

## **BOOK REVIEW SECTION**



Tom A. Coburn with John Hart (and a Forward by Robert Novak). *Breach of Trust: How Washington Turns Outsiders into Insiders*. (Nashville, TN: WND Books, 2003), pp. 272. \$24.99 (ISBN 0-7852-6220-2) hc

**Medical doctors are becoming more prominent** in American politics. Earlier this decade Dr. Bill Frist became Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate. Dr. Howard Dean was for a few months in 2004 the leading candidate for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States. Then there is Oklahoma's own Dr. Tom Coburn, Oklahoma's newly elected United States Senator, who, with some acknowledged help, has written a semi-autobiography of his three terms of service in the United States House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.

Interspersed throughout Coburn's book are ten observations about what the U.S. Congress doesn't want you to know about how it spends your tax dollars. As imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, I am adopting his template for this book review, listing ten observations (reflecting my own humble personal opinion) that you, as a professional political scientist, might find useful to know about either U.S. Senator Tom Coburn and/or his book, *Breach of Trust*:

1. Tom Coburn is more a libertarian (or even an anarchist) than a conservative. Liberals build schools and hire teachers. Conservatives build prisons and hire police. Libertarians close down public institutions and privatize any remaining jobs. Senator Coburn's agenda has always

been to shrink and reduce government, rather than to make it work or to carry out an ideological agenda. Likewise, he is more a radical or revolutionary than a Republican. Coburn is more interested in limiting (if not eliminating) government than he is in his political party, directing or controlling it.

2. Ideological purity is more important to him than party loyalty. Remember, this book is an attack by Coburn on his own Republican Party in Congress (not the Democrats in Congress) because the GOP opted for political expediency rather than ideological purity. Who else would lead a revolt against Newt Gingrich because he believed the Speaker to be too liberal or not confrontational enough with the Democrats? Most of us learned in our “Parties and Pressure Groups” class the difference between the two. The political parties seek to control the governmental process while the pressure group wants the government to adopt a specific policy. Using this distinction, Dr. Coburn is a member of a pressure or interest group rather than a political party.

3. As if reinventing the wheel or rediscovering fire, Senator Coburn has stumbled upon “The Iron Law of Oligarchy” as originally promulgated by Roberto Michels in his 1911 volume *Political Parties*. This concept is well known and easily recognized by any public administrator or student of administrative theory. Dr. Coburn’s Republican Party (GOP) behaved just like Michels’ German Social Democratic Party (SDP) did approximately 100 years earlier—the party compromised its principles to retain political power. Specifically, Senator Coburn’s Congressional Republicans favored lots of federal spending and big federal deficits as they viewed it as a key to being reelected and retaining if not expanding their political power. Likewise, the Republican leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives took a position on term limits that shocked Coburn but would be immediately recognized by anyone familiar with Michels: now that we are in power, there is no real immediate need to adopt term limits. Hence, this explains the title of Coburn’s book. As recounted by Coburn, this devotion to institutional self-interest is not just limited to the Republican Party but the American Medical Association (AMA) as well. Dr. Coburn reports AMA lobbyists knew next to nothing about the medical profession or about the problems or needs facing the practicing medical doctor—the

clients whose interests they were supposedly promoting. Dr. Coburn was surprised that the AMA hired lawyers as lobbyists.

4. This is a buddy book, not the tale of a lone wolf defying the powers that be. Whenever Tom Coburn takes political action in the Congressional arena, it is in alliance with Tulsa Congressman Steve Largent. The two fight their political battles side by side, arm-in-arm, and in lockstep together. They are political Siamese twins in any partisan skirmish or fray.

5. This is not the first (or even the best) tale of a naïve, very conservative Republican being elected to the legislature, becoming dismayed by its operations, and penning a tell-all exposé. H.L. “Bill” Richardson did it earlier (and better) chronicling his experiences in the California State Senate beginning in the 1960s. *What Makes You Think We Read the Bills?* is not only better written but far more entertaining and enlightening about the legislative process. (The book has since been reissued.)

6. What I learned from the book that I didn’t already know was that Congressman J.C. Watts represented Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (page 99). True, Oklahoma City had been dismembered in a gerrymander that gave nearly every member of the Oklahoma Congressional delegation a portion within the city limits but, silly me; I thought the core of OKC was represented during that time by Ernest “Jim” Istook while Watts represented mostly southwestern Oklahoma.

7. Unlike fellow Republican Teddy Roosevelt, who supposedly said the first duty of a statesman is to be re-elected, Tom Coburn, a firm advocate of term limits, did not seek re-election after three terms as he had promised. Like Teddy Roosevelt, who said he would not run for re-election (1908) and then later explained it to mean only at that specific time—but not later (1912), Coburn never promised not to seek a higher office at a later date. Unlike TR, Coburn was successful in his efforts.

