

OKLAHOMA WOMEN AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

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This paper reveals obstacles and challenges women politicians in Oklahoma feel they themselves or women in general face as officeholders. Also examined in this paper is whether attending leadership programs for women, such as N.E.W. Leadership institute held each year at the University of Oklahoma's Carl Albert Center provide an extra edge for women politicians. In determining fact from fiction with regards to these issues, an analysis was done using a mail-in survey of 49 female officeholders in county, city, and state level political positions.

In 2003, 73 women serve in the U.S. Congress. Thirteen women serve in the Senate, and 60 women serve in the House, both all-time highs. Nationally, women comprise 22.4% of members of state legislatures (Center for Women in Politics, 2002). In Oklahoma, there are six women in the of 48-seat State Senate (12.5%), and eight women

in the 101-seat (7.9%) House of Representatives (Almanac of Oklahoma Politics 1998). Although several women politicians such as Mary Fallin, Jari Askins and Angela Monson have emerged as powerful leaders, Cindy Simon Rosenthal's characterization of Oklahoma as "no-woman's land" is still apt (Rosenthal 1998, 96).

The research question driving this study is whether women in Oklahoma politics face different obstacles than men in Oklahoma politics. We sent questionnaires to 49 women who hold public office at the state, city, and county level. Twenty state senators and representatives, district attorneys, lieutenant governors, and city council members returned our surveys. We will use their answers to test the following hypotheses:

H1: Women in politics feel that *women in general* face different obstacles than men

H2: Women in politics feel that *they themselves* face different obstacles than men

H3: Women who have attended leadership programs for women succeed in politics at a higher rate than women who have not attended leadership programs for women.

In short, we believe that women politicians in the state of Oklahoma will feel that women in general face different obstacles than men in running for and holding public office. Also, that women politicians will feel that *they themselves* face different obstacles than men. Finally, we believe that training programs—such as the National Education for Women (N.E.W.) Leadership institute for women sponsored by the National Center for the Study of Women in Politics and OU's Carl Albert Center—should boost the success rate of women getting elected and being effective once elected to office.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern (1997) underrepresentation of women among the political elite appears to stem from two interrelated sets of problems—environmental/structural and attitudinal—that have created barriers to women's political participation.

There are three sets of environmental/structural problems. The first is the sociocultural problem of family responsibilities. McGlen and O'Connor (1998) identify family obligations as a tough hurdle for women. Women with children are less suited for public office. Even if a woman could reject or overcome the alleged incompatibility of the two roles of mother and politician, she might not run for office for fear of the public's or her own family's negative reaction. Mothers of young children who have run for office tell many stories about the hostile and snide questions asked by some voters and reporters about who was taking care of their children. When faced with this role conflict, following the pattern of women in other high-powered careers, women politicians seem to solve the problem either by remaining childless, having fewer children, delaying their political careers until their children are older, remaining single, or marrying a supportive spouse.

The second environmental/structural problem is limited career opportunities, which is an economic problem. Fewer women than men are found in the pipeline professions to political activism. Women who run for office generally tend to have occupied "women's careers," for example, educator/teacher and nurse type occupations (McGlen and O'Connor 1998).

The third environmental/structural problem lies with the American electoral and party system, which is a political problem. For example, women have a harder time in raising money to run for office. Women are not actively recruited to run for office by political parties because they are not seen as strong candidates, nor are they often appointed to powerful committee chairs. Finally, the incumbency effect is one woman's greatest enemy because in protecting the status quo, women are kept from office.

Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern (1997) also identify attitudinal obstacles that women face. They note that the perceptions of women as politicians held by the public, party leaders, as well as women themselves are difficult to overcome. According to McGlen and O'Connor (1998), women face stereotypes and sex discrimination—which includes ideas of what is appropriate or inappropriate for women, concepts as to their behavior, and public perceptions in general.

Women in Oklahoma politics face these problems as well as others. Rosenthal (1998) identifies three special obstacles for women in the Oklahoma legislature. First, the Southern-traditionalistic political culture

of the state favors male politicians. Second, women are seen as “tokens,” which place them under higher scrutiny for their actions because they are seen to represent women as a group. Finally, procedures for decision making are aggregative rather than deliberative or consensus building. In sum, when women achieve power, they have a very hard time using it in the male political context. For these reasons and others, Rosenthal calls Oklahoma “no-woman’s land” (Rosenthal 1998, 96). Although she writes only of the legislature, we can assume that these attributes probably exist in the political bodies throughout the state.

