

dominance. Likewise, the numbers and types of events affecting the length of service and frequency of ministerial turnover serve as further evidence of the principles' control over designated emissaries. However, the uniformity of these findings suggests that the theoretical frame precludes consideration of variations in the power structure within cabinets. Examining the ebb and flow of power would be important, for instance, to an explanation of the majority of resignation cases, those involving reshuffles and retirements, since they usually involve a prime minister's attempt to recharge a government's political capacity. But finding an answer would require going outside the principle-agent analysis and drawing on theories of power capable of explicating how the selection of different individuals contributed ideas, skills, and energy that, in changing the power dynamics within the executive, improved its ability to govern. At base, then, is the question about the validity of the use of foundational approaches prefiguring conceptual and empirical conclusions.

Finally, the effect of this theoretical approach is to narrow the research focus to cabinet composition and, in consequence, to overlook important debates about the role of the core executive in the changing character of state power in postwar Britain. One of these controversies concerns the effects of forces shifting power downward through regional autonomy and privatization, upward toward the European Union and international organizations, and laterally to units such as an independent central bank. Another scholarly dispute bypassed concerns the changing power structure within the core executive itself. This considers the variety of methods being developed for unifying and coordinating the center's capacity to command, strategies such as setting targets, recentralizing resources, and controlling the details of policy planning and institutional multiplication. A third discussion overlooked involves the literatures that identify how governing formulas associated with distinct policy eras affect prime ministerial control. Postwar collectivism provided for the consolidation of strong party government; the crisis of governance from the late 1960s to the late 1970s undermined party discipline and prime ministerial control; and the triumph of Thatcherism after 1979 established a strong and personalized premiership, while utilizing market practices as indirect modes of control within as well as outside of the state apparatus. One would expect these very different contexts to affect power relationships between prime ministers and cabinets in different ways.

As the first book to give a systematic picture of the British cabinet during the period from the administration of Clement Attlee to Blair, *Accounting for Ministers* merits prominence. It goes beyond biographical and constitutional studies by drawing on principle-agent analysis and mining a new body of aggregate data, identifying objective factors affecting career patterns. It also raises a number of significant analytical questions. It is to be hoped that this

study of the British cabinet will inspire similar studies of the core executive in a variety of other parliamentary democracies.

Organizing Democratic Choice: Party Representation Over Time. By Ian Budge, Hans Keman, Michael D McDonald, and Paul Pennings. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. 336p. \$99.00.

The Strain of Representation: How Parties Represent Diverse Voters in Western and Eastern Europe. By Robert Rohrschneider and Stephen Whitefield. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. 224p. \$85.00.
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— Jonathan Polk, *University of Gothenburg*

These books examine the contemporary connections between political parties and citizens in many European and other countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), each emphasizing the enduring importance and success of parties as organizations of representative democracy. The books rely on different data sources to measure the policy stances and actions of political parties. *The Strain of Representation* uses data from a 2007–8 expert survey developed by the authors, whereas *Organizing Democratic Choice* analyzes data from the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP). The expert survey data are cross-sectional, whereas the CMP time series extends across the postwar era, leading these works to highlight different dimensions of representative democracy. Even at points of potential disagreement, the books complement each other well, and reading them in tandem, or independently, enhances our understanding of party politics.

Both books draw attention to important aspects of representation. Robert Rohrschneider and Stephen Whitefield focus on differentiation in the organizational characteristics of political parties and the separation of independent from partisan citizens. Ian Budge and his coauthors insist that scholars take time seriously, cease conflating policy targets with enacted policy, and consider the impact of factional strife within political parties when building and testing theories of representative democracy.

Rohrschneider and Whitefield speak to this last point in their focus on the impact of increased competition for independent voters in an age of declining partisanship across 24 European Union countries. They explore whether political parties offer differing policy choices on salient issues and bundle diverse issues into coherent programs, and if the positions of parties are congruent with those of voters. There is reason to believe that parties in both the “older” and “newer” EU states face obstacles in meeting these requirements of the party representational model of democracy, but for different reasons. In Western Europe, dealignment—seen in changing class structures and

the increased importance of noneconomic, cultural politics—complicates representation for parties largely organized around economic and class-based competition. In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), postcommunist transitions brought multiparty politics and market-based economies to countries with limited experience of either, leading many to question the applicability of the party-representational model in the region.

