

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1, WINTER 2020

The Legislative Scholar

The Newsletter of the Legislative Studies Section of the American Political Science Association

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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

Innovations in Data, Measurement, and Methods for the Study of Legislative Politics

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I'm the new editor of the *Legislative Scholar*. This issue marks my first in a series of newsletters in which I'll be joined by guest editors from across the field of legislative politics to explore a number of topics in depth. In this issue, I'm joined by guest editor Constanza (Connie) Schibber, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Michigan State University, to explore a few of the most novel research designs and sets of methodological tools that legislative scholars are using to draw empirical inferences.

Scholars have relied on a plethora of methodologies to deepen our understanding of legislators and legislatures, from interviews, surveys, and experiments, to numerous statistical modeling techniques.¹ The legislative studies community has been at the forefront in scaling methods (Poole and Rosenthal 2001; Lowe, Benoit, Mikhaylov, and Laver 2011) and in word-as-data within Political Science (Grimmer 2010; Procksh, Lowe, Wackerle, and Soroka 2019). *Political Analysis* dedicated its first special issue, almost twenty years ago, to the estimation of legislators' preferences with roll call data (Cox 2001), while *Legislative Studies Quarterly* recently published a special virtual issue with a collection of articles "defining the state of the art in terms of measurement and modeling" (Crisp 2018). It is not surprising that a large proportion of members of APSA's Legislative Studies section are also members of the Political Methodology section and that over 30% of the members of the Political Methodology section are also members of the Legislative Section (Roberts 2018).

Legislative scholars have collected data in libraries, parliamentary archives, and online sources, and have had to find ways of working with often large amounts of difficult to use data. To answer relevant questions with greater scientific accuracy, some researchers have relied on research designs and modeling strategies from other disciplines, like psychometrics or computer science, and tailored them to study assemblies, while others have developed new methods to study legislators. What is important to keep in mind is that, measures and methods make plenty of assumptions, which is

why it's essential that they are informed by our knowledge of legislative politics.

For this virtual issue, we invited several scholars to review the latest methodological innovations used to study legislatures and to share with us how they are using these approaches in their own work. These pieces include text-as-data, audio and image as data, network analyses, and field experiments. A few of these pieces also showcase the new datasets scholars have created and explain some of the challenges to amassing large amounts of reliable data. We hope that this issue will inspire scholars in new directions and inform novel ways in studying assemblies. In what follows, we preview these contributions.

Although scholars have been thinking of assemblies as social networks as early as the 1930s, Andrew Ballard and Shahryar Minhas show that it wasn't until the turn of the century that networks became somewhat commonplace in legislative studies. They provide an overview of why and how networks can help us make inferences about legislators' behaviors and policy outcomes, while carefully indicating limitations and area of potential extensions of network models.

Roll call voting has long been a staple when studying legislative behavior. Some of the assumptions that underpin the analyses and interpretation of roll call data however are problematic, particularly when making inferences from representatives' votes across countries, chambers, or time. To grasp the magnitude of this problem and to understand the utility of roll call data, Clifford J. Carrubba, Brian F. Crisp, and Matthew Gabel explore variation in roll call voting procedures and theorize the implications of these procedures for selection bias in obtaining roll call votes and bias in the analysis and interpretation of the results. In doing so, they have amassed an impressive cross-national dataset including voting procedures, legislative rules, and plenary minutes for over 150 legislatures in both democratic and non-democratic legislatures. In this newsletter, they share a number of insights from their new data collection with us.

While numerous studies have relied on the content of legislators' speeches and documents to make inferences about their behavior, a new thread of studies has started to use audio, images, and videos to draw inferences, for instance, about parliamentary polarization and voting behavior. In their contribution, Bryce J. Dietrich and Jielu Yao share these exciting new approaches and explain how using audio and video as data, along with other non-traditional techniques, are changing the way scholars' study legislative behavior. They introduce novel research that relies on legislators' vocal pitch when delivering speeches and video of how legislators mingle after floor votes, for instance, to inform our understanding of legislative effectiveness and of legislators' ability to persuade their colleagues.

Although text as data has been used to answer a myriad of questions for almost two decades, scholars have been constantly advancing original tools and applying them to further our knowledge of legislative politics. Mary Kroeger's work stands out in this regard. She develops a new tech-

¹See Martin, Saafeld, and Strom's (2014) *Handbook of Legislative Studies* for a number of pieces reviewing methods of legislative research.

nique to trace the continuity and change in legislation as it moves through the policy-making process in order to understand positive agenda setting. For example, she uses her new textual measure to tackle enduring questions regarding women's ability to wield influence in the legislature as well as how a sponsor's policy position relative to pivotal veto players impacts how much of her or his bill is amended. By analyzing the changing content of legislation over time, Kroeger can assess legislators' ability to implement their ideal legislation, as well as the compromises they must make to see their legislative proposals to fruition.

Though political scientists have been systematically studying legislative behavior for decades inside the assembly, a large part of legislators' activities occur outside of the chamber. In particular, Matthew Mendez Garcia explains that non-policy responsiveness—a non-public type of representation that occurs when legislators respond to constituents' demands—is a critical part of legislators' responsibilities; however, because scholars cannot readily observe non-public behaviors, they are far more difficult to study systematically than public acts of representation (e.g., bill initiation or roll call voting). To address this challenge, scholars have turned to field experiments. Whereas research on legislative behavior relies on public records, field experiments can engage directly with representatives to observe whether they choose to respond to constituent inquiries. In his research, Garcia takes advantage of a novel field-experiment to evaluate non-responsiveness to undocumented immigrants—demonstrating how field experiments can be used to inform our understanding of non-policy responsiveness.

Much of what legislators do takes place "behind the scenes" and scholars frequently have no way of observing this behavior. As a result, there are a lot of unanswered questions regarding how legislators do their job. To give us a window into how legislators influence the implementation of legislation, Melinda Richie developed a novel way of studying back-channel policymaking. She explains that "policy is more frequently made through agency policymaking (i.e., rulemaking) than statute." Legislators can shape rulemaking from communicating with agencies to commenting on regulations, providing suggestions on how to interpret laws, and soliciting help from agencies when drafting legislation. To study legislators' influence on rulemaking, Richie develops a new dataset of legislators' communication with agencies through informal channels that she obtained from Freedom of Information Act Requests (FOIAs). In doing so, she elucidates the difficulties associated with acquiring information via FOIAs and the coding challenges associated with developing an extensive novel data set that relies primarily on government officials to process requests to gain access to information.

When it comes to legislative studies, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is the most understudied region of the world. Historically, many of the legislatures throughout the region were ceremonial chambers, possessing little policy-making authority, and even today some of them

wield limited influence. Nonetheless, more and more, legislatures throughout the region are gaining policy-making power, and yet, scholarly research on legislatures across the region remains absent. This gap in legislative research is primarily due to the absence of reliable data necessary for systematically studying the region. To this end Marwa Shalaby lead a team of multi-language research to assemble an extensive original dataset on legislative activities across MENA. Herein she introduces the Governance and Elections in the Middle East Project (**GEMEP**)—her extensive dataset on legislative behavior across MENA; elucidates the challenges associated with conducting fieldwork in the region; and previews some of the exciting new contributions facilitated by GEMEP.

Book Reviews

Finally, a new contribution to the newsletter is a book review section. Sarah Binder (George Washington University), Ruth Block Rubin (University of Chicago), Michael Minta (University of Minnesota), and Ian Ostrander (Michigan State University) have graciously reviewed *The Whips: Building Party Coalitions in Congress* by C. Lawrence Evans (2018), *Party Institutionalization and Women's Representation in Democratic Brazil* by Kristin N. Wylie (2018), *Poor Representation: Congress and the Politics of Poverty in the United States* by Kristina Miler (2018), and *The Congressional Endgame: Interchamber Bargaining and Compromise* by Josh Ryan (2018).

If you have new books that you would like to see reviewed in the newsletter or if you would like to provide a review for the issue, please contact Tiffany Barnes.

Tiffany D. Barnes and Constanza F. Schibber

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CONTRIBUTIONS

The Past, Present, and Future of Studying Legislatures as Networks

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The study of social phenomena with network and graph theory has its roots in the 1930s (Moreno and Jennings 1938) and has been an active method of studying politics since the 1970s (e.g., Baumgartner and Burns 1975; Galtung 1971; Wallerstein 1974). Most of the political science research using network analysis has focused on international relations topics such as interstate conflict (Maoz et al. 2006; Ward, Siverson and Cao 2007, Minhas,

Hoff, and Ward 2016), terrorist networks (Krebs 2002) and advocacy groups (Keck and Sikkink 2014). However, legislatures provide a number of opportunities for scholars to utilize network analysis techniques as well. Legislatures are relational in nature and lend themselves to being studied as networks, and while the literature applying these techniques to legislatures is relatively new researchers have been increasingly interested in studying legislatures through the lens of network analysis in recent years. In this paper, we discuss how network techniques have and might be applied to research on legislatures. We start by reviewing some of the literature to date, then move to discussing current frontiers in network analysis and how these techniques might be useful to legislative scholars' future endeavors.

Past Research on Legislatures as Networks

The idea of thinking about legislatures in terms of the social relationships between members within and between various institutions dates back to at least the 1930s (Routt 1938). While the first application of social network analysis (SNA) methods to studying legislatures happened 60 years ago (Patterson 1959), SNA has only become commonplace in political science in recent years (Kirkland and Gross 2014). The reasons for this are partially practical. Early attempts to conceive of legislatures as networks focused on the friendships and social relationships between legislators (e.g., Bogue and Marlaire 1975; Eulau 1962; Patterson 1959; Young 1966), and data on these aspects of legislators' lives is hard to come by because they often closely guard their social relationships. Further, this body of work generally sought to explain the social relationships between legislators, rather than investigating how social relations might impact how legislatures operate (e.g., Fiellin 1962; Monsma 1966; Wahlke 1962).

