additional comparative studies concerning Israel and its neighbors.

Parliaments in Time: The Evolution of Legislative Democracy in Western Europe, 1866–2015. By Michael Koß.

— Amie Kreppel, *University of Florida*
kreppel@ufl.edu

At the most basic level, the goal of *Parliaments in Time: The Evolution of Legislative Democracy* is to explain the differentiated development of "talking" and "working" parliaments within the context of Western Europe between 1866 and 2015; it does so through an analysis of internal institutional (procedural) reforms affecting the centralization of agenda-setting powers and the strength of committees. This relatively straightforward goal belies a complex research agenda that requires concept creation/reconceptualization, theory building, and in-depth archival work. In the end, the book contributes a great deal to current understandings of the causes and consequences of the internal institutional development of legislatures. As with most substantial research initiatives, however, there are also some questions left underanalyzed and some methodological choices left unexplained. These do not undermine the value of the book, but rather suggest future opportunities to adapt and extend the theoretical insights it introduces.

The central methodological approach employed is historical institutionalism examining critical junctures at which key decisions are made about the internal procedures that structure parliamentary activity. By proactively integrating time into his analysis, Michael Koß is able to begin with parliaments in a "legislative state of nature" in which agenda control is decentralized (not in the hands of the government) and committees are weak or inexistent (see figure 2.1, p. 25). However, as democracy progresses and legislative workloads increase, legislatures are placed under pressure. They must reform their internal structures to accommodate the increased workload and create procedural efficiencies. Legislators are trapped in the Weberian "steel hard casing" that forces decisions about how to rationalize the functioning of the parliament to meet the challenges posed by an increased workload. For Koß there are two choices: (1) increase the centralization of agenda control to expand the power of the government by creating one committee of "mega-seats" (the cabinet), leaving committees in the parliament either weak or inexistent, or (2) increase the power of committees (many mega-seats) paired with decentralized agenda control. The former strategy leads to talking parliaments, whereas the latter results in working parliaments. There is also the possibility of "hybrid" parliaments that combine strong committees with centralized agenda control. These are understood as

efforts by leaders to mitigate obstructive opposition; however, they are broadly similar to talking parliaments, because the leaders still maintain agenda control.

This general framework reflects much of the existing literature in terms of the characterization of parliaments and the impact of agenda control and strong committees. Koß's key question is why would numerically dominant parliamentary "followers" ever agree to procedural reforms that transform the legislature from the state of nature to a talking parliament. Why would members of the parliament agree (voluntarily) to cede power to the "leaders" (government)? Although existing explanations for the transformation of parliaments and parliamentary power (particularly in the European context) tend to focus on political parties as explanatory variables, Koß instead argues that internal procedural reforms within parliaments that centralize power and shift them toward "talking parliaments" are motivated by a desire to protect legislative democracy from the threat of anti-systemic actors within the legislature who threaten its capacity to manage the increased workload. In that sense, the goal of the book is "to examine not only why legislatures develop towards the talking or working ideal type, but also how legislative democracy is maintained—and under which conditions it fails" (p. 3). This theory is couched as a *replacement* for existing explanations, rather than an alternative that may be an improvement in some instances.

To support his theoretical insights, Koß gathers detailed information on the lower legislative chamber in four cases: the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Sweden. Chapter 4 provides a brief overview of the development of the parliament and some characteristics of the party system in each case. The remainder of the book provides more detailed analyses of each of 90 examples of attempted reforms to agenda control and committee power, with particular emphasis on the context, the role of anti-system actors, and the character of the proposed reform. The analysis is divided into three chronological periods, emphasizing the path dependency of the initial formative movement away from the parliamentary state of nature. The histories presented are detailed and informative, providing careful discussion of both successful and failed reforms.

Despite this attention to detail, the methodological choices are not fully justified at times. Nowhere is this more evident than in the initial selection of cases (chap. 3) and the discussion of other European cases in the conclusion (chap. 8). Although initially "small" countries and countries that have had lapses in democratic governance for two decades or more are excluded from the case studies (without any definition or substantive justification; p. 65), in the conclusion some of these countries (Ireland, Greece, Italy, and Spain) are discussed in an effort to demonstrate the *universality* of the core theory. As Koß notes, these are the cases that initially do not appear to fit the expectations of the model, including examples of

working legislatures with a strong history of anti-systemic actors in parliament (Italy) or talking legislatures without such a history (Ireland, Spain, and so on).