8. Despite its length of 254 pages of text, there is far less to this book than meets the eye. It is padded with lengthy quotes, excerpts of editorials, snippets of articles, and speeches from Coburn and other's who agree with or praise him or his position. Having examined a few padded term papers myself, I recognize one when I read it. However, those works were never offered for sale to an unsuspecting public. Note: there is no index, bibliography, or appendix, although in the conclusion Senator Coburn does provide a plan for action and there are two addendums in the middle of the volume.

9. Dr. Coburn writes from the perspective of a businessman who wants the government to deregulate and untax his efforts so he can run his business the way he wants and make a profit, not as a medical doctor who is dedicated to the welfare of his patients. (However, I am equally dismayed, as was Dr. Coburn, that his offer of advice on matters of medical policy was rebuffed by the leadership of his own party and I personally applaud his efforts combating AIDS/HIV.)

10. If I was requested to recommend a book that is an autobiography of a young, idealistic, maverick Republican, who is elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, does not compromise his principles, battles the leadership of his own party, and eventually is a victorious candidate for the U.S. Senate, I would not hesitate for a moment. The book I heartily recommend is *Fighting Liberal: The Autobiography of George W. Norris*.

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Ronald Keith Gaddie. *Born to Run: Origins of the Political Career*. (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004), pp. 221. \$26.95 ISBN 0-7425-1928-7 hc

**Born to Run details nine case studies** in the pursuit for elective office to the state legislature from five states, Georgia, Maine, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Wisconsin. All the candidates are young. It is part of a new series of books devoted to both the theory and practice of politics, *Campaigning American Style*, Rowman and Littlefield publishers. Dr. Gaddie provides an insider's view of campaign life, the emotional rollercoaster, where you are only as good as your last speech, ad, flyer, or knocked door. Professor Gaddie may have borrowed the title of his book from Bruce Springsteen's album, he also could have used either "Thunder Road", or "Backstreets". It is a report from the campaign trail and is the story, or stories, of the very beginning of the political career with a unique look forward, rather than the more typical backward career mapping.

Dr. Gaddie follows each race through the lens of the candidate's youth which is a rarity, yet within the context of today's political environment, diffused and fragmented political power, candidate centered races, ambition, weakened parties, term limits, and important groups and individuals. He builds upon the important work and observational research of his mentor, Richard Fenno, in *Home Style*, by observing the political process first hand. This is reality political science. I know. I was 27 years old when first elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives and served four terms.

His work includes an analysis of the important question of why young people run in the first place and related considerations such as nativity, which he states, is highest in Oklahoma. The author finds that political ambition, especially progressive political ambition, is most prevalent among the young, especially the activists, and these early starters who get into office before they reach thirty-five are the ones who go farthest in American politics. Brad Carson, Dan Boren, Kalyn Free, Brad Henry, and others this election year could provide excellent local examples for added discussion.

Gaddie believes that all of the young politicians described in his book are closer to professionals than amateurs. "They are making career choices because they want to be in government, but not on the basis of any one issue," he states. While all nine candidates and their districts vary widely – male, female, urban, rural, Democrat, Republican, single, married – commonality is found in the following observations. All candidates benefited from a core inner circle of support that provided financial connections, as well as emotional and political advice with established networks. Most had strong civic ties and mentor type relationships with well known politicians. They had a head start with the powers that be and they planned and began their campaigns as early as possible. The candidates largely managed their own campaigns and were self-motivated. All ran intense grassroots campaigns that were issue-oriented. And all knew their districts well enough to allow the uniqueness of the district help dictate the style and mode of the campaign.

Once elected, policy concerns were simply an extension of the campaign and the needs of the district as well as the ambition of the newly elected legislator. Gaddie observes how age quickly can cease to be an issue within a legislative body given individual personality, talent, dedication, and hard work as he follows freshmen in their first years of office. He concludes with a discussion on the evolution of ambition as observed in the profiled young candidates and elected officials.

For interested readers and scholars, Professor Gaddie continues to provide a tracking of the progress of those he has labeled "The Young Guns," all 27 candidates for legislative office in the state of Oklahoma under 30 this year, on his website [www.soonerpolitics.com](http://www.soonerpolitics.com).

*Born to Run* could easily inspire any undergraduate or graduate student of politics, much in the same way Keith Gaddie describes his



reaction, as an undergraduate at Florida State University, to reading *Home Style* by Richard F. Fenno, Jr., "That is what I want to do."

