

employed to address complex issues and the ways that their collaborative assessments can be used to inform legislators. Determining environmental risk, both empirically and subjectively, is a central aim throughout the work. In conclusion, the author calls for a new understanding of the expert as “specialized citizen.”

Fischer primarily views the problems of scientific expertise and the need for increased levels of informed citizen participation within the context of political theory. “What the positivists have failed to grasp . . . is that scientific discourse is itself a highly interpretive enterprise. Given this interpretive dimension, science loses its privileged claim as superior knowledge” (p. 44). Hence, citizen participation is critical not only for the functioning of democracy and as a value in and of itself, but also because science is open to subjective interpretation, and knowledge is socially constructed (i.e., it is not objective or value free, and facts do not exist). This is precisely why the author believes scientific expertise and citizen participation should be treated equally in the policy-making process.

Average citizens, we are told, have the ability to understand the most complicated scientific and technical issues. Fischer recommends the establishment of “consensus conferences” (pp. 234–40), or about two dozen “ordinary” citizens who assess the science and technology related to a specific issue or problem. People who are chosen to participate in these conferences read and learn about the technical issues involved and, with the help of a nonexpert facilitator, develop a set of recommendations for policymakers and legislators. This approach has been employed in Denmark and elsewhere with some success.

Overall, the book is well written. The author effectively develops important issues, arguments, and ideas before staking out a position. Readers in all fields will appreciate the clarity of the discussions concerning the expanding role of science and technology in environmental policymaking and why citizen participation is vital, especially at the local level. The study successfully integrates central concepts and ideas in political theory with analyses of the most serious problems related to citizen participation in environmental policymaking.

A critical question Fischer skirts is whether more citizen participation leads to more effective environmental policies. Regardless of what mechanisms are used to involve the public, will the result be environmental policies that work? No study has shown that the level of public participation—regardless of how it is achieved—varies directly with the level of effectiveness of public policy. In fact, research shows that the relationship between these two variables is ambiguous at best. Although the author may feel that an increase in citizen participation is as important as (or even more important than) developing cost-effective, successful plans and regulatory programs, it is highly doubtful that politicians and policymakers will agree.

The failure of previous environmental policies has less to do with whether science is completely subjective or a decline in citizen participation and has more to do with poor policy design and execution. The extreme politicization of critical environmental problems (e.g., the protection of biodiversity and climate change) has resulted in no action or failed policies at the federal, state, and local level. In many if not most cases, the rise of interest group politics has prevented vital environmental legislation from being passed. Laws that have been adopted have not been strictly enforced.

The book also does not adequately address how to persuade citizens to become more actively involved in environmental policy at the local level. In general, the level and type

of public participation that Fischer desires takes a great deal of time and effort, and most people do not want to become involved to this extent. Why would they want to participate in fairly demanding consensus conferences? (Interestingly, the study does not explore how advanced computer and communications technology might be used creatively to include a larger number of citizens in environmental decision making at the local level in a meaningful way.) There must be an increase in feelings of civic duty and responsibility before such mechanisms as consensus conferences can be successful.

The major problem with the book is that it fails to offer significant new insights into the dilemma of citizen participation in modern society, particularly when highly technical issues are at stake. The same observations and possible solutions to this dilemma have been discussed by others as well as the author himself (*Technocracy and the Politics of Expertise*, 1990; “American Think Tanks,” *Governance* 4 [July 1991]: 332–53). At the same time, the vast literature on interest groups, policy stakeholders, agenda setting, and public participation in political science is ignored. Regrettably, despite the importance of the topic, the book does not break new ground or add to our knowledge of citizen participation in environmental policymaking.

**The British Presidency: Tony Blair and the Politics of Public Leadership.** By Michael Foley. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000. 374p. \$74.95.

G. W. Jones, *London School of Economics and Political Science*

In this updated edition of his book, published in 1993 as *The Rise of the British Presidency*, Michael Foley develops his argument and rounds on his critics. He remains committed to his central proposition that the study of American presidents reveals underlying political pressures that have transformed the British prime minister into the British president. He asserts (p. 331): “The comparability that has come to exist does so at a level that transcends the constitutional differences within the two systems.” He claims there has been a fundamental systemic change in British government brought about by irreversible dynamics in the British political system.

The drivers of the transformation are the media. They regard politics as a clash between leaders, who personalize their parties, programs, and governments. Both prime ministers and presidents deal directly with the people and power centers. In Britain prime ministers detach themselves from their parties, their cabinets, and Parliament in seeking direct links to the people both to attain and to keep office.

Foley makes a plausible case, writes persuasively in an elegant style, deploys apt quotations from his extensive collection of press cuttings, and shifts easily between U.S. and British experiences. Had he waited for the aftermath of the general election of 2001, he would have been able to reinforce his thesis. The party campaigns focused overwhelmingly on the party leaders and copied U.S. techniques, and the media concentrated on the prime minister and the leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties. Tony Blair, once reelected, reorganized the core executive of the Prime Minister’s Office and the Cabinet Office, increasing and reshaping his staff and fusing the two offices under his control. To many commentators Blair copied the organization of the White House. The general election of 2001 and the subsequent reorganization of government resonate with U.S. analogies.