More recent research has focused not only on how legislators' social ties affect legislative operations, but on proxies for the social ties between legislator. Proxies have become necessarily largely because, as legislatures have become larger and more professionalized, direct measures of the social relationships between legislators have become hard to come by (Ringe, Victor, and Cho 2017) – though there are exceptions (e.g., Ringe, Victor, and Carman 2013). Many of these proxies, such as joint membership on committees (e.g., Arnold, Deen, and Patterson 2000; Peoples 2008; Porter et al. 2005, 2007) and cosponsorship of bills (e.g., Burkett 1998; Fowler 2006a, b; Tam Cho and Fowler 2010; Kirkland and Gross 2014) are reasonable proxies for social interaction, and are predictive of similar voting patterns between members, bill passage, and more.

In addition to the outcomes of votes and how members vote together, a number of scholars have focused on how social ties affect the flow of information in legislatures, via co-membership in intralegislative organizations (Ringe, Victor, and Carman 2013), by leveraging the different relationships members create with political allies and enemies (Ringe, Victor, and Gross 2013), by examining

legislative staffs (Ringe 2010; Montgomery and Nyhan 2017), and even by taking advantage of random processes like the office lottery in the US House of Representatives (Rogowski and Sinclair 2012).

Why Networks?

When should one consider utilizing network analysis for their research? Interest in network analysis in political science stems from the realization that the actions taken by actors are not done in a vacuum. Across a number of political processes, actors can often observe the actions of others and will base their own choices accordingly. This type of interdependence in behavior is a key motivation for why scholars may consider this analysis relevant to the question they are seeking to address. This argument is explored in depth in the 2017 Oxford Handbook of Political Networks and in it scholars provide perspectives from across subfields in political science as to theoretical opportunities that network analysis provides (Victor, Montgomery, and Lubell 2017). A bevy of work has also made the argument that simply ignoring the possibility that the actions taken by actors may be dependent on others may lead to biased effects estimation, uncalibrated confidence intervals, and poor predictive performance (Signorino 1999; Li and Loken 2002; Snijders 2011; Erikson et al. 2014; Cranmer and Desmarais 2016).

What is Relational Data?

To start, it may help to review what exactly are relational data. The basic characteristic of relational data is that it provides a measurement of how at least a pair of actors are interacting or related to one another. The interaction being measured between pairs of n actors can be directed (i.e., asymmetric) in that interactions have a clear sender and receiver, or undirected (i.e., symmetric) where an interaction may simply indicate that both actors voted the same way on a bill.

The most common type of networks in the literature are those in which we have actors of one class. For example, a network representing bill cosponsorship typically will consist of one type of actor, which is politicians. But it is not uncommon to have networks that consist of different sets of nodes. For example, Kim and Kunisky (2018) construct a bipartite network in which one class of nodes are politicians and the other lobbying groups. Interactions in their constructed two class network only occur between members of the opposite class.²

Structuring Relational Data

The first step of any type of network analysis is restructuring our data in terms of a sociomatrix. As social scientists,

²Kim and Kunisky define an interaction as the number of times in a Congressional session that a congressman cosponsored a bill that was being lobbied for by an interest group.

we still may often begin with datasets that are rectangular in which the unit of analysis is some set of n actors that have been paired together to form a dataset of z directed dyads. A tabular design such as this for a set of n actors, $\{i, j, k, l\}$ results in $n \times (n - 1)$ observations, as shown in Table 1.³

Sender	Receiver	Event
i	j	y_{ij}
	k	y_{ik}
\vdots	l	y_{il}
j	i	y_{ji}
	k	y_{jk}
\vdots	l	y_{jl}
k	i	y_{ki}
	j	y_{kj}
\vdots	l	y_{kl}
l	i	y_{li}
	j	y_{lj}
\vdots	k	y_{lk}

Table 1: Structure of datasets used in canonical design.

	i	j	k	l
i	NA	y_{ij}	y_{ik}	y_{il}
j	y_{ji}	NA	y_{jk}	y_{jl}
k	y_{ki}	y_{kj}	NA	y_{kl}
l	y_{li}	y_{lj}	y_{lk}	NA

Table 2: Sociomatrix representation of data in Table 1. Senders are represented by the rows and receivers by the columns.

The dependencies lurking in relational data can often be more easily parsed when we move away from stacking dyads on top of one another and turn instead to sociomatrices as shown in Table 2. Operationally, this type of data structure is represented as a $n \times n$ matrix, \mathbf{Y} , where the diagonals in the matrix are typically undefined. The ij^{th} entry defines the relationship between i and j and can be continuous or discrete.

Models to Explain Formation of Network Ties

A number of inferential models have been developed to explain the interactions between actors in a network. One of the most popular and widely used are exponential random graph models (ERGMs).⁴ ERGMs are particularly useful when one already has a network driven hypothesis in mind.⁵ For example, if one thought that actors who share ties to the

³This is also referred to as a directed-dyadic design.

⁴A detailed literature review on ERGMs can be found in Freeman (2004) and the work of Cranmer and Desmarais (2011) has been influential in establishing a foothold for ERGMs in political science.

⁵Morris, Handcock and Hunter (2008) and Snijders et al. (2006) provide a detailed list of network statistics that can be included in an ERGM model specification.

same third parties may be more likely to form ties themselves than they may want to examine the role that triadic closure plays in the formation of ties Holland and Leinhardt 1981; Maoz et al. 2007). Kinne (2013) points to a potential causal mechanism for triadic closure in the case of bilateral cooperation agreements. Specifically, he notes that shared third-party ties may reveal information about a country's overall capacity for trustworthiness as a partner, thus a pair of countries that share a tie with another may be more likely to sign an agreement because they have in a sense been vetted by that third actor.

In the ERGM framework, we use a set of attributes $S(Y)$ such as the number of triads or reciprocal pairs to characterize a network – covariates that describe attributes of nodes and dyads can be easily accommodated into this framework as well. Given the chosen set of statistics, the probability of observing a particular network dataset \mathbf{Y} can be expressed as:

$$\Pr(Y = y) = \frac{\exp(\boldsymbol{\beta}^T S(y))}{\sum_{z \in \mathcal{Y}} \exp(\boldsymbol{\beta}^T S(z))}, y \in \mathcal{Y} \quad (1)$$

where $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ represents a vector of model coefficients for the specified network statistics, \mathcal{Y} denotes the set of all obtainable networks, and the denominator is used as a normalizing factor (Hunter et al. 2008). Actually estimating an ERGM for networks with even over fifty nodes can be difficult because calculating the normalizing factor would require accounting for and then summing over $2^{n \times (n-1)}$. Strauss and Ikeda (1990) developed a computationally fast pseudolikelihood approach to deal with this issue, however, the standard errors remain unreliable. Currently, the suggested best practice is to use an MCMC-MLE approach (Snijders 2002).

A very different approach to modeling the formation of ties in a network comes under the broad heading of latent variable approaches. In an ERGM, statistical interdependence is operationalized in the model via the set of network attributes that are added to the model and the effects of those attributes are assumed to be homogeneous across dyads because ERGMs are defined at the graph level. Latent variable approaches to network analysis, however, operationalize interdependence in the model quite differently. The benefit is that they allow for heterogeneity among dyads with the cost of not being able to estimate the exact effect of an attribute such as triadic closure.

There are three broad types of latent variables approaches: the latent class model (also known as the stochastic block model), the latent distance model, and the latent factor model.⁶ These approaches try to position actors in groups or space based on the edges that they form and can be expressed with the following form: $y_{ij} \sim \beta_T X_{ij} + \alpha_{u_i, u_j}$.

⁶Though latent distance models have become a popular modeling tool in some disciplines, we are aware of only one publication that has used this approach in political science (see Kirkland 2012). Variants of the latent factor approach, however, have been used in a variety of works in political science including Metternich et al. (2015); Gallop, Minhas, and Dorff (Forthcoming); Cheng and Minhas (Forthcoming).

X_{ij} here represents exogenous nodal and dyadic covariates that can be used to explain the formation of an edge between a given pair of actors.

The goal of α_{u_i, u_j} in each of these latent variable approaches is to provide a lower order representation of how actors relate to one another based on the tendency of actors to sort into communities and/or the tendency of actors to form transitive ties. The α_{u_i, u_j} serves two general roles in the context of these models, first, it is often argued that if this additional term adequately captures the type of interdependence in your network then we improve our ability to obtain unbiased and well calibrated confidence intervals for the regression coefficients on our exogenous covariates. An added benefit of utilizing these types of models for networks is that they condense the complex patterns of relations that can arise networks into a low dimensional setting where the positioning of actors describes what relations they share with other actors. The key value add for a network based decomposition approach is that it allows us to infer the relationship between two actors even if no direct interaction between them is reported. This type of approach has been used for that latter purpose in a number of works. For example, Weschle (2017) uses it to develop a spatial representation of how Eurozone political parties represent societal actors in their public interactions. Tellez and Roberts (2019) utilize a latent factor model to study how relations between states in the Middle East changed pre and post the emergence of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

These models are discussed in detail in Minhas, Hoff, and Ward (2019), here we provide a very brief overview of the model formulations for the symmetric network case.