METHODS

This study was conducted using a mail-questionnaire that contained both close-ended and open-ended questions. Forty-nine women who currently hold office in the State of Oklahoma were selected. The lieutenant governor, state senators and state house representatives, city council members, and district attorneys were selected to receive questionnaires. Of the 49 surveys mailed, one was returned as undeliverable, and 20 were returned completed. Answers to the close-ended survey questions were coded and entered into SPSS. Answers to the open-ended questions were coded into broad categories for qualitative evaluation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1 stated that women in politics feel that *women in general* face different obstacles than men. There were several questions on the questionnaire that pertain to hypothesis 1. Respondents were asked, “Do you agree that **most women** who run for office face different challenges or obstacles than most men who have run for office?” Possible answers range from 1, or “strongly agree” to 6, or “strongly disagree.” Sixteen respondents generally agreed with this question, whereas 11 disagreed. The mean score is 2.4, somewhere between “slightly agree” and “agree.”

TABLE 1

Do you agree that most women who run for office face different challenges or obstacles than most men who have run for office?

	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent Valid
Strongly Agree (1)	5	25.0	29.4
Slightly Agree (2)	1	5.0	5.9
Agree (3)	10	50.0	58.8
Disagree (4)	1	5.0	5.9
Slightly Disagree (5)	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree (6)	0	0	0
Total	17	85.0	100.0
Missing	3	15.0	
Total	20	100.0	
Mean	2.4		

Respondents were also asked “While serving in office, do you feel that women public servants face different challenges or obstacles than men who serve in office?” Possible answers range from 1, or “strongly agree” to 6, or “strongly disagree.” The mean answer for this question is 2.9, with 13 women generally agreeing, and 7 women disagreeing.

In looking at the results from Tables 1 and 2, we can conclude that the respondents to this questionnaire feel that women in general face different obstacles than men in both running for office and serving in office. Table 1 demonstrates that all of the women who answered this question except one agrees with the statement. One woman indicated that she “disagreed” that women faced different challenges when running for office. Table 2 shows that of the 20 women who answered this question, 65% agreed that women face different challenges while serving in office. Seven respondents, or 35% disagreed.

In an open-ended question, respondents had an opportunity to list “additional challenges or obstacles” that women face. One woman wrote, “Motherhood carries more and different responsibilities than fatherhood. There is not a ‘good-ole-girl’ network like the ‘good-ole-boy’ network.

TABLE 2

While serving in office, do you feel that women public servants face different challenges or obstacles than men who serve in office?

	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent Valid
Strongly Agree (1)	4	20.0	20.0
Slightly Agree (2)	1	5.0	5.0
Agree (3)	8	40.0	40.0
Disagree (4)	7	35.0	35.0
Slightly Disagree (5)	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree (6)	0	0	0
Total	20	100.0	100.0
Mean	2.9		

Some women have a harder time raising money. Some male legislators are sexist.” This response seems to echo both what Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern (1997) would call “environmental/structural” obstacles as well as “attitudinal” obstacles.

Other attitudinal obstacles are mentioned by another woman politician: “I believe voters require that a woman be gracious and be neat and tidy in appearance, more so than they expect of a man. Women have to get past our tendency to want everyone to like us and be willing to be firm and clear on issues.” Similarly, a respondent complained that women face “accusations of abandoning family and young children.” A woman politician is “Not a good mother.” Another woman writes that women are hampered by: “Male opinion that ‘skirts don’t belong in politics.’ Male bonding/networking that allows stopping by a business for coffee and talk—women aren’t allowed.”

In summary, hypothesis 1, that women in politics feel that *women in general* face different obstacles than men, is supported by the data we collected. The majority of the politicians who responded to our survey indicated that they agreed that “most women who run for office face different challenges or obstacles than most men who have run for office,” and that while serving in office, women public servants face different

challenges or obstacles than men who serve in office.” Respondents also provided a variety of environmental/structural and attitudinal obstacles that they have faced.