Bringing together Eastern and Western Europe in an overarching analysis is a major contribution of *The Strains of Representation*. Although political parties are under increasing representational strain, Rohrschneider and Whitefield find that they meet the requirements relating to choices, programs, and congruence to a surprisingly similar degree in Eastern and Western Europe. Yet they also recognize the significant differences in the historical legacies and contemporary trajectories of the two regions, and identify separate mechanisms through which parties in Europe contribute to representative democracy. Strain in the West stems from the need of mainstream parties to craft appeals for partisans and independents, as well as greater dimensional complexity. This strain is overcome by the ability of political parties' mass organizations to bring parties and voters into more congruence with one another. The representational success of parties within CEE is attributed to a simpler, unidimensional space, which simplifies position taking and coherent party programs, as well as party-voter congruence.

Organizing Democratic Choice is perhaps even more ambitious. Ian Budge and coauthors assert that “[w]hat we present therefore is nothing less than the fully specified and validated core theory of democracy” (p. 286). These authors repeatedly stress the importance of time for an adequate understanding of the representative process, contrasting sharply with the cross-sectional approach of *The Strain of Representation*. They claim that long-term analysis is essential for uncovering the high correspondence between elector-voter preferences, party positioning, and implemented policy. They argue for representation as a dynamic process, subject to temporary incongruence after individual elections, but trending toward congruence and unbiased representation over time. To this end, the authors leverage a great strength of the CMP data set in their analyses of 16 OECD democracies, its temporal range.

Like Rohrschneider and Whitefield, Budge and coauthors identify three items as necessary for good representation: that parties take divergent policy positions that bracket citizens, that there is alternation in government between parties, and that the rate of enacted policy change is slow. Although both books have an interest in party-citizen congruence, and the concern with policy divergence is shared between them, the latter two criteria of *Organizing Democratic Choice*—dependent as they are on time—necessarily differ from those highlighted in *The Strain of Representation*. Budge and coauthors find that when their three criteria are met, enacted policy zigzags around,

sometimes crosses over, but ultimately remains close to the central tendency of citizen preferences, bringing about congruence and unbiased representation.

Organizing Democratic Choice carefully differentiates between electors and voters. The preferences of the former represent the citizenry as a whole and are unconstrained by the choices available from parties contesting an election, whereas the preferences of voters are constrained by what parties offer and therefore become endogenous to the process of elections. In short, parties structure choices. This makes clear the importance that parties take divergent policy stances and thereby offer citizens meaningful choices, a concern shared by both books.

Early in this book, the authors take on the convergence thesis, arguing that factional strife within parties over the best strategy for electoral success generates alternation in policy positions. Over time, this variability in the positioning of parties—bound to a large extent by their ideological history—limits long-term convergence toward the ideological center. The authors also note that the distinction between policy goals and enacted policy also limits convergence or excessive divergence. Policy inertia from previous governments combines with situational and structural influences to slow the ability of a government to implement its policy targets. If a new government aims to move to the middle, there are always lags in accomplishing it.

Rohrschneider and Whitefield see the strain originating from the competing pulls of partisans and independents as a threat to representation, but Budge and coauthors are likely to view this in a more positive light. Given their understanding of factional strife within a party as a key to delivering oscillating policy goals, the latter believe that leadership struggles between taking policy stances that correspond more closely to the partisan base or adopting those that are more attractive to independents enhance dynamic representation. But the qualitative differences between partisans and independents that *The Strain of Representation* highlights, both as sources of electoral support and as constitutive elements of parties, could destabilize the ebbs and flows in factional power that Budge and coauthors find important.

The lack of a temporal component in *The Strain of Representation* is understandable but lamentable, because the concepts it brings to the foreground—the independent/partisan distinction and the organizational structure of parties—generate questions that call for analysis over time. As opposed to the more partisan, class-based electorates of the 1950–60s, independents—who are more ideologically centrist than partisans—currently make up a voting bloc almost as large as that of partisans. What is more, the size of the independent bloc is expected to grow. While major center-left and center-right parties are currently ideologically closer to their partisans than independents, if the balance of power begins to favor appeals to independents at the expense of partisans, lasting changes in the positioning and organizational

structure of parties could be produced. An increase in the importance of independents for electoral success would likely empower the faction within a party that pushes for ideological moderation, with an accompanying shift to the middle in policy targets expressed in the manifesto. Over time, this strengthening of moderate factions could jeopardize the shifts of power within major parties identified by Budge and coauthors as the factor that allows parties to offer divergent positions that bracket, but also remain close to, the preferences of voters and citizens.