Latent class model

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha(u_i, u_j) &= m_{u_i, u_j} \\ u_i &\in \{1, \dots, K\}, i \in \{1, \dots, n\} \\ M &\text{ a } K \times K \text{ symmetric matrix} \end{aligned}$$

Latent distance model

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha(\mathbf{u}_i, \mathbf{u}_j) &= -|\mathbf{u}_i - \mathbf{u}_j| \\ \mathbf{u}_i &\in \mathbb{R}^K, i \in \{1, \dots, n\} \end{aligned}$$

Latent factor model

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha(\mathbf{u}_i, \mathbf{u}_j) &= \mathbf{u}_i^T \Lambda \mathbf{u}_j \\ \mathbf{u}_i &\in \mathbb{R}^K, i \in \{1, \dots, n\} \\ \Lambda &\text{ a } K \times K \text{ diagonal matrix} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

The latent class model accomplishes this by trying to identify which of K communities each actor most likely belongs to (Nowicki and Snijders 2001).⁷ The latent distance model projects actors onto a K dimensional Euclidean surface in which actors more proximate one another are more

⁷Choosing K in any of these latent variables approaches is typically done via a posterior predictive analysis of the goodness of fit of the model across various network diagnostics. Examples of diagnostics to use in the case of latent variables models are discussed in Minhas, Hoff and Ward (2019).

likely to form a tie because of a higher number of shared partners. The latent factor model is the most frequently used latent variable approach for networks in political science and attempts to provide an approach that can both account for the tendency of actors to form communities and triads via a matrix decomposition approach.⁸

Conclusion

Since 2000, we have seen significant development in approaches that allow us to better understand the dynamics underlying networks. In this piece, we have done a brief review of why a network approach may be useful and on some of the canonical models through which scholars can study networks. However, what was discussed here is truly just an incomplete sampling and a bevy of political science work is being done in thinking about how we can study longitudinal networks⁹ and even multiple networks that may arise from some joint process¹⁰. Apart from the ability of network based models to improve our ability to conduct statistical inference, there is also a wealth of opportunity in thinking about how we can use these models to better understand the interdependent set of relations that we so often observe in subfields across political science.

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⁸This approach was first introduced to political science by Hoff and Ward (2004).

⁹For example, see Minhas, Hoff and Ward (2017); Olivella, Pratt and Imai (2018).

¹⁰For example, see Minhas, Hoff and Ward (2016); Chen (2018).

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- ## Using Roll Call Votes to Understand Legislative Behavior
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- As scholars of legislative politics, we use roll call vote results to calculate many quantities of interest: ideal points of individual legislators, cohesiveness of partisan blocs, polarization in a chamber, dimensionality of the policy space, etc. Theorizing about what explains these quantities or what these quantities explain usually assumes that our measures of them are an unbiased representation of legislative behavior. However, in the case of most legislatures, we have very little information about the population of votes of which roll calls are a sample. Votes may also be taken by a show of hands, standing or sitting, shouting Yea or Nay – methods that result in a collective decision without recording the individual decisions of elected officials. This project was designed to develop theories about legislators' selection of voting methods and the bias those strategic choices might create in the sample of the voting record that is created via roll call. We intend to test the observable implications of those theories with data from numerous elected chambers around the world.
- Initial evidence based on data from 145 national legislatures suggests that voting procedures vary widely, with roll calls typically not being the only form of recording a vote. What is more, the procedures for selecting a voting method also vary widely, and there does not appear to be any relationship between the ease of invoking a roll call and the relative frequency of their use. In addition, the gross number of roll call votes available for analysis does not appear to be related to their prevalence among votes taken by all methods. That is, where we find a high frequency of roll-call votes, we do not necessarily find a high share of votes by roll call. Finally, the legislatures that serve as the basis for most of our research using roll-call vote analysis are generally settings in which the potential for selection bias in roll-call votes looms the largest.
- Our formal theoretic work suggests that the standard incentives behind invoking a roll call – e.g., in order to showcase a party's cohesive support for a particular position or requesting a roll-call vote to facilitate party discipline – are not benign in terms of creating a representative sample of

votes. For example, simulations based on a formal model show that a position-taking motivation for invoking a roll-call vote generates a vote record that typically poorly represents voting behavior in general. Specifically, we find bias in measures of ideal points, party unity, and dimensionality of the policy space. For some quantities of interest the bias is predictable and for others it appears random.

In the course of pursuing this research agenda, we have created a database of legislative procedures and behavior for, as we noted above, something approaching 150 legislatures, and we hope to keep adding more (Crisp, Gabel, and Carrubba, 2016). We have systematically assembled and coded information on legislative voting procedures for 145 chambers across 105 countries spanning Europe, Africa, the Americas, and Asia. These cases include a range of regime types in terms of their level of democracy. Considering how in recent years legislative behavior in authoritarian regimes has received a significant amount of attention, we felt that it was important to collect procedural information for both democratic and non-democratic countries. We selected these legislatures because the standing orders where available in digital form from their official government website and were published in a language in which we had literacy.

We think that the data we have collected will be of value for pursuing a wide range of substantive research agendas, not just the one that motivated us. We are on the verge of having a website constructed that will make our data available to the scholarly community. For the legislatures already examined, we have collected their cameral procedures and coded them for voting procedures, particularly the rules governing plenary voting (and more). Specifically, we were interested in identifying the standard operating procedure – the default voting rule – and any rules governing when and how a roll-call vote can be invoked. Both the procedures and our coding of them will be provided in our database. Also, for a subset of those chambers (around 70 or almost half), we have collected copies of their floor minutes. The number of years of floor minutes varies depending on the digital archives provided by the legislature, but these records are often extensive – sometimes going back decades. The plenary records are valuable to us because they can provide information about the full population of votes. For example, the minutes may include references to votes by show of hands which would not otherwise be recorded. Indeed, in several parliaments, we were able to identify the full population of votes taken in a legislature, by any procedure. The plenary record also often includes the roll-call vote record itself. And finally, the minutes can serve as a corpus of text for analyzing legislative speech for a variety of theoretically motivated questions. It is also the case that a portion of legislatures that make their floor minutes available also publish a separate record of votes taken. Where available, we have collected these as well, and we will be sharing them as part of this database. We are developing legislature-specific algorithms that identify and extract votes and speeches from the minutes, making it easier for users to download the spe-

cific data in which they are interested. We will be providing examples of the machine coding scripts we have developed for downloading and analyzing this collection of legislative records.

We hope that this database will facilitate research on legislative behavior in general, as well as inform our (and others') efforts to develop methods for addressing selection effects in the analysis of roll-call votes. We also hope the database will be dynamic. In other words, we hope to build in features that allow scholars to augment the database both by adding new records to reflect recent plenary sessions and by adding new legislatures where digital records come online. We are in the process of designing an interactive online data portal (we have a working prototype) that scholars and members of the public can use to view, download, and analyze our data, including the rules of procedure and floor minutes. This portal will include interactive data visualization and text analysis tools.

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How Audio, Image, and Video Data is Being Used to Study Legislative Behavior

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Since perhaps Laver, Benoit, and Garry (2003), text data has been used to understand legislative politics. While studies like Proksch and Slapin (2012), Quinn et al. (2010), and Pearson and Dancey (2011) have added considerably to our understanding of legislative politics, a new line of research has begun to emerge in which audio, image, and video data are being used to understand a wide range of political behavior. This article highlights some of this literature and explains how future scholars could potentially apply these techniques to their own research.

To date, audio data has been used primarily to understand vote choice (e.g., Tigue et al. 2012) and emotional expression in elite settings (e.g., Dietrich, Enos, and Sen 2019). For example, using 796 YouTube videos of the top two candidates from each House race in the 2012 midterm election, Klofstad (2016) found those with higher pitched

voices were more likely to lose, although these effects became somewhat diminished once other electoral variables were added as controls. In more recent work, Klofstad and Anderson (2019) found little correlation between changes in vocal pitch and legislative effectiveness, a finding the authors find puzzling and suggest may be due to their measure of legislative effectiveness. Regardless, this work and others by this research team (e.g., Klofstad, Anderson, and Peters 2012) clearly demonstrate how audio data can be used to better understand the U.S. Congress.

With that said, this work asks a very specific question about how non-verbal expressions, like changes in vocal pitch, can influence legislative behavior. More specifically, the experimental treatments in these studies tend to use manipulated audio in which the vocal pitch of the speaker is increased or decreased using software. If one were interested in knowing whether voters generally prefer higher or lower pitched voices, then this approach is completely reasonable. However, members of Congress (MCs) are exposed repeatedly to their colleagues' voices, so while they may initially react negatively to a speaker with a higher pitched voice, over time they likely become used to their colleagues' tone. After this point, deviations from this learned baseline are likely what is most important since such changes may signal whether their colleague is expressing a more or less intense expression.

In a recent article published in the *American Political Science Review*, this is precisely the argument advanced by Dietrich, Hayes, and O'Brien (2019). Instead of thinking about the basal reaction MCs may have to vocal pitch, these researchers explore how changes in vocal pitch may be indicative of underlying attitude preferences. Although certainly not the first to suggest female MCs are more likely to speak about women and the issues they care about on the House floor (e.g., Osborn and Mendez 2010), this study uses the audio from over 74,000 floor speeches to demonstrate that such expressions are not simply "cheap talk," but instead are grounded in a deep attachment to women as a group. Ultimately, the authors show that when women speak about women with more intensity – as indicated by increased vocal pitch – their male colleagues are not only more likely to mention women, but they are also more likely to vote with them. While the authors are quick to point out the difficulty of establishing a causal relationship using observational data, this study will undoubtedly serve as an important foundation for future scholars interested in using audio data in their own research, legislative or otherwise.

Despite the relatively widespread use of audio data in legislative studies, less work has been done which uses images or video in a similar way. One noticeable exception is Xi et al. (2019) who – similar to Yao et al. (2019) – applied deep learning techniques to Facebook photographs of 319 Members of Congress. Their classifier – which used transfer learning and the ResNet-34 architecture – achieved an accuracy of 82.35 percent when multiple images were used. Ultimately, they found conservative politicians are more likely to use image objects and people to advocate military and sta-

tus quo political institutions while liberals are more likely to use images to show their concerns about the global community and environment. Xi et al. (2019) also found conservatives are more likely to express happiness in their photos, a result which is the opposite of what was previously reported by Wojcik et al. (2015). Given previous work in political communication which underlines the importance of facial expressions (e.g., Stewart, Walter, and Schubert 2009; Grabe and Bucy 2009), it is only a matter of time until scholars begin to use these results to better understand legislative behavior.