In order to test Hypothesis 2, women were asked “In running for office, do you agree that **you personally** have faced different challenges or obstacles than most men who have run for office?” Possible answers range from 1, or “strongly agree” to 6, or “strongly disagree.” In answering this question, 13 women agreed that they had personally faced different challenges than men, and nine women disagreed. The mean answer is 2.65, or between “slightly agree” and “agree.”

Women were also asked, “Do you agree that you are taken as seriously as a male political figure of equal standing?” The mean answer to this question is 2.74, indicating that, on average, women agree that they have been taken seriously as politicians. Only three women indicated that they had not been taken seriously.

In looking at the open-ended responses to this question, women had many interesting things to say that indicate that being taken seriously by colleagues and constituents may come on a more conditional basis. One politician wrote that she felt taken seriously by constituents but not

TABLE 3

In running for office, do you agree that you personally have faced different challenges or obstacles than most men who have run for office?”

	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent Valid
Strongly Agree (1)	4	20.0	23.5
Slightly Agree (2)	3	15.0	17.6
Agree (3)	6	30.0	35.3
Disagree (4)	3	15.0	17.6
Slightly Disagree (5)	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree (6)	1	5.0	5.9
Total	17	85.0	100.0
Missing System	3	15.0	
Total		20	100.0
Mean	2.65		

TABLE 4

**Do you agree that you are taken as seriously as a
male political figure of equal standing?**

	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent Valid
Strongly Agree 1.00	5	25.0	26.3
Slightly Agree 2.00	1	5.0	5.3
Agree 3.00	10	50.0	52.6
Disagree 4.00	1	5.0	5.3
Slightly Disagree 5.00	1	5.0	5.3
Strongly Disagree 6.00	1	5.0	5.3
Total	19	95.0	100.0
Missing	1	5.0	
Total		20	100.0
Mean	2.74		

by fellow politicians: “[I’m taken seriously] By citizens, lots of phone calls for ‘at a girl’. Generally, the public doesn’t have a good opinion of the ‘good-ole-boys’ council and Mayor. The city council members and Mayor don’t take me seriously. City staff and employees do.” Another politician felt that once she gained office, she was taken seriously, “Once you are in office, I feel I’ve been treated no differently than my male counterparts.” This sentiment also shows up in another response: “Not initially, the old adage applies that as a woman I do have to work twice as hard for some recognition.” Finally, one woman provided a completely negative answer: “People tend to listen to men because they’re more stern and forceful.” On the whole, it seems that the respondents feel that they are taken seriously at least part of the time, although respect from constituents and co-office holders might be hard to earn at first.

We also asked women whether “your role as a political figure has been limited by your gender?” In general, women’s responses about feeling limited by their gender are ambivalent. The mean score on this question is 3.85, putting the average answer between “disagree” and

“agree.” Only six politicians noted that they agreed that their roles as political figures have been limited by gender. The open-ended responses to this question confirm this ambivalence. One woman wrote, “Citizens back me. Council members and Mayor don’t give me credit and work around me, often shut me out of information.” Her response seems to show that she may feel limited because of her gender. Another woman wrote, “There are some that still feel we should stay home and cook instead of running a business or seeking an office.” Her answer reflects the general attitudes that society holds regarding the proper roles for women. Some women simply do not feel limited at all. One woman wrote, “I do not feel limited simply because I am a woman. I am judged more on my performance and competency.”

Women were asked in an open-ended question, “Have you ever felt discriminated against as a woman in politics?” We coded their responses either 1 for yes, or 0 for no. Twelve of the 20 women who answered this question felt that they had been discriminated against and they provided many examples. One woman wrote, “[the] Mayor talks down to me, explains things as though I couldn’t possibly know; telling me what my role and agenda is, getting in my face, don’t give my opinion credit, blow it off—including a black councilman.” Similarly, another

TABLE 5

Do you agree that your role as a political figure has been limited by your gender?

	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent Valid
Strongly Agree (1)	1	5.0	5.0
Slightly Agree (2)	3	15.0	15.0
Agree (3)	2	10.0	10.0
Disagree (4)	6	30.0	30.0
Slightly Disagree (5)	2	10.0	10.0
Strongly Disagree (6)	5	25.0	25.0
Total	19	100.0	100.0
Mean	3.85		

TABLE 6

Have you ever felt discriminated against as a woman in politics?

