

The Fracturing of the American Corporate Elite. By Mark S. Mizruchi. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013. Pp. xiv+363. \$35.00.

Joseph Galaskiewicz
University of Arizona

The Fracturing of the American Corporate Elite argues that the role of corporate elites in American politics has changed. Since the 1980s the collective leadership of the very largest corporations has become more fragmented and conservative and less prone to pursue policies as a group that benefit the public good. Corporate America has not lost its clout; rather its agendas have become more self-serving. Mark S. Mizruchi contrasts this with the post–World War II corporate elite, which had a broader vision, was more pragmatic, and pushed policy agendas that benefited not only corporate America but the entire country.

Mizruchi does not argue that the old elite was morally superior or another example of the “greatest generation” (p. 286). Rather, from the end of the war until the late 1960s, business operated in a much more balanced institutional context and reacted accordingly. The federal government enjoyed considerable legitimacy, and unions were powerful. Business’s “enlightened” perspective was the product of this balance of power among institutions. It was also a period of relative stability and economic growth that enabled corporate managers to focus on long-term goals.

Chapter 2 presents a history of the corporate elite, tracing its roots to the rise of industrial capitalism (1870 to 1900) and describing its evolution into a more moderate, pragmatic force from the 1920s to the 1940s. Mizruchi presents useful descriptions of the National Civic Federation (NCF) and the Committee for Economic Development (CED). Chapter 3 describes how after the war the government’s greater role in the economy became legitimated, and how it worked effectively with business moderates on economic and social policies, especially through the CED. Chapter 4 focuses on the tense but constructive relationship between large corporations and large labor unions during and after World War II. The corporate elite was cool toward unions, and factions in the business community were hostile. Still labor’s power limited business’s options, and corporations had to accommodate labor. Chapter 5 examines the role that banks played in sharing information, shaping a consensus in the business community, and looking out for the entire economy. Being central in networks populated by the corporate elite meant that banks could act as mediators to resolve differences within the business community and formulate unified positions on issues. Corporate self-interest just meant something different back then.

Historical events in the 1970s changed the context. Chapter 6 examines how in the 1970s a segment of the corporate elite perceived that American capitalism was under threat by forces at home (regulatory agencies and public opinion) and abroad (foreign competition) and with the government weakened by ineffectiveness (the Vietnam war) and scandal (Watergate) and prolonged periods of inflation and unemployment, this segment decided to

mobilize an all-out offensive against government and unions. Mizruchi describes the actions of newly empowered conservative think tanks, foundations, and business lobbyists. Chapter 7 describes how once it became clear in the early 1980s that business had prevailed, it also became clear that "organized collective action within the business community was no longer necessary" (p. 7) and the elite fragmented. This effect was exacerbated by the wave of acquisitions in the wake of deregulation that turned CEOs' attention inward. Also, finding consensus became more difficult as commercial bank boards were no longer pivotal in bringing together diverse members of the corporate elite.

The weakness of the corporate elite is illustrated in chapter 8, where Mizruchi examines the elite's role in two policy debates during the 1990s and 2000s: health care and tax policy. He describes the difficulty of getting consensus among large firms, and how this resulted in the corporate elite failing to take positions that would benefit business and society as a whole. Finally, chapter 9 explores the implications of these changes for American democratic institutions. He ends with a provocative question: without mass-based progressive political movements to keep authorities accountable, are responsible, pragmatic corporate elites what democracies need most? You can read the chapter for his answer.

Overall, the book is well researched and readable and will contribute greatly to the literature on business and society. However, a number of issues need more attention. First, I would like to see a longitudinal structural analysis of the ties among inner-circle Fortune 1,000 executives. I want to see the "fracturing" that he described. The data presented in the book were mostly qualitative, and he used cases to illustrate his arguments. Doing a longitudinal network analysis along with the qualitative analysis would have great value.

Second, we need a comparative perspective. If certain historical events did not occur, for example, Watergate, Japan's and Germany's resurgence, Reagan's election, or the energy crisis, would the elite have remained intact and moderate? In other words, is this another example of American exceptionalism, or are there forces inherent in all postindustrial societies that lead to a fracturing of the corporate elite over time? The author acknowledges the need for comparative work in the last chapter.

Third, how much does the fracturing of the corporate elite contribute to political gridlock today? Mizruchi argues that without a pragmatic, unified corporate elite, there was no one who could reign in "destructive sectors of the American polity" (p. 9). Most agree that big business no longer dominates the Republican Party and thus is unable to discipline its members. But the right wing of the business community is not the only source of extremism in American politics. While Mizruchi offers an interesting hypothesis to explain a very unfortunate turn of events, I await others to test it.

Fourth, I suspect that today, if companies are working for the "public interest," it may be in narrower niches and through cross sector partnerships given their apolitical orientation. Countervailing forces have moved

companies to pay more attention to the environment, workers' rights and safety (especially abroad), and consumer health and privacy. In the last chapter Mizruchi describes these efforts as more private and piecemeal than before, but we need more research on these initiatives before we can draw conclusions about the current cadre of corporate leaders.

Good Green Jobs in a Global Economy: Making and Keeping New Industries in the United States. By David J. Hess. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012. Pp. x+293. \$30.00.

Magnus Boström
Örebro University

The reader might think David J. Hess's book is about "green jobs" in a U.S. context. It is. Yet, *Good Green Jobs in a Global Economy: Making and Keeping New Industries in the United States* is about several things. The subtitle is indicative of the key thesis of the book, which is a historical argument. Hess argues that politics and policies on green energy transitions in the United States are intertwined with the relative decline of the United States in the global economy. The book investigates political struggles around green energy policy reform in the United States with an empirical focus on three technological systems: electrical systems, the heating and cooling of buildings, and transportation.

Why "good green jobs"? The reader will notice that this frame has been important for the forming of "green transition coalitions" and for the formation of a new, more defensive ideology in relation to trade liberalization. Hess uses a comparative case study approach, with mostly qualitative data and systematic comparisons of policy fields and across states and local governments. Country comparisons are left for future studies, although the United States is analyzed in relation to the world economy. Moreover, the American perception and fear of quickly industrializing and mercantilist China appear as a key theme.

Hess does not define green energy—neither what it is or is not nor what it should or should not be. Rather, he is interested in the framing of green energy (and a variety of related terms) among coalitions in the policy field. "Green transition coalitions" are formed under the frame "green jobs" and include labor, environmental, localist, antipoverty, and faith-based organizations, and it extends to large- and small-scale clean energy businesses, even the military. While historically there is an uneasy relation between the labor and environmental movement ("job" vs. "environment"), the green jobs frame connects with new incentives to protect domestic industries, which paves the way for a rapprochement among the groups.

Hess analyzes the green industrial policy at the federal level, particularly during the Obama administration (the 111th Congress is reviewed in one chapter) and at the state, regional, and local levels (three other chapters). His analysis reveals little progress at the federal level, despite efforts made