Perhaps the most direct application of image- or video-as-data is a forthcoming paper in *Political Analysis* titled "Using Motion Detection to Understand Social Polarization in the U.S. House of Representatives." In this paper, Dietrich (2019) uses over 6,000 hours of C-SPAN videos to measure the extent to which Democrats and Republicans mingle after floor votes. Not only does he find these types of bipartisan social interactions have been steadily declining since 1997, but he also shows that they may have important downstream consequences. More specifically, party votes are found to be more likely after videos in which Democrats and Republicans do not literally cross the aisle. Similar to Dietrich, Hayes, and O'Brien (2019), the author emphasizes the difficulty of establishing a firm causal relationship using observational data, but he finds more evidence that the lack of bipartisan social interactions is "predictive of party voting and not the other way around" (p. 12).

The use of audio, image, and video data will become increasingly important to the study of legislatures both inside and outside of the United States, especially as the methodology needed to understand the dynamics in these non-traditional data sources continues to develop. Casas and Webb Williams (2019), Knox and Lucas (2019), Neumann (2019), Rheault, Ludovic, and Sophie Borwein (2019), and Torres (2019) will be important future works in this regard. These studies will likely motivate a new wave of research in which non-traditional data sources are used in combination with machine learning to better understand legislative politics and hopefully this article will help scholars better navigate what may seem like unfamiliar waters.

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- ## Thinking about Legislative Power by Measuring Alterations to Sponsored Bills
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- Assessing the distribution of power and which actors' preferences are decisive in legislative decision-making has been a long-standing fascination in the legislative literature. I introduce a textual measure that I argue captures an element of positive agenda setting power in legislative bodies. Specifically, I measure the percentage of the text that was changed between the introduced version of a bill and the subsequent versions of the bill. These scores have a number of possible uses. For example, I am using them to assess gender differences in the amount that bills sponsored by congresswomen versus congressmen change as they move through the legislative process. Another project uses these metrics to assess the relationship between how much sponsors' bills change and distance to pivotal players (chamber median and majority party median). The measure could also be easily incorporated into the Volden and Wiseman scores of legislative effectiveness (for example, by weighing sponsored bills by how much they are altered).
- In Congresses where passing laws is difficult and infrequently occurs, studying the process through which bills

are altered and members of Congress compromise to reach a final product is essential to understanding statutory creation. I use the changing content of legislative vehicles in order to ascertain legislators' relative power. The systematic alterations have implications for the distribution of power within the legislative chamber and reflect the ability of politicians to see their preferred policy passed into law. The first application of this measure is to gender since the literature on women's effectiveness in legislatures reaches mixed and conditional conclusions (see the discussion in Volden, Wiseman and Wittmer 2013). Carefully examining legislative processes may help us untangle the subtle differences in the trajectory of representation by women. Kathlene (1994) calls for scholars "to examine how the content of a bill changes as it passes through the process and look closely at who is influencing the changes. Is male verbal aggression directed at women-sponsored bills or women's issues resulting in a transformation of their bills that is disproportionately influenced by male voices?" I begin to answer this call and apply computational advances to make the metric possible.

In terms of methodological intent, Martin and Vanberg (2014) fall the closest to this work. Martin and Vanberg (2014) study the legislative histories of bills proposed by governments in parliamentary democracies to determine the relative power of a variety of actors. They seek to "evaluate whether the extent of these changes is systematically related to policy divisions between particular actors in the government and the legislature" (p. 985). This endeavor is similar in that it takes the extent to which bills are changed as a systematic measure of the sponsor's power and legislative style. Though, I use an automated measure instead of taking a random subset of legislation considered. Casas, Denny, and Wilkerson (Forthcoming) critique the typical metric of legislative effectiveness (the number of a legislator's sponsored bills that get through certain hurdles) by examining legislative proposals that get attached to other bills and pass into law. I follow this research in using textual analysis to examine the legislative process as related to how specific bills get altered throughout the legislative process.

Dealing with textual data involves substantial cleanup and verification efforts. The data needed to calculate the changes across versions of bills are, of course, different versions of the bill. When you look at the text that is posted on Congress.gov, you will notice that there are various features that do not conform well to careful comparisons between versions. One feature is that there is text included in the version that has been deleted from the statutory language. This text needs to be removed before one can make a comparison across versions, since that text is effectively removed from consideration. Casas, Denny, and Wilkerson (Forthcoming) have done much of this preprocessing and were kind enough to share their data with me.

After these bills have been processed, a few summary statistics can be easily calculated. I use the **textrueuse** package in R. First, each document is converted into the component sets of rolling five-word strings (other lengths can

be easily calculated). Next, the Jaccard similarity for each pair is calculated. This measure is the intersection of the five-word strings shared between the pair of bill versions divided by the number of unique five-word strings that appear in both documents. By calculating the rolling five-word strings, this measure takes into account word order. The Jaccard similarity provides an easy-to-understand summary measure of the textual reuse between two documents. Further, this measure allows us to examine stability in bill language between versions. Simply, this measure indicates the amount of text shared between every two versions of a bill. These textual-based measures can be easily merged by bill identifier with other Congressional data sets (such as Adler and Wilkerson's Congressional Bills Project). Other measures of similarity can be easily calculated from this preprocessed dataset. Perhaps the researcher would like to know how much of the first version of the bill is deleted across versions, this could be calculated with simple alterations.

Complications with how the measure can be used and understood remain. First, the strategic decision about the content of the bill may alter by type of legislator. For example, an ideologically extreme legislator may moderate a bill in order to see that the bill has a higher chance of passing into law. Thus, the bill may change less as it moves throughout the process because of this anticipatory behavior. Additionally, if a bill is altered too much, a legislator may abandon the bill and introduce another that incorporates the changes. In this case, the measure misses how much the "policy" changes as it undergoes the legislative cycle. While there are considerations that the researcher should consider when thinking about what this measure should be used for, it has the potential to help researchers consider legislative sponsorship in a nuanced manner.

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Field Experiments and the Study of Latino Representation

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Political inequality along the dimensions of race and ethnicity is an enduring feature of the U.S. political system (Butler 2014). Proponents of descriptive representation have often held that electing members of racial and ethnic minorities is one way to alleviate this disparity as such representation increases the responsiveness of elected officials to such groups (Tate 2003). Studies of policy responsiveness were important in determining that descriptive representatives do prioritize the policy concerns of their co-ethnics; this has been especially true in the case of African Americans (Whitby 1998). Research on Latinos, however, has presented a more complicated picture with studies pointing out that on policy responsiveness, Latino representatives do provide more representation than white legislators (e.g., Bratton 2006), while others find that Democratic party affiliation explains Latino substantive representation best (Knoll 2009). These studies help present a complex picture of policy responsiveness but focus on the more public aspects of representation, which requires a different set of calculations on the part of the legislators. Research done on less public acts of representation, such as non-policy responsiveness, has yielded important findings on how legislators prioritize different groups of constituents.

Non-policy responsiveness occurs when a legislator responds to a request for assistance of some kind to a constituent and is considered a crucial component of a legislator's duties (Eulau and Karps 1977; Butler 2014). Studying non-policy responsiveness allows researchers to potentially study the motivations of legislators, as it is one domain that is completely under the auspices of the legislative office. Non-policy responsiveness allows scholars to theorize how legislators treat constituents and whether they provide different levels of responsiveness to them. Field experiments have proven to be an appropriate method as they have allowed researchers the ability to assess whether legislator non-policy responsiveness is conditioned upon race, ethnicity, or some other facet of identity.

My research has utilized field experiments on state legislators to assess whether they provide non-policy responsiveness to undocumented Latino immigrants. Undocumented Latinos present a challenge to our understanding of descriptive representation as they are a stigmatized group in society with no formal electoral power. The promise of a vote is an

important incentive to induce responsiveness from a legislator, but what happens if a legislator receives a request from a constituent who cannot vote? That is the question that I set out to answer in my research. I utilized a field experiment that allowed me to vary the national status of a fictitious Latino constituent. I hypothesized that most legislators would prioritize a Latino citizen over an undocumented immigrant but that Latino legislators might respond equally to both due to their shared ethnicity.

The ability to examine legislative responsiveness is made possible due to the ability to directly randomize the assignment of subjects to treatment groups, therefore automatically controlling for confounding factors (e.g., Morton and Williams 2010; Grose 2014). Researchers can directly compare response rates across treatment groups to determine whether disparities exist by holding the message constant. With the message similar across all treatment groups, the only variation occurs along the independent variable, which is usually indicated by the text or the name of the constituent. This independent variable could be the randomization of electoral rewards (i.e., Broockman 2013), or the ethnicity of the sender (i.e., Butler and Broockman 2011; Mendez and Grose 2018).

For this experiment, legislators were randomized into three groups and sent emails from a fictitious Latino constituent asking for help with finding financial aid for college. In the first treatment group, the message to the legislator explicitly states that Maria Fernanda Garcia is an undocumented immigrant, and that her family is undocumented as well. The second treatment email message explicitly states that Maria Fernanda Garcia is a citizen of the United States, as designated by her status as a third-generation Mexican-American. The inclusion of her generational status is intentional, as it indicates to the legislator that not only was the constituent born here, but that her family has a historical presence in the country making her a citizen of the United States. The third email message, the control group, does not state whether Maria Fernanda Garcia is a citizen or an undocumented immigrant. Like the two treatment messages, this message indicates she is Latino through her name.

Compared to Members of Congress, state legislators are an ideal population to experiment on if one is interested in studying the behavior of minority legislators due to their greater numbers. For example, in 2015 there were a total of 279 Latino state legislators compared to 35 Latino Members of Congress. The greater number makes it easier to have more treatment groups that allow for statistical testing.