	Frequency	Percent Valid	Percent Valid
No .00	8	40.0	40.0
Yes 1.00	12	60.0	60.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0
Mean	.6		

woman writes that she felt disrespected by her constituents: “Fellow members of my City Council are not discriminatory but some constituents do not talk business with a woman or worse, believe surely the lone female is the ‘weakest link’.” A third respondent linked attitudes toward women to her difficulty in gaining power: “Paternal attitudes of some male representatives, [and] [d]ifficulty to move into leadership position because of focus on ‘soft issues’—education, children, etc.” Although not all women claimed to have felt discrimination, these three examples outline some of the obstacles that women face.

In conclusion, can hypothesis 2—that women in politics feel that *they themselves* face different obstacles than men—be accepted? Women generally agree that they have faced different obstacles (Table 3), but these politicians also say they have been taken as seriously as men (Table 4), and they have not been limited by their gender (Table 5). When asked outright if they “ever felt discriminated against,” 12 women provided examples that they had, whereas eight claimed they had not (Table 6). The evidence is indeed mixed. One woman writes, “The old adage applies that as a woman, I do have to work twice as hard for the same recognition,” but she does imply that equality can be earned.

Hypothesis 3 asks whether women who have attended leadership programs for women succeed in politics at a higher rate than women who have not attended leadership programs for women. In 2001, the Carl Albert Center at the University of Oklahoma established the National Education for Women’s Leadership (NEW) institute to encourage more women to consider careers in public service, including running for public

elective office. We were interested to learn whether current women politicians had benefitted from such a program in the past.

Women were asked if they had "attended any leadership programs specifically designed for women." Of the twenty women who responded to our survey, only four had attended such a program. Using means-tests to compare these groups would be inappropriate due to their small size, so qualitative analysis only will be used to evaluate whether hypothesis 3 can be supported.

One woman who attended leadership programs for women stated they were beneficial because "they made me think on more sides of an issue." Another woman attended a program for Women in Municipal Government, which she found valuable: "It helped me build a network of other women to talk with." Most women had not attended a leadership program for women. Some thought one would be a good idea: "I would endorse a leadership program such as NEW. Leadership programs are very important." Another woman wrote, "I currently encourage young women to attend schools and seminars in order to build their confidence and self-esteem so they can survive in the world outside of the home."

We were surprised to find that many women had a dim view of such programs. One woman wrote, "sometimes we need to remember we are all Oklahomans—gender is not the issue." Another seemed to think that the set of skills she needed to be successful in office were not the ones taught at such an institute: "The real art is to be a lady among men who promotes her causes and ideals with facts for the good of the constituents, while understanding the male role in the deal."

One woman thought that a special program for women would actually be a hindrance: "If women truly believe in equality then they shouldn't need the crutch of separate programs. Special women-only programs perpetuate the notion that women need special help to bring them up to par with male candidates."

CONCLUSION

It seems that female politicians on the whole sense discrimination against women in politics in general, but not discrimination against themselves personally. One woman wrote, "I do not feel limited simply because I am a woman. I am judged more on my performance and

competency.” Our findings agree with the conclusions of Cantor and Bernay (1992), who found that women who are successful in politics do not tend to be daunted by the obstacles before them.

We could not properly evaluate hypothesis 3—that women who have attended leadership programs for women succeed in politics at a higher rate than women who have not attended leadership programs for women—because of the lack of data. We were surprised to learn that such programs would not earn total support from women currently in office.

On a methodological note, these are the “winners” with whom we spoke. It is likely that the women who have been most disadvantaged by their gender are not sitting in public office. Women in office today are pioneers in “no-woman’s land,” and they are willing and able to overcome any obstacle.

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APPENDIX: SURVEY

1. How many times have you run for office? _____
Have you ever run unsuccessfully? Yes / No

2. What level of office have you held? (Circle all that apply.)
a. City
b. County
c. State
d. National

3. What is the longest you have held an office and what office was it?

4. In running for office, do you agree that **you personally** have faced different challenges or obstacles than most men who have run for office?
a. strongly agree
b. slightly agree
c. agree
d. disagree
e. slightly disagree
f. strongly disagree
g. no opinion

5. Do you agree that **most women** who run for office face different challenges or obstacles than most men who have run for office?

- a. strongly agree
- b. slightly agree
- c. agree
- d. disagree
- e. slightly disagree
- f. strongly disagree
- g. no opinion

If so, what are some of these additional challenges or obstacles?