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Jill Norgren. *The Cherokee Cases: Two Landmark Federal Decisions in the Fight for Sovereignty*. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), pp.212. \$21.95 ISBN 0-8061-3606-5

**Some books transcend a discipline** and make themselves available for use to several academic and even the general reading public. This work is of use to historians primarily, of some use to those engaged in legal history, and perhaps a little less use to political scientists.

The book is a fine chronological development of the background to *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* and *Worcester v. Georgia*. These two cases set the pre-Civil War federal stance as to interactions between Native American tribes and the states, and even today cast a long shadow as to how tribes are considered in the governmental sense. The setting for each case, then, is crucial to the understanding of the outcomes in each case. The cases, however decided, would have various ramifications on such issues as states' rights and the slavery question. The growing issue of slavery as well as the issue of nullification as raised by John Calhoun during this time made the milieu surrounding the cases as important as the legal precedents involved in the decisions.

There is a fine description of the growth of the Cherokee Nation, its interaction with the colonial powers, and the United States through the Revolution, preparing for the main inquiry. More could have been made of the totally different view of ownership of land as between the Native Americans and the Euro-powers. There is a good description of the Cherokee's unfortunate alliance with the British during the Revolution and the consequences of that alliance. The description of the Compact

of 1802 between Georgia and the United States, wherein the Georgians ceded land claims in return for some assurance that the U.S. “as soon as possible” would oversee the extinguishment of Cherokee land claims is correctly isolated as a critical turning point against the Native Americans. Once the Louisiana Purchase was made, and there was a place further west for the tribes, the long term outcome was not in doubt, unless the law would provide differently.

The portions of the book which concern the method of the Georgians in acquiring the land are likewise succinct. Georgia claimed jurisdiction over the land as a prelude to ownership, hoping to run the natives off “legally” instead of buying them out, since the Cherokee themselves would not resort to the violence which would have triggered the raw exercise of military power.

The description of Andrew Jackson and his sway over the country and this particular problem is a little too heavy, and the treatment of Chief Justice Marshall is a little too light. Granted, Jackson was a huge figure in government, politics and even society, but without the surrounding consensus of whites, particularly in the South, his beliefs on these matters might not have held sway in spite of the law. Marshall, though in his twilight, is still treated too lightly. His motivations for his viewpoint are not given the depth accorded Jackson, and perhaps not enough to forestall the reader asking why Marshall acted and then reacted as he did in the cases. The author pins Marshall’s partial giving in to the Georgian case in *Cherokee Nation*, in agreeing that the rights of the “discoverers” of the New World flowed to the U.S., by saying that he needed to protect the Court. There is not enough development of the threats to the Court to fully help us understand this development.

While a historian will be satisfied with a description of the characters and the broad flow of events, a political scientist will of necessity be more interested in motivations, triggering events, and individual, as opposed to overall, causation. This is why we need to know more about Marshall, especially as he is as big a figure in American history as Jackson.

The description of the attorneys in the book, their attachment to payment for their work, and their ultimate defection after obtaining somewhat favorable judgments for their native clients might be a good book on its own. It is apparent from the book that the lawyers' main concern was payment for their services, and it is ironic that they were

mostly paid less than they wanted after defecting to the side of Jackson and the Georgians. Their defection is disturbing, leaving the reader with a question as to whether everyone in the drama was just sleepwalking, with the outcome never in doubt regardless of the law churned out by the Court.

There is not a thorough study of the cases from a lawyer's point of view, but that is not the purpose of the work. It would be of use to provide the setting for the cases, but in today's legal atmosphere with regard to Indian sovereignty, Marshall's black letter law will be much more important than the historical setting.

This is an excellent reference for those of various disciplines doing work in this area, most notable for its apparent lack of bias in telling the story, something not always available in works on this subject.

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Renee Ann Cramer. *Cash, Color, and Colonialism: The Politics of Tribal Acknowledgment*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), pp. 234. \$24.95 ISBN 0-8061-3671-5 hc

**Renee Ann Cramer has produced** an engaging treatment of a controversial topic. In the wake of tribal gaming expansion and American Indian tribal fuel and tobacco revenue threatening Anglo-American retail sales, political opposition has risen among voters and in Congress. Cramer, who teaches political science at California State University-Long Beach, surveys tribal acknowledgment within the federal system.

She used a wide range of sources including local, state, and federal documents, interviews, and primary and secondary published information. She assesses the establishment of the federal process as currently codified in 25 CFR Part 83, the theories underlying the attainment of it, and the rocky road involved for tribal groups seeking it. She concludes with an examination of three tribes, the Mowa Choctaw and Poarch Creek in Alabama and the Mashantucket Pequot in Connecticut.