It is further unclear what ramifications declining partisanship would have on the elaborate organizational structures that currently allow the parties of Western Europe to manage representational strain. As Rohrschneider and Whitefield point out (pp. 120–21), party organizations change slowly, and perhaps parties will be able to adjust their mass organizations in response to the rise of independents, as the authors suspect. Mass organizational structures, however, are dependent on high membership and firm connections to social groups, and could therefore atrophy as party membership declines and group allegiances become less durable, which could weaken the distinctiveness of party positions.

The transience of independent support compared to that of partisans could also act to counteract the centripetal scenario described previously. Independents in the middle of the ideological distribution are by definition more fickle than partisans, making them a more difficult voting bloc to retain across repeated elections. Incorporating the perspective of Budge and coauthors on representation as a process is a useful theoretical lens here, particularly the role that independents might play in creating the costs of governing and regression to mean levels of support that they describe in Chapter 12. By blending *The Strain of Representation's* insights about independents with *Organizing Democratic Choice's* sensitivity to time, future scholars will be able to shed new light on the impact of this voting bloc on party competition and organization.

Early in *The Strain for Representation*, Rohrschneider and Whitefield compare the measures of party positions derived from their survey with alternative measurements. Although they find the correlation between their survey and CMP measures of ideology acceptable, it is markedly lower than the correlations between their measure with those of other expert and citizen surveys. In normative terms, it is encouraging that independent studies, making use of different data, each find that political parties continue to structure choice in complex political environments and succeed in representing the interests of citizens. As the time series of expert surveys continues to grow, exploring the dynamic relationships charted within *Organizing Democratic Choice* and the impact of the organizational characteristics of parties emphasized by *The Strain of Representation* with additional data on positioning and dimensionality is but one approach to connecting the insights of these important books in future research.

Social Protest and Contentious Authoritarianism in China. By Xi Chen. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 256p. \$99.00.

Protest with Chinese Characteristics: Demonstrations, Riots, and Petitions in the Mid-Qing Dynasty. By Ho-Fung Hung. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. 288p. \$50.00 cloth, \$27.00 paper.
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— Timothy Hildebrandt, *London School of Economics and Political Science*

Recent success and failure of “Arab Spring” movements has reminded the world of the promise and peril of social protest. While increased interest in the study of protest has been facilitated in part by large, regime-changing movements in the Middle East, social protest is by no means limited to such big movements with big changes. Focusing on these protests alone misses the far greater number of smaller-scale and routinized protest movements worldwide, including in China.

For China watchers, the study of protest is particularly important because their number and scope has grown in recent years. But as both books under review show, social protest is not new to China. Beyond revealing its deep historical roots, the books engage a number of questions: Why do protests occur in China? What tactics do protesters employ? And why have protests not (yet) resulted in grand political change? With the publication of these two books we are closer to a better understanding of social protest in the world’s most populous country.

Research topic aside, it might be easy to dwell upon the difference between these two books: Xi Chen’s more traditional mixed-method analysis of recent protests contrasts with Ho-Fung Hung’s richly detailed historiography of Qing-era protests; Hung relies on centuries-old archives and personal writings of imperial court officials, while Chen draws upon contemporary government documents and interviews with protesters. Differences aside, the two books should be seen as truly complementary works; scholars will be rewarded for reading these fantastic studies side by side.

Both books start from the important premise that most studies of social protest and mass mobilization are Western dominated and contain a “political change” bias. Much of the interest in, and academic work on, social protest focuses on *exceptional* events where protests have led to the downfall of authoritarian regimes. Decoupling protest from democratization allows both Chen and Hung to understand societal mobilization, state responses, and the effect on both parties. Their refreshingly dispassionate analyses give appropriate attention to both the state structure and societal agency necessary for protests. Although they reach the conclusion in different ways, both authors demonstrate that social protest is decidedly routine in China, deeply inculcated in the political culture, and often facilitated (rather than prevented) by the state.