The sample of legislators for my experiment was from U.S. states with significant Latino populations. To maximize the possibility that the state legislators will be from districts that feature undocumented Latino constituents, I included states with Latino populations of over 10 percent according to the 2010 U.S. Census. This yielded a sample of state legislators from 28 legislative chambers in 14 states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Utah, and Washington. These states yielded a

total sample of 1,871 state legislators with email addresses.

The results showed that non-Latino state legislators responded less to the undocumented Latino than the citizen by a statistically significant margin but the margin was by less than 8 percentage points meaning that about a quarter of legislators still responded. This number was higher than I originally expected. The results for Latino legislators did not produce a statistical difference between the response rates to the undocumented Latino or the citizen Latino indicating that they responded similarly to a Latino constituent regardless of her national status. More intriguingly, my results indicated that generally legislators, non-Latino or Latinos, responded similarly to the undocumented Latino constituent but that, statistically, there was not a difference between how they responded. The only difference was that statistically non-Latino legislators responded more to the Latino citizen while the Latino legislators responded the same.

This field experiment found that legislators do indeed respond to undocumented Latinos and presents important avenues for future research on this question. The fact that Latino legislators responded similarly suggests that they do indeed have a different relationship than non-Latino legislators to undocumented immigrants. The reasons for this relationship could be related to electoral reasons or out of a personal sense of linked fate. More research would be required to identify the exact mechanism but it does suggest that the benefits of descriptive representation do extend to undocumented immigrants.

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Measuring Back-Channel Policymaking: Inter-Branch Communication and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

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Members of Congress communicate with agencies through informal channels (e.g., letters, emails, phone calls, meetings) thousands of times each year. Despite previous assumptions that these interactions are confined to casework and requests for grants, about a quarter of these contacts are about matters of national policy (Ritchie 2018). Of course, House members and senators (and their staff) contact agencies to support grants for their districts and states and to expedite passport renewals and visa applications, but they also contact agencies to comment on regulations, offer interpretations of law, and to request the agency's assistance in crafting legislation. Members of Congress even urge agencies to initiate policies that are lagging in the legislative process (e.g., the Dream Act) in advance (or in lieu) of passage and to delay or suspend implementation of provisions. This *back-channel policymaking*, as I refer to it, is important because, despite a focus on the formal legislative process, the agencies that implement the nation's laws have a great deal of discretion. In fact, policy is more frequently made through agency policymaking (i.e., rulemaking) than statute (Potter 2019, Warren 2011).

Until recently, these informal inter-branch interactions have remained a black box because of a lack of data on the

communication between individual members of Congress and agencies. In order to collect such data, I used the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to request records of communication between members of Congress and federal agencies.¹¹ FOIA allows individuals to request records and documents from federal agencies with some exceptions (detailed below). Through the FOIA process, I was able to obtain records of contact from members of Congress to agencies (generally referred to as "congressional correspondence logs") from several agencies including the U.S. Departments of Energy, Labor, Homeland Security, Transportation, Education, Commerce, Health and Human Services, the U.S. Trade Representative, and others.

Although there can be variation across agencies, congressional correspondence logs generally include the names of the House members or senators involved in the contact (including collaborators if multiple legislators signed on to a letter, for example), the date of the communication, the date the agency responded, a summary of the subject of the communication, and often other information such as the medium (e.g., letter, fax, email, phone call) and the agency component/office or names of agency officials involved with the communication. These logs are created by the agency and are intended for internal agency use.

The congressional correspondence logs offer information revealing the important ways members of Congress engage with agencies. To offer just a few examples from the Departments of Energy (DOE), Labor (DOL) and Homeland Security (DHS), members of Congress contact agencies in order to (examples from the correspondence logs in italics):¹²

Influence the development of policies and regulations:

Rep. Anne Northup contacted the DOE to "ensure that final ENERGY STAR clothes washer criteria does not include aggressive water-use component will drive consumers away from energy."

To propose new policies or changes to existing regulations:

Reps. George Miller and Major Owens "Request MSHA [Mining Safety and Health Administration (DOL)] to Adopt a New Policy to Increase Fines for MSHA Violations."

To comment on agency rule-making decisions:

Rep. Barney Frank contacted DHS to express "concerns regarding USCG decision to publish an interim final rule (Automatic Identification System, Requirement for fishing vessels) that would require fishing vessels which are 65 feet or greater in length to install Automatic Identification System to comply with the Maritime Transportation Act of

¹¹foia.gov

¹²Spelling and grammatical errors are from the original congressional correspondence log records. The quoted text consists of summaries of the correspondence intended as internal agency notes.

2002. Many vessels participating in the managed fisheries within the Mid-Atlantic and northwest are already required to carry a vessel monitoring system at significant cost."

To express support or opposition for proposed rules:

Senator Amy Klobuchar contacted the DOL to "Oppose Child Labor Rule Prohibiting Youth Workers from Using Patient Lifts."

To gain insight into an agency's intention for implementing legislation prior to passage:

"Senator Feinstein finds the language inserted in FY 2006 Defense Authorization Conference Report troubling; seeking assurance that SNL [Sandia National Laboratories, DOE] will not conduct testing related to bunker buster program."

To request an agency's assistance in drafting legislation:

"Rep. Souder request the Department [DHS] review the attached draft bill and provide any technical assistance that your Department believes may improve it."

To request an agency's support for legislation:

Senator Dianne Feinstein contacted DHS to express "her disagreement with DHS's arguments against the Emergency Agriculture Relief Act (bipartisan bill). Writes that the bill is necessary and broadly supported solution to the labor crisis facing the agriculture industry today."

To try to delay or even block implementation of law:

Rep. Bob Inglis contacted the DOE to ask, "Could the DOE exercise its discretion to forestall enforcement of the 2010 commercial refrigerator/freezer standards against self-contained SOC Display Merchandisers while work is progressing on a legislative resolution that would establish credible, reasonable achievable standards for those products."

These data have led to several novel substantive contributions. We now know that members of Congress regularly contact agencies about policy, and that these interactions are widespread across legislators, rather than exclusive to committees with oversight (Ritchie 2018). These data have also provided evidence of agency responsiveness to requests from House members and senators (Ritchie and You 2019) and shown how women, racial and ethnic minorities, and veterans in Congress advocate for their respective communities through their interactions with agencies (Lowande, Ritchie, and Lauterbach 2019).¹³ These data are continuing to produce novel research, including collaborative papers

¹³Also see Mills, Kalaf-Hughes, and MacDonald (2016).

and as a part of my ongoing book project, Back-Channel Policymaking: Congress, the Bureaucracy, and Inter-Branch Representation.

However, constructing the novel datasets that led to these substantive contributions involved several challenges. While FOIA requests can now be made electronically, agencies are not always forthcoming with requested documents or diligent about complying with FOIA policies. Some agencies have even developed strategies for circumventing FOIA requirements in order to avoid fulfilling requests. Consequently, the FOIA process from start to finish can be time consuming and challenging.

Delays, Fees, and Agency (Un)responsiveness

The challenges of FOIA vary by agencies. Some agencies responded to my requests by emailing me electronic PDF versions of their records after about a month. Others sent letters in the mail explaining that the agency would require additional time to fulfill my request beyond the time limit established by FOIA (about 1 month). Nearly all the agencies I contacted took longer than one month, and many agencies have massive FOIA backlogs. Some frequent FOIA requesters believe that agencies use these delays and other responses requesting further details to terminate their obligation to fulfill a request. If the requester does not respond to an agency's request for further details within a window of time (generally 20 days), the agency may close the request. Some agencies, often after a series of delays, would send a letter denying the fee waiver I requested, resulting in a potentially large price tag. After months of phone calls and email exchanges with FOIA officers and one (successful) formal appeal of a fee waiver denial, I received the records I had requested.¹⁴ Even then, I often did not receive the records in the format I explicitly requested (electronic records via email). Agencies would mail me CDs and even boxes of (very) poorly photocopied records. Despite having made my original FOIA requests in 2012, I am still waiting to receive the documents I requested from some agencies. The State Department, for example, is notorious for not fulfilling FOIA requests.

In fact, there may come a time when these records will not be available by FOIA request. *Politico* reported that the House has made efforts to try to block agencies from releasing congressional correspondence records to the public.¹⁵

Redaction of Exempted Information

Another limit of data using these records involves agency redactions for exempted information. Information covered by one of nine exemptions under the FOIA can be redacted. For example, the 6th exemption protects

¹⁴I was able to persuade agencies to reverse their fee waiver denials without making formal appeals as well.

¹⁵<https://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/15/house-moves-to-block-access-to-records-foia-242791>

personal information affecting an individual's privacy, so the names of citizens in the congressional correspondence logs are redacted. However, the records of a particular correspondence would still contain all the other information (except the citizen's name is redacted with the type of exemption noted). Fortunately, the names of citizens are not necessary for my purposes, and any other exemptions were minimal and did not result in the redaction of information required for my research. However, other scholars planning on using congressional correspondence logs or other FOIA documents should take note of the exemptions in case they are critical for a proposed research design.¹⁶

Coding Challenges

My research required hand-coding the subjects of over 100,000 contacts from members of Congress to agencies. My book project alone required the coding of over 65,000 contacts. This coding involved categorizing contacts as either casework, grant requests, or policy (Ritchie 2018), carefully matching (by hand) Trade Adjustment Assistance petitions to contacts in support of petitions (Ritchie and You 2019), and coding for content such as advocacy in support of particular groups (Lowande, Ritchie, Lauterbach 2019). Coding these contacts can be particularly challenging and time-consuming because the subjects and topics can vary widely and often require the coder to look up agency jargon and abbreviations. In addition to jargon, the logs, which are for internal agency use, are often littered with spelling errors and typos. These agency errors make coding more challenging and time-consuming.

Managing the Records

The format of the documents the agencies sent also created challenges for managing the records. As I mentioned, some agencies sent thousands of pages of electronic PDFs that were poorly scanned and not keyword searchable. Other agencies mailed boxes of poorly photocopied documents.

