

**Sarah A. Treul.** *Agenda Crossover: The Influence of State Delegations in Congress*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017, xi, 170 pp. (\$99.99 Hardcover).

Over the last several decades students of American legislative behavior have focused primarily on political party. This is, of course, understandable, particularly given the rise of polarization. Undoubtedly, party is of central importance. Exclusive attention to it, however, may cause the field to miss important developments with other relationships. In *Agenda Crossover*, Sarah Treul examines the behavior of state delegations in Congress, a topic that has been largely ignored in the four decades since Barbara Deckard [Sinclair] studied it. Combining sophisticated data analysis with interviews, case studies, and political history, Treul finds that state delegations are somewhat less important to the decision making of members of Congress today than they were a generation or two ago, although members still claim they play a useful role. But the book's most valuable contribution may be the author's intriguing finding on how senators exploit representatives' agendas for their own electoral advantage.

In a broad historical overview, Treul argues that in the past homogenous state economies provided state congressional delegations incentive for members to work across political party lines to protect and promote common state interests. But, as state economies have become more heterogeneous in recent decades they give members less reason to act jointly. Yet, her interviews reveal that congressional members still see their state delegation as a useful source of information and, under certain circumstances, influential policy making vehicles.

Treul initially examines House and Senate delegation behavioral patterns separately. Both of these chapters are data dense and the analyses in each are thorough. The findings reported in the House chapter come as little surprise. Political party and polarization dominate the discussion. Importantly, however, there is variation in delegation behavior across the states. For example, Treul reports that the most dramatic increases in delegation polarization between 1967 and 2010 occurred in the South, most notably in Georgia, while many northern state delegations witnessed only slight increases, and Iowa's delegation even experienced a trivial decrease. She also finds differences across the states in the subjects of legislation delegation members sponsored. Thus, the federal system still exerts an impact on U.S. House member behavior even as party dominates decision making and polarization forces state delegations farther apart.

Examining the behavior of U.S. senators by state, Treul finds a slight increase in senators voting alike over the last few decades, even when controlling for party. More important, perhaps, she reports that senators from the same state are alighting on similar agendas and not staking out distinctive topics on which to distinguish themselves from each other. Senators cover a wider range of policies now to protect themselves from potential challengers. Overall, senate delegations behave more similarly than their House counterparts, likely because senators represent the same constituency. Similar policy agendas emerge as a rational response to preempt potential challengers.

The book's most significant contribution is the author's theory of agenda crossover. Treul examines the degree to which legislative agendas overlap across congressional delegation members. Her gauge on this measure is broad; the overlap only has to be in terms of the legislation's topic and not of its policy direction or intent. The argument Treul advances holds that members of Congress are rewarded electorally for placing the "right" issues on their policy

agendas. Because U.S. House members have to seek reelection every two years their agendas have to be particularly sensitive to the voters' preferences. The novel twist that Treul develops is that as their reelection campaigns approach, senators coopt the agenda's advanced by their state's representatives, prompting the author to see lower house members as scouts. Not surprisingly, she reports that agendas are more apt to be shared within delegations by representatives and senators from the same party. Representatives with progressive career ambitions utilize the agendas of their state's senators as a means for expanding their agendas beyond the more narrow confines of their districts. Senators seeking reelection look to their state's representatives for updated information about the voter's policy concerns and preferences. Treul finds consistent support for her various agenda crossover hypotheses. The substantive size of her findings are not overwhelming, but they do document that members of both the House and Senate behave in the ways she theorizes.

*Agenda Crossover* represents a great deal of thought and work. The author gathered volumes of data and examined them in a thorough and thoughtful manner. Her analyses are successful in documenting the current state of congressional state delegations and in showing how various relationship have changed over time and across state delegations. But this book does not exhaust the topic. There are at least two more dimensions that merit further attention. First, greater attention could be directed at the states from which delegations hail. Treul touches on a few of the differences across the states by looking at state population size and the number of \$5 billion and \$15 billion industries. Left unexamined, among other differences, are state governmental structures and state party structures. Lawmakers from one party states, for example, might interact differently than those from more competitive states. Second, the experiences of state delegation members before they arrive in Congress could be integrated into the analysis. For example, one question might be whether lawmakers from more professional legislatures cooperate differently or devise agendas differently when they arrive in Congress. There also may be personal or professional relationships developed prior to entering Congress that impact legislative behavior. Finally, more could be done on policy agenda content to incorporate information on policy direction and potential impact.

Overall, *Agenda Crossover* makes a useful contribution to the congressional literature. The theorizing is straightforward and sensible. The analyses are thoroughly professional. The author uses material from her interviews and case studies to inform her theorizing and to flesh out the analysis in informative ways. And the author is to be commended for reminding legislative scholars that Congress operates in a federal system and that, at least on the margins, the states matter in policy making.

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