

arguments their authors have made in other books and articles. In addition, much of the volume is less concerned with developing general theories than it is with providing detailed descriptions of and explanations for the evolution of party systems in particular countries over time.

Causal inference is also an issue throughout the work, in part because it is very difficult to disentangle party system institutionalization from its purported causes and consequences. For example, it is hard to know whether greater party system institutionalization strengthens democracy or greater democracy strengthens party system institutionalization. Similarly, party system institutionalization may contribute to better economic performance, but better economic performance may also enhance party system institutionalization. In both of these instances, there are reasons to suspect reciprocal causation, as well as the existence of other unmeasured variables that shape party system institutionalization, democracy, and economic performance. Some of the chapters readily acknowledge these problems. In Chapter 4, which explores the correlates of party system institutionalization through quantitative analyses of 18 Latin American countries, the authors note the problem of endogeneity and caution that “the results are correlational, and limits to causal inference remain” (p. 130). Similarly, in Chapter 13, which examines the relationship between citizen attachments and party system institutionalization, Seawright warns that “the nature of the connection as causal, reverse-causal, spurious, etc., cannot be sorted out via the kind of descriptive analysis used here” (p. 396).

Finally, the volume might have benefited from a concluding chapter that summarized its findings, discussed their implications, and set out an agenda for future research. The final chapter, which compares party system institutionalization in Latin America to Africa and Southeast Asia, performs some of those tasks, but not as comprehensively as a concluding chapter might have done.

These shortcomings, however, do not negate the many strengths of *Party Systems in Latin America*. The volume represents an important empirical and conceptual contribution that will shape future research on party systems in Latin America and around the world.

**Political Corruption and Scandals in Japan.** By Matthew M. Carlson and Steven R. Reed. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018. 204p. \$39.95 cloth.  
doi:10.1017/S1537592718003730

— Leonard Schoppa, *University of Virginia*

“Scandals” are not commonly the topic of books in political science. While there are certainly numerous works that have measured or compared levels of “political corruption” or “clientelism” across polities or across time,

most scholars have been wary of tackling the more salacious and seemingly more slippery category of scandals.

Matthew Carlson and Steven Reed are therefore to be commended for taking on the challenge of analyzing the role that scandals play in democratic societies. By systematically analyzing all of the major scandals that have received national media attention in Japan between 1950 and 2016, they advance a convincing argument that we need to pay attention to scandals in order to understand the ebbs and flows of political corruption in democratic political systems everywhere.

The authors begin by carefully situating their definition of political corruption in the ample literature on this topic, arguing that a broad category of actions that “pervert the course of democratic politics” (p. 6) best captures the universe of corrupt acts. They fault some of the leading cross-national measures of corruption, such as those compiled by Transparency International, for focusing too narrowly on behaviors that are experienced by individuals (such as being expected to pay a bribe to public officials to receive government services). Bribery of this type is certainly one activity that perverts the course of democratic politics, but such measures ignore the wholesale purchase of public policy by special-interest groups that make campaign contributions to politicians, which certainly perverts the way democracy works in many systems.

Carlson and Reed argue that the case of Japan highlights the insufficiency of narrow definitions of corruption. Japan scores low (one of the least corrupt) on measures such as those compiled by Transparency International, in part because few Japanese experience requests for handouts from government officials. But most experts have long considered Japanese politics to be among those more heavily infected with corruption because scandals frequently highlight cases in which politicians offer policy favors in exchange for money.

The authors’ commonsense definition of corruption helps us appreciate the first way in which scandals help us better understand corruption. They help us see the full range of what is regarded as corrupt by the public in a given place and time. Scandals are behaviors that are covered in the national media *because* they concern the public. When revelations in the media prompt candidates to resign or lose elections, or when they cause political parties to lose seats, we have further evidence that the behaviors revealed are regarded as perversions of democracy by the public. Some of these scandals involve criminal acts of bribery or violations of campaign laws, but sometimes the behaviors revealed are not technically illegal. When politicians respond to scandals by tightening laws to cover these behaviors, that is further evidence that the public sees the acts as corrupt.