6. While serving in office, do you feel that women public servants face different challenges or obstacles than men who serve in office?

- a. strongly agree
- b. slightly agree
- c. agree
- d. disagree
- e. slightly disagree
- f. strongly disagree
- g. no opinion

7. Have you ever felt discriminated against as a woman in politics?
Explain. _____

8. Do you agree that you are taken as seriously as a male political figure of equal standing?

- a. strongly agree
- b. slightly agree
- c. agree
- d. disagree
- e. slightly disagree
- f. strongly disagree
- g. no opinion

Please explain your answer:

9. Do you agree that your role as a political figure has been limited by your gender?

- a. strongly agree
- b. slightly agree
- c. agree
- d. disagree
- e. slightly disagree
- f. strongly disagree
- g. no opinion

Please explain your answer:

10. Did you ever attend any leadership programs specifically designed for women in your past? If yes, please give examples:

11. If yes to question 10, do you feel it has helped you in any way? If no, do you think it would have benefitted you? And why do you feel the way you do?

12. Consider the experiences you have had when running for office and while in office. Would you, or do you, endorse such leadership programs such as NEW (which is a week long residential program during which college students learn about women's leadership roles and women's political participation for scholars and practitioners) for young women who are interested in political careers?

13. What factors motivated you to seek public office?

BOOK REVIEW SECTION

Cindy Simon Rosenthal, ed. *Women Transforming Congress*. Forward by Richard F. Fenno, Jr. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002) pp. 453. \$29.95 ISBN 0806134550

Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, Barbara Boxer and Diane Feinstein: will one among them be the first female President of the United States? Political research will no doubt one day confront this event. In the meantime, the selections in *Women Transforming Congress* represent an excellent start to understanding the significance of gender in national politics. This important collaborative work confronts the important question of whether and how the 200 women who have served in the previous century have transformed the U.S. Congress as an institution.

Much of the existing research on women in politics has taken the form of individual case studies that defy broad generalizations. Editor Cindy Rosenthal's initial chapter takes note of four specific limitations of this research: it has been confined to state legislative experiences, since the available data are richest there; it focuses on women in office after the "feminist era" of the late '60s; it concentrates upon female elected officials to the neglect of the massive support staff surrounding legislative work; and it ignores the institutional norms and behaviors driving the actions of both men and women. Rosenthal and her collaborators endeavor to shift the research agenda to the national level despite her own admission that the data sample is small and conclusions necessarily tentative.

Published with assistance from the National Endowment for the Humanities, this work emerged out of the first-ever national research conference on women and the U.S. Congress, held at the Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center at the University of

Oklahoma in April 2000. The collection of individual works represents a broad foundation of research and analysis upon which future scholarship may build.

Story-like progressions of themes provide great breadth to this volume. The editor's initial chapter anticipates many later conclusions, allowing the reader to identify sections or topics of particular interest. Beginning with the gendered nature of institutional norms, the second chapter discusses the "gender ideology" affecting all members. The next section teaches that women represent far more than their individual constituencies. This is followed by an argument that while women's issues are championed predominately by female legislators, they do have a transforming effect upon their male counterparts. In one of the best contributions to the volume, female institutional support staffs are studied. It is noted that while female staff tend to concentrate on certain issue areas and contribute to the representation of issues and constituencies, they are by and large absent from most male-dominated committees.

The contributions on campaigns and elections focus on the experiences of "strategic politicians,"—those female candidates with the experience, skills and resources—who gain election only to find that they typically conform to institutional norms to succeed once elected rather than transforming the environment. The following chapter admits, however, that the electioneering of men has been impacted by women to the extent that they include "softer" presentation modes and female-oriented issues.

Another under-researched area addressed by this work is women and the committee structure. A good contribution to this subject is the essay which evaluates the effect of the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill episode. While this had a temporary effect in that more women gained increased representation on committees and subcommittees, the seniority of males largely prevailed to take command of the committee leadership structure and function in later years. The following essay seemingly reinforces the earlier "strategic politician" conclusion by considering female policy transformation. It finds that women who rise to leadership positions, albeit in female-friendly issues, can be successful, even as their achievements are overshadowed by the preponderance of "pivotal" committees with traditional male dominance. Little composite change has thus been noted overall in impact of gender at the committee level.