The format and quality of the records can vary across agencies. The records from the departments (Departments of Labor, Energy, and Homeland Security) I selected for my book project are particularly high quality, generally with type of communication (e.g., letter, email, phone call, fax), detailed summaries of the communication, and response dates. I have seen other correspondence logs with extremely brief descriptions of the subject of the communication, which would make coding for particular measures difficult. I was fortunate to have help from research assistants with managing the documents and reliability coding.

Conclusion

FOIA can be an excellent way to collect interesting, creative, original data. However, this novel data often requires a

¹⁶For the list of nine exemptions see: <https://www.foia.gov/faq.html>.

great deal of time and persistence to see your FOIA requests through. I encourage scholars to utilize FOIA to create novel datasets but caution them to consider their timeline as this process can take several months or even years. Finally, the resulting documents often require extensive work to format and code.

In my experience, the FOIA process is not a matter of submitting a request and then simply waiting for the agency to send you records (although that was true of some agencies). Even after submitting a request, I had to be persistent in keeping up with the agencies to ensure they were still processing my requests and relentless in defending my right to fee waivers. The FOIA process is so notoriously difficult that scholars have been known to trade FOIA war stories at conferences.

Fortunately for scholars interested in using congressional communication data in the future, obtaining these data will be much easier and will not require a FOIA request. I am teaming up with my collaborator, Kenny Lowande (Assistant Professor, University of Michigan), to make these data easily accessible to scholars, journalists, and even citizens. We are creating a web database that will allow users to download large datasets and for citizens to look up the letters their representatives have sent to agencies. The database will offer greater transparency and accessibility for citizens to be informed and engaged with the government and democratic processes. Keep an eye out for the website called "Congress Calls!"

Novel data that furthers our knowledge of American institutions are important. I had only recently learned about FOIA when I made my first request as a graduate student in 2012 and was not aware of how challenging and time consuming the process would be. Fortunately, I benefited from funding support from the Dirksen Center and Vanderbilt University's Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. This funding support and the undergraduate students from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; Vanderbilt University; and the University of California, Riverside who assisted in formatting and coding made this research possible. Lastly, I would be remiss not to recognize the FOIA officers who endured my insistent phone calls and emails. These data and research would not be possible without them.

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Introducing a New Dataset on Legislators' Activities in Arab Parliaments

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Scholarship on legislative politics in electoral authoritarian regimes has flourished over the past decade – except for in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Hundreds of articles published in top-ranked political science and sub-field journals, edited volumes and books have enriched our understanding on the internal dynamics and outcomes of electoral institutions functioning under authoritarianism across different parts of the world (see for example: Malesky and Shuler 2010; Miller 2014; Truex 2016; Manion 2015). When it comes to the MENA region, extant work has focused predominantly on the link between electoral politics and prospects for democratization. Unquestionably, the Arab uprisings have spurred significant scholarly attention on the region, yet, studies continued to focus on the democratizing potential of the uprisings without paying much attention to the myriad of ways opposition actors mobilize to change the status quo from within. It is quite shocking that over the past decade, there is not a single article dealing with MENA's legislatures in any of the top political science journals: *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, and *Journal of Politics*. Merely four articles on MENA's legislative politics appeared in *Comparative Political Studies*, albeit focusing on elections. Similarly, only one article appeared in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* and none in the *Journal of Legislative Politics*. The dearth of work on legislative politics in MENA can be attributed to a variety of reasons, most prominent of which are the scarcity of reliable data and the difficulty associated with conducting fieldwork and/or accessing research sites. To bridge this significant gap, I initiated the Governance and Elections in the Middle East Project (GEMEP) more than five years ago. The goal of GEMEP is to collect and analyze time-series legislative

data, mainly bills, questions (i.e., queries), and roll call votes as well as legislator and district-level data from almost every Arab country with functioning legislature. While the project is still work in progress, we were able to drive important insights and publish intriguing findings over the past few years. We currently have a wealth of original data that will significantly enrich our understanding on these assemblies and pave the way for further scholarship.

What Explains the Dearth of Scholarship on MENA's Legislative Politics?

Every Arab state currently has a legislative body – either directly elected or appointed. Nonetheless, there are wide temporal and cross-national variations regarding the structures and modes of selection and/or election of these assemblies and their degree of political competition. Most Arab states have formed assemblies since independence from colonial powers in the mid 20th century, embarking on a brief era of political liberalization and power-sharing. Particularly, since the 1980s, many Arab countries introduced significant electoral reforms and fairly competitive elections – mainly in response to severe economic and political crises along with international and domestic pressure (Baaklini et al. 1999). Legislative politics has been, for the most part, one of the most durable mechanisms employed by those in power, however, very little is known about the inner dynamics and consequences of these elected institutions and/or actors within these bodies. What explains the dearth of scholarship on legislative politics in MENA?

On the one hand, this can be attributed to scholars' skepticism of the significance of MENA's electoral institutions given the resilience of its autocratic structures to subsequent waves of democratization. Many scholars in the West continue to embrace the idea of the "exceptionalism" of the region and reluctant to accept that what is really exceptional about MENA is the dearth of comparative quantitative data and large-N studies which have hindered scholars' ability to connect with wider themes in legislative politics and draw meaningful generalizations. On the other hand, extant literature has largely focused on authoritarian legislatures as channels to distribute rents and provide access to state resources (Lust 2006, 2009; Blaydes 2011; Lindberg 2009; Corstange 2016), circulate elites to strengthen existing regimes (Brownlee 2007; Albrecht 2008; Sater 2007, 2012; Brown 2012) or as tools used by the opposition to gain more visibility and highlight the regime's missteps (Loidolt and Mecham 2016) which has drawn scholars' attention away from analyzing the outcomes of these legislatures.

Scholars have also avoided the study of MENA's legislative politics for logistical reasons. To mention a few, fieldwork can generally be unpredictable and dangerous; and safety remains a major concern (Clark and Cavatorta 2018). Furthermore, access to governmental sites, especially to foreign researchers, can be rather challenging – especially given the general mistrust in foreign researchers and entities. There are other challenges such as funding

issues, language skills, and adequate training which are not unique to the MENA region. The end result is a serious dearth of rigorous, comparative quantitative data and scholars' over-reliance on qualitative data sources and single country studies which, again, impeded MENA scholars' ability to contribute to ongoing debates within the legislative politics literature.

What is the GEMEP Dataset?

The Governance and Elections in the Middle East Project (GEMEP) aims to provide scholars and policymakers with an original database on legislative politics to better understand the role of electoral institutions by analyzing deputies' legislative behavior and policy stances across the region. Since 2013, I have led an outstanding team of multi-lingual researchers and students to gather and code legislative activities, mainly draft bills, parliamentary questions and roll call votes (if applicable); committee assignments and leadership; district-level characteristics; and variations in electoral laws both within and across countries. The dataset also has a wealth of legislator-level data: political and ideological affiliation; gender; educational and professional background; number of votes acquired; quota status; tribal/ethnic affiliation; and political experience (i.e., re-election).

Specifically, we have systematically coded and translated tens of thousands of parliamentary questions and bills according to the Comparative Agenda Project (CAP) coding scheme to facilitate comparability with other regions.¹⁷ These quantitative data sources are also supplemented with qualitative data, mainly interviews with legislators as well as analyses of primary sources and legislative documents (i.e., electoral laws, upper/lower chamber by-laws, political parties' programs and manifestos).

Thanks to the GEMEP dataset, researchers are able, for the first time, to shed important light on legislators' policy stances and preferences. For instance, Shalaby and Aydogan (2018) find significant issue congruence between MPs and the public in Morocco's post-Arab uprising legislature (2011–2016). Comparing legislators' queries with public opinion data demonstrates significant issue congruence between party members and citizens, even when compared to other democratic systems. Shalaby (2017) provides evidence that opposition groups, mainly Islamists, tend to pose more sensitive questions to the ruling elites in Morocco, Jordan and Kuwait's legislatures. Shalaby (2016) highlights the wide variations in female legislators' policy priorities and preferences in three monarchies: Jordan, Kuwait and Morocco.

Furthermore, using original legislator-level, committee membership and leadership data, we were able to investigate the dynamics of female membership in legislative committees in five Arab countries (Shalaby and Elimam 2019). We find that women tend to be marginalized from influential committees and sidelined to social issues and

¹⁷For more details on the Comparative Agenda Project see policyagendas.org.

other 'burden' committees. In addition, our recent research on female legislators' vertical and horizontal segregation in Jordan's lower chamber indicates the presence of distinct forms of discrimination against female deputies (Shalaby and Elimam, Forthcoming). Using time-series data expanding for almost two decades, we show that affirmative action policies have been effective in alleviating inequalities and transforming horizontal power relations (i.e., membership in influential committees) within legislatures, yet, a wide gap still exists when it comes to altering and re-negotiating vertical power structures (i.e., committee leadership).

Conducting Research on MENA's Legislatures: Actual Challenges and Opportunities

There are many challenges that may face researchers studying MENA's legislatures, some of which I continue to struggle with. First, the opacity of the rules and volatility of electoral laws and procedures pose a significant obstacle toward understanding the role and composition of these legislative bodies. In Jordan, for instance, the past three lower chamber elections were conducted under three different electoral laws and a fourth one is being formulated for the upcoming 2020 election. Furthermore, it is pretty simplistic to study these legislatures as monolithic entities and/or as simply being divided along pro and anti-regime lines. Political affiliations within these legislatures tend to be pretty fluid with blurry party/ideological divisions. Relatively, identifying the opposition actors in MENA's electoral landscape can be a rather daunting process and requires deep knowledge of the context and structure of existing (and historical) power relations. It is not immediately clear who is being co-opted by the regime and who is the genuine opposition pushing for substantive reforms. Add to this, conducting interviews with outspoken opposition figures can be pretty risky.

