



**Minutes of the 2010 Annual Business Meeting**  
**Legislative Studies Section**  
**American Political Science Association**  
**Washington, DC**  
**September 3, 2010**

Section Chair Sarah Binder called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m. and reminded attendees of the section reception, sponsored by LSQ and Wiley-Blackwell, to follow the business meeting. She thanked the Council, the Nominations Committee (Wendy Schiller, Bruce Oppenheimer, Janet Box-Steffensmeier), the current annual meeting program co-chairs (Thad Kousser, Lanny Martin) and future program co-chairs (Erik Engstrom, Michelle Taylor-Robinson) for their hard work and support.

Binder introduced Michelle Taylor-Robinson, co-program chair for the 2011 LSS Program. Taylor-Robinson noted that panel allocation by APSA is based in part on proposal rejection rates for the previous annual meeting, and so encouraged LSS members to submit paper proposals for the next meeting. She also noted that she and co-chair Erik Engstrom will continue to encourage proposals that focus on comparative/cross-regional work.

Thad Kousser reported on the LSS Program for the 2010 Meeting. The section sponsored 13 panels and cosponsored one. He reminded members of the importance of attendance rates in panel allocation and noted several actions taken to increase these, including sponsoring roundtables and having an Americanist and comparativist work together as co-chairs.

Secretary-Treasurer Tracy Sulkin reported on the section's finances. As in past years, the section is operating with a small surplus. The section's only incoming funds are from dues. Since membership varies from year to year, but many of the section's costs (e.g., awards and maintenance of the website) are fixed, section officers have been wary about spending this surplus. However, if membership numbers hold in the coming years, this may present an opportunity for allocating these funds to additional section activities.

The meeting continued with the presentation of awards.

**Carl Albert Dissertation Award** for the best doctoral dissertation in the area of legislative studies (Selection Committee: Robin Kolodny, Tom Clark, Andrew Taylor)

Recipient: Patrick Egan (University of California, Berkeley, 2008), "Issue Ownership and Representation in American Politics"

Patrick Egan's dissertation, "Issue Ownership and Representation in American Politics," investigates the relationship between the public's perception of which party 'handles' a particular issue better, or competently, and how this affects politicians' responses in the legislature. Egan addresses a key problem in studies of the influence of public opinion on

public policy – that the relationship may vary by party and by issue. Using public opinion data, Egan establishes that over time, the public has said that Republicans handle foreign policy issues and taxes best, while Democrats handle domestic issues, such as health care and the environment, best. Egan also tackles formal literature that does not consider how the relationship between constituents and representatives varies across issues, or how the public makes distinctions between campaign promises and performance in office. Using the US Congress, Egan shows that candidates from the two major parties will take differing positions on an issue and that the position taken by the candidate from the ‘issue-owning’ party will be less responsive to public opinion – because they have less need to be responsive than their opponent. This is because voters believe that the candidate from the issue owning party is more likely to deliver on promises on the issue, and is OK with the idea that the candidate’s position may not perfectly reflect the median voter’s.

Egan’s work makes an important contribution to the study of public opinion and representation that will stimulate a broad research agenda. Egan’s linkage of individual issues to partisan ownership reveals a logic to the imperfect fit between the public’s ideal points and legislative action. This committee was certainly impressed with the dissertation’s potential to induce other scholars to test its implications on legislative behavior for some time to come.

**Richard F. Fenno, Jr. Prize** for the best book in legislative studies published in 2009 (Selection Committee: Damon Cann, Linda Fowler, C. Lawrence Evans)

Recipient: Frances Lee (University of Maryland, College Park), *Beyond Ideology: Politics, Principles, and Partisanship in the U.S. Senate*, University of Chicago Press.

After extended deliberation, the committee unanimously voted to award the 2010 Fenno Prize to *Beyond Ideology: Politics, Principles, and Partisanship in the U.S. Senate*, by Frances Lee. So many fine scholars have worked on congressional parties that one might wonder what new insights might emerge from yet another study. *Beyond Ideology* demonstrates the possibility for finding nuggets in well-mined terrain. She accomplishes this feat by redefining the way scholars measure ideology, looking at patterns over nearly 25 years from 1981-2004, and systematically testing various propositions regarding the relative strength of ideology versus party as explanations for legislators’ behavior.

