become more important. McGuinnes' account will help focus debates over the tensions between equal and excellence and the government's ability to promote both.

The book will also inform debate about how federal education policy has influenced the American schools in more general. McGuinnes argues that the NCLB has replaced the idea of "equal opportunity" with a more explicit focus on "equal achievement." The tension between the two has been a constant feature of American schools, and McGuinnes' account will help us understand how these tensions have played out over time.

powers the capacity or the license to act and essentially lend influence to actors who are in need of it in promoting a policy.

National scholarship in such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) prove to be a solid case for study to demonstrate the utility of borrowing strength theory. Through a longitudinal analysis of education policy interest and influence, the author illustrates the growing interests of the national government in K-12 education policy over the last four decades. National interest has been harnessed by fairly steady presidential support for a national policy solution. National budget commitment to education has grown tremendously, although political parties differ over specific educational priorities. Consider the history of U.S. federalism: national influence relies on state and local strength, their role cannot be ignored in analyzing education policy.

Mann's thesis, therefore, has very important implications for how to best study the implementation of NCLB. Critics of the sweeping education policy often view it as a national-level effort to further enhance the national influence in K-12 education policies. If Mann is correct, then national education policy entrepreneurs must borrow strength from state and local actors in order to implement policies. The presidency must also maintain efforts to borrow strength from Congress. Mann's interviewees indicate that the effort to maintain these strength-borrowing ties contracted over time, limiting the capacity to borrow needed influence.

Mann's analysis of NCLB and other national education policies should be required reading for individuals interested in pursuing education policy as a career of study.


Often in politics, persuasion is power. Within the U.S. Congress, for example, legislation influence public policy largely through their committee assignments, which grant them important insider advantages in the crafting of legislation and oversight of the executive branch. Most major policy issues are wide-ranging in scope, however, and thus are especially conducive to clear-cut lines of responsibility. On Capitol Hill, jurisdictional boundaries often overlap, and conflict over turf is commonplace. In this new book, John Baughman identifies the conditions associated with conflict cooperation between House committees over turf and shares valuable insights into inter-committee bargaining, the role of party leaders in managing the committee system, and the consequences of jurisdictional fragmentation for policy making in the modern House. The book is essential reading for congressional scholars and others.

First, Baughman exhibits a nuanced understanding of the history of jurisdictional politics and its insider's knowledge of how committee leaders and staff deal with jurisdictional issues. For instance, he provides the most compelling description that we have of the effects on inter-committee relations from the Bipartisan Reform of 1974 and the 1995 Budget Act changes of 1995. In preparing the book, Baughman conducted dozens of interviews with legislators, committee aides, and staff, and he shares his book in a great many of the insights to be drawn from a "multi-method" approach to gathering data.

Second, the book builds on important new theoretical ground for conceptualizing about legislatures. Baughman applies concepts from transaction cost economics to generate predictions about when jurisdictional conflicts will break out between House panels. Some other counter-intuitively, regular interactions between committees over shared jurisdictional responsibilities are conducive to more, rather than less, cooperation over turf and legislation. Baughman's conceptual framework also helps us understand the conditions under which partisan, jurisdictional, and informational conflicts will have the most explanatory power over inter-committee politics, helping to clarify perhaps the central concept of committee conflicts in recent congressional scholarship.

Third, the author subjects the predictions of his conceptual framework to a wide range of rigorous and substantively interesting empirical work. There is a wealth of new evidence about committee bargaining and leadership strategy in this book. To its knowledge, he is the first scholar to simultaneously model the determinants of legislative success at the roll calling and floor stages (using bivariate probit). He conducts a multivariate analysis, the use of committee "water letters," which serves as an important and useful indicator of inter-panel reciprocities. Baughman uses a number of new studies such as an analysis of trade legislation during the 106th Congress, to add new perspective about how potentially competing committees can work together to build majority coalitions. The chapter on the role of party leaders includes a detailed analysis of the mechanisms and strategies used by the House leadership to coordinate policy making when jurisdictional issues are shared by two or more standing committees.

In short, Common Ground 124-9 and answers some important normative questions about committee politics. It features engrossing, engaging treatment of inter-committee bargaining. And it marshalls concrete evidence about the consequences of overlapping jurisdictional boundaries for member behavior and the content of legislation. Although the analysis is specific and rigorous throughout, Baughman does a great job of integrating these stories and examples, and the book is extremely well written. It should be value to any informed reader with an interest in the congressional legislative process.

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