To conclude, the Arab uprisings have paved the way for increased scholarly attention to the region. Some regimes have loosened restrictions on fieldwork and facilitated access to unexplored academic terrains. Today, conducting fieldwork on legislative assemblies is much more feasible than most researchers abroad might think – with the exception of countries in conflict, mainly Syria, Libya, Iraq and Yemen. Furthermore, affiliation with local research/academic institutions and establishing research collaborations with country experts are formidable assets for facilitating fieldwork and building local networks. However, graduate programs have a major role to play on promoting scholarship on legislative politics in the region. Departments should dedicate more time and resources to provide specialized training for students interested to study MENA's legislative politics. Programs should also put much emphasis on adequate language training and deeper understanding of historical and cultural contexts that continue to shape the region's political landscape. Recently, excellent work has been published on conducting ethical, original and safe research, however, much more is still needed when it comes

to the study of the evolving electoral institutions and their outcomes across the region.¹⁸

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¹⁸See for example Clark and Cavatorta (2018); Grimm et al. (Forthcoming); and the most recent MENA Politics Newsletter: apsame-na.org.files.wordpress.com

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BOOK REVIEWS

***The Whips: Building Party Coalitions in Congress* by C. Lawrence Evans**

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Larry Evans' *The Whips* is a remarkable—and exhaustive—treatment of the legislative whip systems in the U.S. Congress—both today and over the broader postwar period. No surprise that *The Whips* earned the Fenno Prize in 2019: The award honors work that is theoretically and empirically strong, and is dedicated to encouraging scholars to pursue new avenues of research and unexplored questions about the nature of legislative politics. In the tradition of Dick Fenno's work, *The Whips* amply exceeds those aims.

Substantively, the book is of course first and foremost about the political mechanics of the congressional whip system—offering historical, contemporary, and bicameral perspectives on how party whip systems develop and with what consequence. In practice, Evans makes clear, the whip system is actually four different systems, since each of the two chambers' parties developed whip systems in parallel and at times in competition with one another. We learn quite a bit about the structure of the whip systems and their evolution over time—particularly in light of changing partisan and electoral forces that pervade the House and Senate, and their interactions with other congressional developments. And most importantly in terms of the book's substantive learning, Evans makes plain that whip systems offer an institutional tool for party leaders seeking to build majority coalitions or to block opponents from building their own.

But *The Whips* is more than the institutional story of how the whip systems, how they have developed and what impact they might have on coalition building. As importantly, Evans offers us a theory of legislative politics that stands in stark contrast to prevailing models. In much contemporary legislative scholarship, we think most often in terms of spatial logic: Our theoretical and empirical focus is on preferences, which are held to be fixed and exogenous to the legislative game. Knowing something about the policy views that the players bring to the table—coupled with prevailing rules of the game and current policy—allows us to determine potential range of outcomes under the spatial logic, broadly construed.

The Whips, instead, urges us to study positions, not preferences. Why? Because positions are the building blocks of party cohesion, party coalition, and party politics—all of which are the targets of the whip systems. Evans offers us what he calls a behavioral logic: a theoretical perspective

that places lawmakers' goals and their audiences back home at the center of their decision calculus on the chamber floor. That's the dynamic where party leaders use their whip systems to develop party positions and attempt to secure them in policy outcomes.

Why is that so novel? Because the spatial logic underpinning many contemporary studies of parties and leadership in Congress rely on the assumption that lawmakers come to the legislative game with fixed preferences. Instead, Evans argues—and attempts to show—that lawmakers reach positions by attempting to balance pressures from constituency audiences back home against the demands of party leaders and fluid policy alternatives. By focusing on the whip systems, we learn something new about the possibilities of party leadership influence on the formation of lawmakers' positions, but also about the conditions for such influence and the limits of such party leadership power. Rather than testing for party effects on roll call votes after the formation of legislator "preferences," *The Whips* encourages us to examine the impact of party on the formation of member positions and to look for party effects in the right places. And whipped votes are not, Evans reminds us, a random sample of floor votes, but instead the portion of the agenda on which the majority's program is at risk.

The Whips stands out not just because of its theoretical contribution, but on account of the empirical evidence that Evans brings to bear in an effort to test for the ways in which whip dynamics shape the formulation of lawmakers' positions and thus the building of majority coalitions. The archival work here is, in a word, stunning. Evans draws from more than a dozen different archival collections, reaching across a number of dimensions. He locates archives of House Democrats in 1955, all the way to House and Senate GOP in 2002. Geographically, Evans' reach extends from Pullman, Washington, to Norman and Stillwater, Oklahoma, as well as to Michigan and Louisiana. All told, Evans exploits over 650 whip counts and 150,000 member-level position data as established on hundreds of the most significant bills in the postwar Congress. *The Whips* is a model of exploiting archival records to develop systematic empirical data with which to test our conjectures about the dynamics of lawmaking. The downside of course is the heavy investment of time and resources necessary to mine archival collections; the upsides are amply visible in this landmark contribution to legislative studies.

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***Party Institutionalization and Women's Representation in Democratic Brazil* by Kristin N. Wylie**

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With Democratic voters again grappling with the perceived "electability" of a female nominee for the presidency and the number of Republican women in Congress plummeting, there has been renewed discussion about how best to shrink America's gender gap in elected officeholding. While some argue that grassroots mobilization and changes in public opinion are necessary to increase women's descriptive representation, others urge the adoption of new electoral rules to counteract the myriad of obstacles female candidates face in their recruitment and campaigns. But would these changes make a difference?

In *Party Institutionalization and Women's Representation in Democratic Brazil*, Kristin Wylie suggests the answer is no. Her carefully researched account of gender disparities in elected officeholding in Brazil suggests that reversing women's chronic underrepresentation is not straightforward, even under the best of circumstances. Indeed, Wylie's work should give Americans looking for answers beyond their own borders reason to doubt the efficacy of potential reforms, or at least to be less sanguine that there are easy fixes. Despite boasting the strongest women's movement in the region, increasingly progressive public opinion, and a long-standing gender quota for proportional elections, Brazil lags behind other Latin American countries in achieving gender parity in officeholding.

Rejecting the view that some combination of voter bias, electoral-system characteristics, and repressive party ideologies accounts for Brazil's sizable gender gap, Wylie points instead to the weak institutionalization of the country's political parties. These "inchoate parties foster a climate in which decisions on leadership and candidate selection lack transparency" (p. 29). This, in turn, reduces parties' compliance with Brazil's gender quota, dissuades aspiring female candidates from running, hampers their capacity to reach party leadership positions, and encourages "at best, gender negligent" decision-making – and, at worst, "machista bias" (p. 30). To be sure, she acknowledges, not all parties are the same. While there is little variation in the number of women who run for office across Brazil's different political parties, women in leftist parties are more likely than their peers to have amassed the necessary organizing experience to navigate and ultimately move up the party hierarchy (p. 54). In short, she argues that "women's representation is most effectively enhanced when a critical mass of women ascend to the leadership of an institutionalized party" (p. 197).

To support this central claim – that is, that Brazil's "amorphous" parties are to blame for the country's "crises of representation" – Wylie presents a remarkable array of original quantitative and qualitative data (p. 28). The book's empirical chapters thoughtfully combine interviews, descrip-

tive analyses of women's legislative representation, multivariate analyses of candidate vote share, and public opinion data to show that existing theories are insufficient to explain the gender gap, and to demonstrate why a party's organizational capacity and political will are so crucial to achieving greater parity in women's officeholding. While one might reasonably quibble that there is limited variation in party institutionalization in the cases she explores, and that a cross-national analysis might be useful, the book is persuasive and impressive in scope.

Moreover, Wylie's account dovetails nicely with recent scholarship on women's officeholding in the United States. In both Brazil and the U.S., politically ambitious women are deterred from running (or even contemplating a bid) because the rules of the game are unpredictable and difficult to navigate without guidance from above. Moreover, party networks in both countries are too often "old boys clubs" that fail to actively recruit women to run. Instead, they rely on a system of self-nomination that nearly always yields a disproportionate number of male candidates, who are more likely than their equally experienced female counterparts to deem themselves qualified to hold office. This serves only to perpetuate the gender gap.

If political science research on institutions has one lesson to teach, it's that institutional change tends to be hard, slow, and piecemeal. But Wylie's book does have good news for those who seek greater parity in women's political participation and representation. If the problem is institutional, the solution can be too. Activists need not wait for the tides of public opinion to change, nor must they devote single-minded energy to reforming electoral rules. In both long-established and third-wave democracies, party organizations can be lobbied to recruit, support, and promote the aspiring (and inspiring) women who wish to devote their lives to public service. In this way, *Party Institutionalization and Women's Representation in Democratic Brazil* can be read as a manual or blueprint for continued – but more effective – mobilization.

Reference

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Poor Representation: Congress and the Politics of Poverty in the United States

by Kristina Miler

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In *Poor Representation: Congress and the Politics of Poverty in the United States*, Kristina Miler examines whether the U.S. Congress is effective in representing the interests of poor Americans. Contrary to conventional wisdom that poverty issues are largely ignored because the poor are politically weak and invisible, Miler argues that both of these assumptions are false. Instead she finds that Congress, presidents and both the Democratic and Republican political parties are aware of the interests of poor people. To assess presidential attention to poverty issues, Miler examines how often presidents mention poverty related issues in the State of the Union address from 1960-2014. She finds presidents regardless of party affiliation frequently mention the poor, with Democratic presidents mentioning poverty slightly more than Republican presidents. Similarly, to assess party attention to poor people's issues, she examines the policy platform of the Democratic and Republican Party. She also finds that the major political parties often mention poverty or the poor. Surprisingly, she finds that the poor are mentioned more often than politically visible groups such as the middle class, seniors and veterans. Miler also finds poor people have more political power than previously expected because they comprise a sizable share of legislators' districts and can affect legislators' electoral success.