Lee focuses on members’ collective needs for majority control of their chamber in order to accomplish personal goals of influence. She finds party effects in the Senate, an institution that lacks many of the formal mechanisms of party control and about which scholars know comparatively little. She also sees members *voluntarily* turning to parties rather than responding to discipline and sanctions. In effect, she responds to Krehbiel’s challenge – “where’s the party?” – by demonstrating its effects in the agenda setting role of the president, in procedural votes and in good government issues. If legislators’ preferences were fixed and exogenous to the institution, she argues, patterns of polarization in these domains would not be nearly as pronounced. Lee’s work has significant ramifications for ongoing studies of elite polarization, partisanship in Congress, and the use of the full corpus of roll-call votes as valid indicators of ideology as distinct from partisanship. This volume is not only notable for its significant conclusions, but also for the multitude of studies that will inevitably follow in its wake as Lee’s clever distinctions between the effects partisanship and ideology are incorporated into existing scholarship on the U.S. Congress.

The committee also wishes to offer an honorable mention to John Carey’s *Legislative Voting and Accountability*. *Legislative Voting and Accountability* is a paradigm-shifting book. While comparative legislative studies has devoted considerable attention to aggregate attributes of legislatures, such as the gap between votes and seats or the effective number of parties,

Carey takes a leap forward by focusing on the votes of individual legislators in a broad sample of countries. This significant stride in comparative legislative research provides leverage on what may be the most central question of legislative studies: Are legislators accountable for their actions, and, if so, to whom are they accountable? While students of the U.S. Congress are accustomed to thinking in terms of direct accountability to constituents for their votes, varying institutional structures can make legislators accountable to a diverse set of principals, including party leaders, presidents, or even subnational governors in federated systems. While those of us who study the U.S. Congress are spoiled by the prolific record keeping of our national legislature and the kind data sharing of scholars who have these data in electronic formats, Carey had to travel the world to document the individual votes. The data in this book, now made freely available, will provide empirical fodder for a generation of comparative legislative studies scholars.

While the remarkable data collection project is impressive, the conclusions reached through the analysis of the data are even more significant. Carey finds that various electoral institutions affect the incentives that determine whether candidates strive for individual accountability or collective accountability, and explores the extent to which the existence of alternative principles affect the degree of (and nature of) accountability. Carey's book serves as a clear reminder that there is much to be learned about legislative politics and representation by exploiting the cross-national variation in institutions and political context.

**Jewell-Loewenberg Award** for the best article in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* in 2009 (Selection Committee: Cherie Maestas, Neil Malhotra, Jamie Carson)

Recipient: Sebastian Saeigh (University of California, San Diego), "Recovering a Basic Space from Elite Surveys: Evidence from Latin America," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 34(1): 117-143.

The committee is pleased to award the Jewell-Loewenberg Award for best paper published in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* in 2009 to Sebastian Saiegh for his paper "Recovering a Basic Space from Elite Surveys: Evidence from Latin America." The committee received a number of top notch nominations and we also reviewed all published articles from the preceding year so the pool of contenders was quite deep. With that said, Sebastian Saiegh's article stood out as a smart and thorough attempt to address a thorny measurement issue that affects a broad swath of research in the study of comparative and American legislatures.

Locating legislators, parties, and executives is essential to the study legislative institutions, parties, party systems, polarization, and representation. However, our tests of theories in these areas are only as strong as our measures of the underlying concepts. Saiegh reviews the common methods for locating political actors and parties in a common ideological space such as using roll call vote data or expert judgments, and highlights the problems with each. He argues that elite surveys – survey responses from politicians – can be scaled to yield valid and reliable measures that improve on these more commonly used alternatives. Survey data is less likely to exhibit the biases from strategic behavior than roll call votes. It can also be obtained in countries or states where roll call data are unavailable. Moreover, through proper scaling procedures, the use of elite survey data allows multiple actors to be located on the same ideological scale.

Saiegh uses the Aldrich-McKelvey scaling procedure to correct for differential item functioning to obtain valid and reliable estimates of ideological positions for political elite in 9 nations in Latin America. The article provides evidence of reliability across all 9 cases, and in-depth validation analysis of for three countries. As a result, the paper makes a convincing case that this is a suitable approach to measurement that improves upon existing strategies and serves as a practical alternative to using roll call data. The committee was impressed with the quality

of the analysis, the weight of the evidence, and the broad applicability of the results.

**Alan Rosenthal Prize** for the best book or article in legislative studies written by a junior scholar that has potential value to legislative practitioners (Selection Committee: Michele Swers, Christopher Berry, and John Griffin).

Recipients: David C. W. Parker (Montana State University) and Craig Goodman (Texas Tech University), "Making a Good Impression: Resource Allocation, Home Styles and Washington Work." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 34(4): 493-524.