To their credit, Carlson and Reed are not so naive as to think that a simple count of scandals gives us a full

measure of corruption. In some of the most corrupt systems, there are few scandals because the politicians exercise strong control over the media and/or the judicial system. They argue, for example, that just because Japan saw few scandals between 1967 and 1972 (when Kakuei Tanaka emerged as the leading political figure), we should not assume that politics was clean. During this period, both the media and prosecutors seem to have been cowed by the strong influence of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) over the media and courts. Reporters and prosecutors stopped looking for corruption because their previous efforts to publicize and prosecute it had failed to convict or defeat corrupt politicians. But when foreign media coverage of the Tanaka scandals gave these actors an opportunity to dig, their revelations of extremely disturbing behaviors suggested that there was actually much more activity of this type going on beneath the surface.

Similarly, the authors argue, a large count of scandals—such as the numerous cabinet ministers forced to resign over improper campaign finance reporting between 1997 and 2012—should not be regarded as proof that corruption was highest during these periods. Many of these scandals involved relatively trivial violations of campaign law, such as cases where a minister accepted a modest donation from a Korean resident of Japan who was not a citizen. Some involved activity that had been legal or easy to hide until reforms tightened restrictions and disclosure requirements. There were more scandals during this period because corrupt activity was easier to find, not because there was more corruption after the reforms were implemented. Carlson and Reed thus argue for a careful qualitative review of scandals that pays attention to exactly what behaviors were revealed; how they were revealed; whether they led to convictions, resignations, or campaign defeats; and how campaign finance and bribery laws were adapted in response.

This careful analysis gives us a convincing measurement of the level of corruption across time in Japan. The authors argue that it was high in the 1950s through the 1980s but has fallen off significantly since 1994. The analysis also shows the central role played by scandals in causing corruption to rise or fall. When scandals are infrequent, corruption can continue beneath the surface since politicians expect to face few consequences. When they are frequent, politicians have an opportunity to *learn*. They watch a colleague being forced to resign a cabinet seat, and they modify their behavior. The authors report that at least 12 senior Diet members revised their campaign reports immediately after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced, after a string of scandals in his first term, that he would appoint to the cabinet only politicians whose reports were flawless (p. 155).

Because scandals are so important to the process of reducing corruption, the authors argue, the factors that

are most important in reducing corruption are those that facilitate these revelations. Disclosure rules that forced politicians to account for their income and expenditures in much greater detail were critical. Also important were changes to bribery statutes that made “mediation bribery” illegal. A politician did not need to be the cabinet minister officially in charge to be prosecuted. Senior politicians with deep networks in the bureaucracy could be held responsible just for calling up and asking officials to give a donor’s bid favorable consideration, even when they held no technical authority over that contracting decision. This change allowed prosecutors to take on corruption of this type, which had been endemic in the LDP, and reveal it to the public.

Finally, Japanese politics has become less corrupt because electoral reforms in 1994 changed the environment in several ways. They eliminated intraparty competition, which had incentivized politicians to build expensive personal support networks, allowing politicians to make (much cheaper) appeal for votes by taking popular positions on *policy*; they provided parties with public funds to cover political expenses; and they fostered the emergence of a two-party system, which increased the incentive for the opposition to dig and find evidence of corruption in order to win elections, and increased the likelihood of a party being knocked out of government if it failed to clean up its act.

The book suffers from repetition at points, covering campaign finance scandals in chronological chapters and then again in a chapter on “sex and campaign finance scandals.” It also delivers critical information on changes in campaign finance regulations in dribs and drabs over the full length of the text, rather than in a single coherent section. But these deficiencies are more than offset by the lively writing and depth of empirical detail about the many scandals covered. *Political Corruption and Scandals in Japan* is a must-read for scholars of Japanese politics and those who study corruption in other places and times.

#### **Brexit: Why Britain Voted to Leave the European Union.**

By Harold D. Clarke, Matthew Goodwin, and Paul Whiteley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. 272p. \$59.99 cloth, \$19.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592718003870

— Matthew J. Gabel, *Washington University in St. Louis*

On June 20, 2016, citizens of the United Kingdom voted in a referendum asking whether the UK should remain a member of the European Union or leave, causing “Brexit.” The slim victory for Brexit came as a surprise, if not a shock, to many observers. Resolving what exactly the vote meant and how best to respond to it has dominated UK politics ever since.

This book is an ambitious and impressive attempt to explain the Brexit vote. What sets the book apart from other accounts is that it engages the topic