

conceptual skeleton and examines how Blair and Howard skilfully married their institutional power resources with personal power resources in order to realise their potential for leadership. The heart of the book comprises five empirical chapters. Three of these examine the institutional resources at a prime minister's disposal, including the cabinet, the party and the central coordinating structures of government, and two focus on prime ministers' personal resources, specifically their skills and their prominent status in the media and public eye. A concluding chapter summarises the material and explores the trajectories of the two prime ministers' personal capital.

Bennister knows his subjects well and makes good use of primary and secondary sources. Systematic comparisons of leaders' political styles are few and far between, and this book provides some illuminating insights into how Blair and Howard used similar resources in different ways, such as their handling of cabinet. The structured comparative approach in each chapter works well, although there is some tendency to repetition in the summaries at the end of the chapters. Any limitations are chiefly sins of omission. It would be useful to know more about the concept of 'predominance', for example, and the extent to which it is a continuum or a category, and also how it can be operationalised. More might also have been said of Gordon Brown, both as a challenge to Blair's predominance and as his successor; there are some references to the fortunes of Howard's successors, yet very little is said of Brown's 'predominance' or, indeed, David Cameron's.

Overall, however, this is a good book that will be of interest to all students of Britain's and Australia's prime ministerships and to students of executive politics more generally. The cost may make it prohibitive to purchase, but it should certainly be read from the shelves of university libraries.

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Quiet Politics and Business Power: Corporate Control in Europe and Japan by **Pepper D. Culpepper**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 221pp., £19.99, ISBN 9780521134132

All too often, political science scholarship pays too much attention to highly salient issues, assuming that

most of the important issues are equally salient for electorates and accurately reflected by political parties and interest groups. In this book, Culpepper focuses mainly on takeover regulations, which often do not rank high on the political agenda, but have major political consequences such as mass layoffs or corporate reorganisation. By examining how four countries with different corporate control mechanisms – France, Germany, the Netherlands and Japan – have experienced takeover rule changes since the 1990s, he concludes that the political dynamic of low salience ('quiet politics') is different from high salience ('noisy politics').

Unlike other high-salience issues (e.g. wage bargaining rules or pension systems) which can usually be explained by variations in government partisanship or interest group coalitions, managerial preferences are key to understanding stability/change in low-salience issues. Although the preferences of managers on takeover rules vary from one country to another based on the strength of labour organisations, the central point is that managers achieve what they want. Given the absence of voters' attention and the high technicality of this issue, both legislators and reporters are disincentivised to invest resources and, instead, simply defer to the lobbying capacity, media-framing ability and expertise of managers.

In proving the validity of his 'quiet politics' theory *vis-à-vis* 'partisanship theory' (e.g. Tiberghien)¹ and 'coalition theory' (e.g. Gourevitch and Shinn),² Culpepper adopts systematic process analysis³ which sets falsifiable predictions for each theory and tests the explanatory power of each in light of the quantity and diversity of observations. Although the overall methodology revolves around the qualitative comparison of four countries, he draws observable implications from both qualitative and quantitative sources. Particularly noteworthy is Culpepper's selection of newspaper coverage across the political spectrum as a proxy for political saliency.

Although briefly described (p. 10, p. 46) the book would have benefited further from systematically incorporating 'temporality' and 'complexity' of policy saliency into the theoretical framework. In addition, given the comparatively early stage of scholarly application of systematic process analysis, the author would have helped readers by specifying its major advantages to other similar methods such as 'analytical narratives'.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, the book is rich in detail and approachable for both academics and non-academics alike. Above all, the book successfully puts 'quiet politics' theory at the centre of the corporate governance literature and, from a broader theoretical perspective, further fine-tunes the 'varieties of capitalism' and 'institutional change' literature. In this regard, it will serve as a particularly valuable reference among students of political institutions, political economy and business.

Notes

- 1 Tiberghien, Y. (2007) *Entrepreneurial States: Reforming Corporate Governance in France, Japan, and Korea*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press.
- 2 Gourevitch, P. A. and Shinn, J. (2005) *Political Power and Corporate Control: The New Global Politics of Corporate Governance*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- 3 Hall, P. A. (2003) 'Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Research', in J. Mahoney and D. Rueschemeyer (eds), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, p. 374.

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State Formation, Parties and Democracy: Studies in Comparative European Politics by **Hans Daalder**. Colchester: ECPR Press, 2011. 303pp., £34.00, ISBN 9781907301179

Hans Daalder taught political science at Leiden University and was one of the founders of the European Consortium of Political Research and of post-Second World War comparative politics. This volume collects Daalder's major articles on comparative politics, with a particular emphasis on processes of democratisation and the development of parties and party systems. Daalder was one of the first political scientists to adopt the comparative method to analyse party systems and evaluate their performance. His approach to comparative analysis was empirical as well as historical. He would use data to test a hypothesis and tease out explanatory variables. But he would also adopt the 'thick description' approach which would typically involve delving into the history of national case studies. With this approach Daalder not only described and explained the evolution of modern party systems but also provided the reader with a detailed historical account of the various cases.

Most of the articles cover three major themes: first, the different paths towards state formation. In one of his most well-known and cited articles, 'Parties, Elites, and Political Developments in Western Europe', Daalder demonstrates how political parties can be key agents in the development of modern, homogeneous, political systems. He compares the British to the French political system and shows how parties have been crucial agents of nation building in the United Kingdom, while they have been far less successful in France. Daalder contrasts British mass parties to France's cadre type to explain how the former became genuine brokers linking the centre to the periphery.

Second, Daalder evaluates how patterns of pre-democratic political elite settings influenced the development of party systems. One of his main arguments is that countries that developed to mass democracy in a slow and gradual fashion have typically been more successful than those that faced the twin crisis of national integration and political participation at the same time, such as Germany and Italy. Third, he discusses the rise and merits of consociational democracy. In a review article on smaller European democracies Daalder explains how thanks to political institutional engineering they have been able to achieve political stability despite very difficult social and cultural conditions. Lastly, in the preface Peter Mair contrasts Daalder's scholarly generation to today's, arguing that today's students of political science are exclusively method driven and hence tend to produce works of a much more limited quality than those of Daalder's generation.

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Semi-presidentialism and Democracy by **Robert Elgie, Sophia Moestrup and Yu-Shan Wu (eds)**. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 296pp., £60.00, ISBN 9780230242920

Robert Elgie has long been a proponent in the field of semi-presidentialism and has produced many scholarly books and articles on the subject. His latest contribution is *Semi-presidentialism and Democracy*, edited with Sophia Moestrup and Yu-Shan Wu, both of whom he has collaborated with before. Following up on earlier works including those on semi-presidentialism in Western Europe, Eastern Europe and outside Europe,