Congressional authorizing legislation set up what would ultimately be referred to as the Branch of Acknowledgment and Research. It is now called the Office of Federal Acknowledgment. She examines the long, expensive, and slow process which federal acknowledgement entails. Only fifteen tribal groups have thus far been federally recognized out of hundreds clamoring for it. Federal acknowledgement can bring with it federal dollars and trust land status for tribal territory. Her work looks at the latter aspect because of its importance for gaming income. Her assessment also stresses the importance of the U. S. colonial legal

legacy in Indian Country, racial attitudes, and the growth of Indian gaming revenue and influence leading to a backlash. The author views Indian racial identity and gaming as “points of crystallization” (p. xv) for federal acknowledgment. In a sense her work is about the popular reaction to Indian gaming (the “cash” in her title) even though the focus is on federal recognition of tribal groups.

Cramer takes the reader through a survey of the fundamentals of Federal-Indian legal history, then notes reformist tendencies that jolted the Bureau of Indian Affairs into action in the 1970s. The Branch of Acknowledgment and Research (1978) created criteria for federal recognition, which were modified in 1988 and 1994. The author examines roadblocks along the path to acknowledgment, especially what Cramer terms “cash and color.” She also sets forth scholarly critiques of tribal governmental structures and assesses federal acknowledgment procedures. Cramer’s recent work and that of Mark Miller the year before underscore the increasing scholarly interest in the topic.

Cramer then moves to the bulk of the work, an examination of acknowledgment centered on the experiences of the Mowa Choctaw Tribe near Coffeeville and the Poarch Band of Creeks near Atmore in Alabama, as well as the Mashantucket Pequot in Connecticut and the consequences that arose from their recognition. Gaming successes have made everyone more aware of the acknowledgment process. Gaming colors federal recognition procedures. A welter of tribal, local, state, and federal interests come into play along with civic, political, religious and other competing forces over recognition issues because of gaming as the focal point. The author points out that gaming success ignited a fierce backlash against American Indians in general and against acknowledgment in particular. Rising stakes fuel increasing litigation.

The author notes that the Mowa Band efforts have thus far been frustrated in their attempt to gain federal recognition. Cramer details how Poarch Creek public relations efforts won over initial local white hostility and gained unprecedented respect and support for economic development projects that now benefit all residents of the surrounding Escambia County. Compared to the relative quiet with which the Poarch were recognized, the Mashantucket met a firestorm of controversy attending their recognition and casino activities. For some, excesses of the Foxwoods Casino (and the nearby Mohican Sun Casino) in terms of congestion, crime, and impact exemplify all the problems over federal



recognition. In Connecticut, Cramer zeroes in on the Paucatuck Eastern Pequot Tribe and the Eastern Paucatuch Pequot prior to their merger (2002) to illustrate racial hysteria in reaction to Mashantucket recognition. Membership rolls had a tortured history, especially given the factionalism and racial language used. Factionalism was instrumental in the rejection of the Eastern (Paucatuck) Pequot Tribe petition for federal acknowledgment (2000). As a recent example of the complexity of the process, the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs subsequently reversed the holding, recognizing the tribe, only to have the Interior Board of Indian Affairs reverse the decision (2005) in an unprecedented action. Similar hurdles of proof bedevil the Golden Hill Paugussett (located just south of Colchester, CT) in their petition prospects. Connecticut voter and property owners' backlash fed opposition and litigation against federal recognition and have further complicated and politicized the federal recognition process. Cramer briefly examines suggested "fixes" proposed to rectify the acknowledgment process. She concludes that, instead of attempting to exclude politics from the procedures, everyone should acknowledge the pressures of political, social, economic, and racial issues and take them into consideration when making decisions.

Her conclusion about inclusiveness as a proposed solution will appear to some as too simplistic. The acknowledgment landscape in the United States is very broad and some might criticize the author's focus on only a few tribal examples. However, those examples ably illustrate the major points she makes. This is a solidly done work whose three examples illustrate the successes and problems inherent in contemporary tribal acknowledgment.

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Theda Skocpol *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), pp. 366. \$18.87 ISBN 0-8061-3532-8 pb

**Theda Skocpol once again dares** to occupy highly contested ground that intersects a number of important contemporary dialogues. *Diminished Democracy*, part of the Julian J. Rothbaum Distinguished Lecture series, challenges conventional conservative wisdom that pits ‘good’ local institutions against ‘bad’ collectivizing national programs, while simultaneously chiding liberals for succumbing to precisely the kind of managerial elitism that would alienate liberalism from its core working-class constituencies. Given the provocative and ambitious nature of the project, even a partial success must be judged as an important contribution, and a worthy addition to Skocpol’s well-deserved reputation in the fields of sociology and political science.