Having established that poverty related issues are visible to political parties and presidents and that the poor are not electorally weak, she expects Congress to represent the poor collectively and individually. First, she uses hearings, bill sponsorship and bill passage data from the Policy Agendas Project from 1960 through 2014 to assess how well Congress addresses poverty issues. Contrary to the high level of attention devoted to poverty issues by political parties and presidents, Miler finds that Congress as a whole devotes a smaller proportion of its time holding hearings, introducing bills, and passing legislation on issues that affect poor people.

Next, Miler extends the analysis to examine how well Congress responds to the changes in the macro-level and district level poverty rates. She finds the number of poor in the U.S. does not affect how much attention Congress devotes to poverty issues in hearings, bill introductions, or bill passage rates. She disaggregates the national data to determine if congressional level responsiveness may be affected more by district level poverty than national poverty rates and finds that district level poverty does not affect the passage of poverty bills or hearings held on these issues. Moreover, Miler finds that lack of responsiveness of Congress to poverty issues does not vary by party control of the Congress. Surprisingly, Democrats the party usually associated with being most responsive to the issues of the

poor are no more likely to pay attention to poverty issues than Republicans. This confirms Bartels (2008) finding that Democrats and Republicans are unlikely to be responsive to interests of low-income individuals.

Miler shifts her analysis from a collective analysis of congressional representation of the interests of the poor to an examination of how well individual legislators represent the interests of poor people. She examines bill sponsorship activity on poverty related issues for all US House members from the 98th Congress (1983-1984) through the 113th Congress (2013-2014) and their voting support for poverty legislation from 110th Congress (2007-2008) through 113th (2013-2014). She finds the legislators that lived in districts with high rates of poverty did not sponsor or vote for poverty related bills more than other members of Congress. Although Miler paints a bleak picture for representation of the poor at both the collective and individual level, she finds that through surrogates the poor can receive some measure representation on poverty related issues. Specifically, Old-School Democrats, Democratic Women, Indigo Republicans and Urban Black Democrats are consistent champions of the poor. These legislators are likely to sponsor and vote favorably on poverty related legislation.

Miler's work moves us further along to understanding how and why underrepresented groups receive representation in Congress. This book should be a recommended reading for scholars of congressional politics and political representation.

Reference

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The Congressional Endgame: Inter-chamber Bargaining and Compromise by Josh Ryan

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Bicameralism is a barrier to lawmaking. The requirement that two independent chambers pass legislation in identical form not only lengthens the legislative process but it also blocks many bills from ever becoming law. These features are especially evident at the moment in which the House and Senate are controlled by different political parties. Many pieces of legislation pass within a single chamber only to never reach a vote in the other. However, even when unified the chambers' dissimilar rules structures and other features leads to tension over legislative content. Yet despite these barriers, Congress often does produce legislation by coming

to an agreement between the House and Senate. Josh Ryan's book, *The Congressional Endgame*, asks how the chambers of the U.S. Congress bargain with each other over the final version of a bill as well as how that bargaining ultimately shapes the legislation at hand.

Perhaps the best feature of the book is that it takes bicameralism seriously and structures the investigations accordingly. As the author notes, the necessity to negotiate identical bill text between dissimilar chambers will "fundamentally and significantly alter policy out-comes" but that much of our empirical or formal work on congressional action does "not adequately take into account the central role of bicameralism in lawmaking or the implications thereof" (p. 3). Overall, the book does a good job of exploring a narrow but important issue for understanding how the U.S. Congress legislates.

The book discusses the two general – but not mutually exclusive – pathways through which the chambers can come to an agreement on legislation in the event that they do not simply pass identical forms from the start. First, the leaders of both chambers may delegate the task of reaching agreement to a conference committee containing members of both chambers and charged with creating bill text that will receive an up or down vote without amendment in both chambers. Second, the chambers may engage in amendment trading, whereby each chamber sequentially passes amended versions of the bill until a version exists that can pass both chambers. The amendment trading option has previously been called "ping ponging" on account of the back and forth interplay between the chambers. Both of these options are explored in detail with respect to their influence on bill failure and policy changes.

While competing explanations of how chambers do and do not resolve their differences are explored, bargaining is the theoretical anchor of the book. The third chapter works to create a framework for resolving interchamber disputes using a non-cooperative bargaining model. The author theorizes about lawmaking explicitly from the point of view that we must consider the benefits offered to a coalition not only through passage but also the rejection of a deal seen as too far away from an ideal point. Failure is therefore a viable option even when the chambers are mostly in agreement.

What do these explorations find? Overall, both conferencing and amendment trading tend to be highly successful in overcoming interchamber divisions and leading to final passage in both the House and the Senate. While it may be difficult to get the chambers to agree that policy should shift, once they do so they have effective mechanisms with which to reach agreement on exact legislative language. Perhaps most importantly, both mechanisms, conferences and amendment trading, tend to moderate the legislation that is passed as compared to the bill in its original form. Furthermore, in successful bargaining, neither side tends to get everything that it wants.

The book is pitched toward a scholarly audience and would be of interest for a graduate seminar on the U.S. Congress. The strength of the book lies in its focused ex-

ploration of the very last step in the legislative process. This allows it to spend time on many under-explored topics. In particular, the book takes a serious look at amendment trading as a substitute for the more traditional conferences. As the author notes, previous treatments of amendment trading have tended to be more anecdotal and idiosyncratic than theoretical and empirical. An exploration of this mechanism of reaching agreement is long overdue.

Awkwardly, this book about interchamber compromises comes to us at a point in which we have historically low numbers of conference committees being used. As the author notes, this decline has nothing to do with the effectiveness of the mechanism itself so much as it has to do with the inability of Congress to pass legislation more generally. The need to resolve interchamber differences only arises once each chamber is able to pass its own version of a bill. In an era where the House and Senate have become known for their collective inaction, this book reminds us of the pathways through which Congress can work to reach agreement and pass laws.

Reference

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Editors

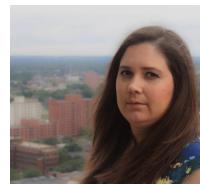
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Tiffany D. Barnes is an Associate Professor of Political Science at University of Kentucky and affiliated faculty with the Gender and Women's Studies Program and Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies Program. Her research is in the field of Comparative Politics with an emphasis on comparative political institutions—namely legislatures, Latin America, and gender and politics. She employs both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to examine how institutions shape the political behavior of citizens and elites. Her book, *Gendering Legislative Behavior: Institutional Constraints and Collaboration*, (Cambridge University Press 2016) won the Alan Rosenthal Prize from the Legislative Studies Section of the American Political Science Association in 2017. Her other peer-reviewed work appears in journals such as the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Politics & Gender*, and *Election Law Journal*. In 2018 she was awarded the Emerging Scholar Award from the Legislative Studies Section of the American Political Science Association and in 2017 she was honored with the Early Career Award from the Midwest Women's Caucus for Political Science.



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Sarah Binder is a Professor of Political Science at George Washington University and a senior fellow at The Brookings Institution, specializing in Congress and legislative politics. She is most recently the co-author with Mark Spindel of *The Myth of Independence: How Congress Governs the Federal Reserve* (Princeton University Press 2017). Her earlier books include *Minority Rights, Majority Rule: Partisanship and the Development of Congress* (Cambridge University Press 1997); with Steven S. Smith, *Politics or Principle? Filibustering in the United States Senate* (Brookings Institution Press 1997); *Stalemate: Causes and Consequences of Legislative Gridlock* (Brookings Institution Press, 2003) and with Forrest Maltzman, *Advice and Dissent: The Struggle to Shape the Federal Judiciary* (Brookings Institution Press 2009). Her work has also appeared in the *American Political Science Review*, *Perspectives on Politics*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, and elsewhere. Binder is also a Political Science editor at *The Washington Post's Monkey Cage* blog and a former co-editor of *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. Binder received her B.A. from Yale University in 1986 and her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Minnesota in 1995. She joined Brookings in 1995 and George Washington University in 1999. Binder was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2015.



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Marwa M. Shalaby is an Assistant Professor in the departments of Political Science and Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has been awarded the prestigious Anna Julia Cooper Fellowship for the academic year 2019-20. Shalaby's research areas are comparative politics, democratization and research methodology. Her work focuses primarily on the intersection of the politics of authoritarianism, and women in politics. Her research also explicates the micro-dynamics and outcomes of electoral institutions under competitive authoritarianism, mainly in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Over the past years, Shalaby has conducted original data collection and extensive fieldwork across the region. She is the PI for the Governance and Elections in the Middle East Project (GEMEP)—the most comprehensive and only dataset that offers invaluable insights into the micro-dynamics of MENA's electoral institutions. Her work was supported by Rice University's Endowment on Women's Rights in the Middle East, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, New York University Abu Dhabi Institute (NYUADI), Rice University's Boniuk Institute, the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy (AUB), and the Hicham Alaoui Foundation. Shalaby's work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Comparative Politics*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Parliamentary Affairs*, *the Middle East Journal* and *Oxford Bibliographies in Political Science*. She has co-authored an edited volume, *The Evolving Role of Women after the Arab Spring*, with Valentine Moghadam (2016). Shalaby is currently working on a book manuscript exploring the dynamics of women's political representation in Arab parliaments.



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Jielu Yao is a Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science at the University of Iowa. In 2018-2019, she was also a pre-doctoral research fellow at Wesleyan University. Her research sits at the intersection of political methodology and American politics. More specifically, she uses deep learning to understand the descriptive and substantive representation of women and minorities. Although she has used text analysis to answer various questions related to these topics, her work mostly uses image and video analysis, especially as it pertains to online political advertisements. Her dissertation employs these techniques to examine the rhetoric (both visual and textual) used by congressional candidates in their political advertisements, with a particular focus on ads speaking about the criminal justice system. This work recently received the Seashore Dissertation Fellowship at the University of Iowa and will be completed in May 2020.