The Alan Rosenthal Prize is given to junior scholars who make significant advances in political science that also can be applied to practical legislative work and will advance the practice of representative democracy. In their article, "Making a Good Impression: Resource Allocation, Home Styles, and Washington Work," David Parker and Craig Goodman achieve this distinction by providing new insights into the representational relationship between constituents and their members.

A great deal of attention has been paid to understanding the motivations behind legislator's policy activities in Washington. Yet, we know comparatively little about the representational relationship between members and their constituents and how and why members develop a specific home style. In the great tradition of Richard Fenno, Parker and Goodman focus on how constituents perceive the home styles of their members and whether the activities of members can affect these constituent perceptions. Combining data from the American National Election Study on constituents likes and dislikes with data on member's office expenditures, these scholars demonstrate for example, that increased spending on travel and to a lesser extent franked mail does enhance a member's reputation as a good constituent servant. However, spending on franked mail does not impact a member's reputation for policy expertise. Scholars and legislators who want to increase their understanding of the link between constituents and their representatives will benefit from this study.

**CQ Press Award** for the best paper on legislative studies presented at the 2009 annual meeting (Selection Committee: Lauren Bell, Kenneth Shotts, Garry Young)

Recipient: Christian Grose (University of Southern California), "Priming Rationality: A Theory and Field Experiment of Participation in Legislatures."

In the late Spring, the Committee reviewed several very good nominations and submissions, and although it was difficult, the Committee ultimately concluded that this year's LSS CQ Press Best Paper Award winner is The University of Southern California's Christian Grose, for his paper, "Priming Rationality: A Theory and Field Experiment of Participation in Legislatures."

The Committee selected Professor Grose's paper for three reasons: first, because it tackled an interesting question—why state legislators might deliberately abstain from or actively avoid casting a vote?; second, because it used an innovative methodology—a fully-developed and implemented field experiment; and third, because the paper substantially and significantly advances our subfield's knowledge of what motivates legislators' roll call participation decisions.

Through Professor Grose's work, we learn that simply by telling a legislator that his or her vote matters, we — or, more likely, constituency or pressure groups — increase the likelihood that he or she will show up to vote. Not surprisingly, it is also true that legislators are more likely to vote when they think the record of whether or not they voted will be made public. But

Professor Grose also shows us that when legislators believe that the actual content of their votes will be made public, they are more likely to *abstain from* voting. For the first time, we have causal, direct evidence of how priming and pressure can affect legislators' participation decisions. Finally, beyond the theoretical and empirical contributions of Professor Grose's work, his paper was downright fun to read — and it is a rare and talented scholar who can manage all of this in one paper.

LSS Chair Sarah Binder congratulated the award winners and thanked the committees for their service. She then discussed the issue of section membership. She noted that membership fluctuates from year to year, with a current total of about 570. In 2005-2006, the section experienced an expected decrease in membership when dues went up to accommodate the LSS membership – LSQ subscription link. There was a recovery in 2007-2008, and then another drop in 2009-2010, probably as a result of the economy and its effects on university and personal budgets.

Since changes in the size of the membership have consequences for LSQ and LSS, she argued that it is worth investigating whether the recent dips are due to lapsed memberships or to fewer graduate students and junior faculty choosing to join the section. Thus far, the primary action taken to address the issue has been appointing an Americanist and a comparativist as dual program chairs for the annual meeting. Binder indicated that she intended to continue this practice, as well as extend it by reflecting section diversity in awards committees composition (with, where possible, a comparative scholar, a Congress scholar, and a state legislative scholar on each). She also noted that she was willing to contact lapsed members and ask them to renew their membership.

The discussion then turned to the LSS listserv. LaDonna Sullivan of the Carl Albert Center noted that they intend to refresh the list by cancelling the old list and repopulating it with a fresh list of members. Members will be subscribed to the list using the email addresses they provided to APSA, but there will be mechanisms for changing one's address or opting out of the list. Eventually, the section listserv may be operated through APSAConnect, but for now, there are still some glitches to be worked out (e.g., a member is dropped immediately when his/her membership lapses).

Sullivan also raised the issue of whether to discontinue the printed mailing that goes out to members indicating that the latest edition of the electronic newsletter has been posted to the website. She noted that the primary advantages to eliminating this printed mailing are to reduce demands on Carl Albert Center staff and to save on paper and postage. Several members advocated for continuing the printed mailing, arguing that the reminder greatly increases their likelihood of visiting the site and reading the newsletter. It was decided that the mailing will continue for the time being.

Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tracy Sulkin  
LSS Secretary-Treasurer

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