In this edition Foley covers the Blair government's first term and examines how Blair was governing. In the first edition he looked only at the campaign to obtain office, politics, images, and the media, without exploring the structures and processes of government, and especially the relationships between prime ministers and ministers. He still downplays the latter, asserting that underlying political pressures have transformed cabinet and ministerial government into prime ministerial government. He fails to appreciate that much of the high personal profile achieved by the prime minister is desired by his ministerial colleagues because it helps them and their party win elections and gain consent for their policies. The prime minister is only as dominant as these colleagues let him be. If he becomes a liability to winning elections and gaining consent, he will be constrained and ultimately jettisoned.

Foley also adds a section on four objections to his thesis. The first is that of deceptive appearances, which argues that a flamboyant prime minister can distort news coverage to give an impression of personal hegemony. The second is that of the flash in the pan, which argues that a prime minister may achieve governmental prominence, but it will be only temporary in a system that depends on ministers predisposed to collective working and that is produced from elections based on mandates for governments rather than for individual leaders. The third is that of the iron law of politics, which argues that a centralizing prime minister cannot be sustained against a political system rooted in conflict, division, and challenge that is expressed through Parliament and a cabinet dependent on always having parliamentary support. The fourth is that of the problem of precision, which argues that it is so hard to see through the complexity of data that it makes sense to stay with the generalization that most accords with traditional observation. The burden of proof lies with the innovator, and the presidential-government paradigm lacks a clinching body of evidence.

Foley's response is to emphasize that his analysis of spatial leadership, outsider politics, competitive populism, personal projection, media management, individuated party images, the permanent campaign, and new linkages between leaders and their public constituencies shows that new underlying political pressures have overturned the traditional institutions and processes of government.

The fifth objection to the Foley thesis, which the author fails to address, is that it lacks an historical perspective. Foley's analysis is limited to the period from Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and takes no account of how past prime ministers behaved. Disraeli and Gladstone personified their parties in the nineteenth century and were dominant in both electioneering and governing. Lloyd George exercised such personal leadership—breaking with his party, keeping aloof from Parliament, appealing directly to the people through most of the approaches noted by Foley, and increasing his staff—that he was known by the 1920s as an imperial Caesar. But the government of Bonar Law in 1922 dismantled Lloyd George's expanded prime ministerial Secretariat in the gardens of 10 Downing Street and reasserted the processes of cabinet and ministerial government. The institutions that make up the British Constitution were not transcended and transformed by Lloyd George or Margaret Thatcher. Tony Blair's dominance is contingent, not structural, the result of a unique set of circumstances that could be changed, above all by a downturn in the economy, failure to deliver on promises, and growing unpopularity.

The image of the elastic band to explain the British system is still apt. It stretches to accommodate an assertive prime minister but contracts to suit one less activist. Blair may be

the prime minister who has stretched it the most, but he has not yet gone as far as to break the elastic. He has not called his new arrangements in the core executive a prime minister's department because he knows that would snap the band by alienating his ministerial colleagues. Blair prefers a presidential system to a parliamentary system, as is shown also by his advocacy of directly elected mayors to replace collective and conciliar processes in local government, but he has not dared make the move that would indicate that prime ministerial government has replaced cabinet and ministerial government.

**Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics.** By Jing Huang. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 458p. \$59.95.

**Cadres and Corruption: The Organizational Involvement of the Chinese Communist Party.** By Xiaobo Lu. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000. 368p. \$55.00.

Bruce J. Dickson, *George Washington University*

These two books cover fundamental aspects of the Chinese political system that are widely acknowledged but not well understood. Factionalism has been endemic in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from its creation in 1921. Scholars and journalists often refer to factional strife within the party, but the contours and dynamics of Chinese factionalism remain obscure. Corruption, whether malfeasance or rent-seeking behavior, also has bedeviled the CCP ever since it came to power in 1949. The causes and consequences of corruption are better understood, but the CCP has been unable or unwilling to deal effectively with the problem, despite the damage to the regime's reputation and coherence. Both books attempt to shed new light on these enduring elements of Chinese politics.

Because there are few book-length studies on these issues and because these volumes promote fresh analytical perspectives, they are likely to be widely read. Both are notable for incorporating approaches that are often missing in studies of Chinese politics: for Lu, comparative analysis, and for Huang, rational choice. Yet, both are undermined by accounting for so little temporal or regional variation in their inquiries. Both imply that the causes of factionalism and corruption have remained fairly constant, despite the many political changes in China in the period covered by each book. They are strongest in their factual descriptions of factionalism and corruption, respectively, but the analytical perspectives adopted do not add a great deal to the explanations.

Huang intends to show that factionalism has been the primary independent variable in Chinese politics. The book covers the period between the late 1930s, after the CCP had arrived in Yan'an and Mao had attained supremacy within the party, until the fall of Hu Yaobang in 1987. The roots of the clash between Mao and Liu Shaoqi that was finally revealed in the Cultural Revolution are traced to the initial state-building efforts of the 1950s, which challenges the conventional wisdom and will likely engender debate. The 1987 endpoint is unexplained and omits the most important episode of factional strife in the post-Mao period, the Tiananmen demonstrations of 1989 and the emergence of Jiang Zemin as the top leader.

The emphasis of *Factionalism* is on an interpretation of elite politics during approximately 50 years. Much of this interpretation covers well-known events, and little new information is presented. Huang provides an extensive and able review of the differing approaches to the study of elite politics