Rather than allow for the possibility that the role of anti-system actors *may be sufficient* (during specific historical periods), but is *not necessary* for the development of a talking legislature, Koß appears in some cases to interpret history to fit the model; he states, for example, that in Italy despite the fact that "the Communists obstructed the passage of legislation...[they] never posed a vital threat to legislative democracy . . .[because] they participated in the work of powerful committees" (p. 243). In addition to this assertion being certainly contestable, it avoids the fact that the presence of a strong anti-systemic Communist Party in parliament during the initial period of democratization after World War II should, according to the theory presented in this volume, have led the pro-system "followers" to empower "leaders" through the centralization of agenda power to protect Italy's nascent legislative democracy. Instead, Italy followed a very different trajectory, actively including the anti-system actors and decentralizing agenda control to an unprecedented level. Similarly, Koß argues that in the cases of talking parliaments that emerged without active obstruction from anti-system actors (Spain, Ireland), it was the mere fear of the potential emergence of such actors that led to the ceding of power by the followers within the parliament. After the careful analysis of the previous chapters, this explanation feels ad hoc and unsatisfactory.

These efforts to make *every* case fit the theory are unnecessary. There is no reason to expect universality from a theory of legislative development, especially not one that is embedded within careful analyses of path dependency and specific historical exigencies. In the effort to replace previous theories reliant on factors related to political parties and party systems, Koß misses the possibility that his own contribution may add substantially to our collective understanding of parliamentary development without comprehensively supplanting existing explanations. The theoretical contributions of the book, as valuable as they are, would have been strengthened had the conclusion instead sought to accept the cases that do not perfectly fit the theory. Rather than attempting to explain away these anomalies, Koß might have encouraged additional investigation into multicausal, historically embedded analyses that investigate the ways in which political party and party system development interact with the presence of anti-system actors, particularly in democratic legislatures that emerge after the advent of modern political parties or after long periods of democratic breakdown.

Overall, *Parliaments in Time* is a valuable contribution to the literature on institutional development in general and the evolution of parliaments in particular. The four cases analyzed in depth are well researched, and the

insights into the role of anti-system obstruction, particularly during the early phases of institutional rationalization, are both innovative and instructive. The initial three chapters are quite dense, but the reader will be rewarded for their efforts in the empirical chapters that provide careful applications of the theory. I am hopeful that the author and others will pick up the mantle of integrating the new insights from this book into the existing literature, in particular examining not only the effective number of parties or volatility but also their implications for party discipline and internal party hierarchy: these factors may also explain the willingness of followers to cede procedural power to leaders, particularly within post–"state of nature" parliaments.

Contesting Authoritarianism: Labor Challenges to the State in Egypt. By Dina Bishara. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 204p. $82.99 cloth, $29.99 paper.

— Lisa Blaydes, *Stanford University*
blaydes@stanford.edu

In the years leading up to Egypt's 2011 protest uprisings, an unprecedented number of labor union members brought their demands for better wages and fair treatment to the institutions of the Mubarak regime. Although it was perhaps not surprising that industrial workers were engaged in demonstrations of this sort, the participation of white-collar bureaucrats in labor protests confounded scholarly expectations. Dina Bishara grapples with this puzzling and important phenomenon. In particular, she asks why and how 27,000 real estate tax collectors were able to break out of the state monopoly on trade unions to establish Egypt's first independent trade union in 2009.

The starting point for Bishara's exploration is a clear and convincing account of state–society relations in Egypt, with a focus on the country's long-standing system of state-controlled trade unions. Founded in 1957, the Egyptian Trade Union Federation monopolized the formal representation of Egyptian workers for decades. According to Bishara, union leaders first offered their support to Gamal Abdel Nasser "in exchange for guaranteeing workers' economic rights, most importantly job security" (p. 27). But under what conditions did the prevailing corporatist bargain erode? Beginning in 1974, Anwar Sadat's "open door" economic policies liberalized aspects of the Egyptian domestic economy. This reform process accelerated under Hosni Mubarak with a restructuring of public-sector enterprises as demanded by international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. This process set into motion a deterioration of state–labor relations as workers became increasingly aggrieved as a result of the byproducts of neoliberal reform efforts.