Skocpol’s thesis is that America’s democratic promise lay in the many cross-class, mass-based national groups that formed in local chapters throughout the early republic, and acted as vital intermediary institutions linking local to national politics. This book challenges core assumptions guiding the *liberal-communitarian* debate with political theorists, the *liberal-conservative ideological* debate (potentially on a number of levels), and the *general debate* concerning the nature of interest groups within democratic theory. Skocpol also addresses the relative utility of interest groups as a vehicle for participatory politics.

Skocpol’s analysis also offers an instructive contrast to her fellow Harvard colleague Robert Putnam and left-leaning communitarian

thinkers like Michael Sandel, who have argued that the revitalization of civic life should take place primarily at the local level. Skocpol contends that scholars like Putnam “misdiagnose the civic challenges America faces today, for they have forgotten that national community, active government, and democratic mobilization are all vital to creating and sustaining a vibrant civil society”(p.12). These mass groups facilitated upward mobility for working-class Americans, and agitated for important redistributive programs that raised millions of Americans from the working class into the burgeoning middle class. Additionally, national associations like the Loyal Order of the Moose brought political elites into close contact with working- and middle-class members in ways that contemporary politicians can only superficially and, for Skocpol, inadequately emulate. She cites the (somewhat) apocryphal example of Warren G. Harding being inducted into the Loyal Order of the Moose by his chauffeur to illustrate the degree to which the powerful were compelled to pay heed to the needs of their less fortunate brothers as a result of these memberships.

Much of the narrative Skocpol develops is archival and historical in nature. She painstakingly amasses evidence to support her thesis of the generally beneficial role these groups played, while looking clear-eyed at the frequent chauvinism and bigotry that often drove these groups’ policies. Certainly, Skocpol is not advocating a nostalgic return to a time when groups could with impunity segregate and discriminate against ethnic minorities, Catholics, and women. However, she notes that many ethnic minorities, rather than attacking the segregationist policies of these national groups, often created parallel groups and counter-mobilized in eminently democratic fashion. For example, Irish-Americans created the Ancient Order of the Hibernians, and African-Americans began chartering Masonic chapters as early as 1775 in the northern states (p. 35). Her somewhat paradoxical conclusion is that the counter-mobilizing impulses of Americans led to more overall participation in these organizations than may be possible in these more enlightened times, when groups face serious formal and informal pressures to be inclusive in ways that many Americans find discomfiting.

Skocpol advances a number of reasons why the tumultuous events of the 1960’s eroded faith in these larger groups, which succumbed to a professionally managed elite style of politics. The reforms of the Progressive Era, which she characterizes as ‘Neo-Mugwump reforms’

had the unfortunate byproduct of inhibiting the kinds of mobilizing politics that insured high voter turnout (but also created an avenue for corruption by political machines, as Skocpol rightly notes). Likewise, Vietnam's lack of unpopularity inhibited veterans' mobilizations that normally punctuated American politics between wars. Similarly, the civil rights and feminist movements – even as they opened avenues for political participation on behalf of disenfranchised groups – created powerful disincentives for membership in the somewhat parochial national groups like the Knights of Columbus. Interestingly, Skocpol offers evidence that professional memberships have not been seriously eroded over time, and suggests that elites remain relatively mobilized, which she suggests as contradictory evidence to Putnam's *Bowling Alone* thesis: social capital has eroded, but not necessarily among elites, who are more naturally attuned to networking than members of the lower socioeconomic strata (pp. 214-215).

Skocpol's remedy to these problems is primarily political rather than institutional. Recommending that many regulations distinguishing between partisan and non-partisan activities be torn down, she believes that elites must eventually return to the kinds of mobilization-driven politics that insure high voter turnout. Her conclusion is that political discourse that is segregated by class is every bit as sterile and superficial as a discourse in which people may be arbitrarily excluded on the basis of their race, religion, or gender.

A book so ambitious can hardly be flawless. In some cases, the evidence provided does not always appear to fully support the claims Skocpol makes, particularly in earlier chapters on how the United States became a civic nation. Largely, this problem is simply a reflection of the paucity of evidence available, rather than an indictment of Skocpol's methods, which in some instances are quite novel and innovative. Overall, the flaws in this book are far outweighed by its virtues. *Diminished Democracy* should be required reading for democratic theorists, and is highly recommended for anyone worried about the future of democracy in the United States.

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