In establishing the congressional agenda and making policy, women have proven to be transforming, according to the contributions in the next section. An analysis of the introduction of legislation reveals that majority and minority party identification seem to determine to what extent risk-taking behavior occurs rather than simply whether congresswomen are driven by gender to assume the lead on gender-specific issues. The essay analyzing debate in the chambers from four specific floor debates in the 104th Congress again notes a broadening of the substance and approach to policy issues and concludes females have a tendency to speak out more on behalf of “underrepresented groups.” This adds credibility to the earlier conclusions that once elected, women represent far more than the constituency from which they came.

Interest groups and their roles are next. Gender-specific contributions in the breast cancer issue assisted the promotion policy initiatives regarding prostate cancer. Increased women’s involvement in issues through a “community” of interest groups reveals that the priorities of Congress soon followed. A particularly disturbing essay reveals, however, that protest and violence approaches, i.e., “tactics,” make women’s groups “targets” and not promoters.

This work finishes concludes with a series of essays identifying barriers to true transformation. Until more women are elected, gain seniority and ascend to more strategic committee and leadership positions, institutional norms will continue to limit their lasting contributions. Women running as Republicans on the ballot particularly encounter serious obstacles to change. Female responsibilities and lifestyle demands pose high hurdles for continuity and success and lead women to postpone political aspirations until later in life (while not particularly mentioned, this could also be a factor in the preference for state legislative service—closer to home). In a good global comparison, female parliament members in Great Britain are contrasted with their U.S. equivalents. Different institutional configurations make it far easier for female parliament members to succeed in the gender transformation of their institution than for U.S. congresswomen to do so.

Whether or not women’s impact upon national politics has indeed been transformative, this scholarly collection will certainly transform the study of Congress. Readers will gain new insights and perspectives on women in politics. Until the time that a “strategic” politician becomes

the first female president, this work should set the tone for how scholars approach the study of gender in our national political institutions.

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Robin Kolodny. *Pursuing Majorities: Congressional Campaign Committees in American Politics*. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998) pp. 320. \$9.98 ISBN 0806130695

Robin Kolodny stretches congressional scholarship into the relatively unexplored area of Congressional Campaign Committees (CCC) in the House and Senate. Kolodny traces the historical development of the CCC over the last 150 years and concludes her analysis in the modern era. Kolodny asserts that the political parties are unable to provide remedies or strategies for overcoming political fragmentation, the CCC confirm that well-established theoretical assertion at a fundamental political party level. By choice and design congressmen desire a separate electoral strategy. If not, they will be consumed by the affiliated presidential party and consequentially, lose or never attain majority power in their own institution. The CCC become an efficient manner to apply the latest campaign techniques, tap into sources of funding, and allow the congressional party to govern with or without an affiliated president.

Kolodny answers a variety of questions: How do Congressional Campaign Committees contribute to congressional vibrancy? What do the CCC do? Who controls the CCC and for what purposes? When did the CCC become critical to the overall congressional process? How do the CCC Chairs benefit from service in the committee? And why should scholars and citizens care about the CCC?

Congressional Campaign Committees are an integral part of the congressional process because political parties strive to attain or maintain majority control over their chambers. The goal of majority control often differs from the party's other goal of winning a presidential election.

Hence, the CCC tend to serve the needs of the institution and the congressional leadership contributing to weak party structures.

Pursuing Majorities applies to those interested in institutional development, congressional seniority, congressional leadership, and modern campaigns. Kolodny traces the development of CCC and clearly makes the case that the CCC are in a fluid, obscure, and untenable situation. They maintain a cousin-like relationship with the national party committee; whereas, whenever it is mutually beneficial, and they cooperate; otherwise they operate in separate universes and at times at cross-purposes. The reader may agree with Kolodny that the party in government is hindered by party fragmentation. However, I tend to rejoice in that CCC bolster checks and balances. Kolodny remains steadfast and correct in her analysis that CCC serve the members of Congress and not the whole political system.

The weaknesses of the book are minor ones. The book is not well suited for a general audience. Scholars can benefit from Kolodny's in-depth historical research yet undergraduates will more than likely struggle with the density of the reading. The other minor observation is that the bibliography did not reference the Carl Albert Archives located at the University of Oklahoma's Carl Albert Congressional Research Center. The Carl Albert Archives is one of the nation's best collections of congressional papers and may contribute to further research in this area.

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