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Book Review: David Coen & Alexander Katsaitis (Eds): Handbook on Lobbying and Public Policy. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2024), 514pp.; €235.66 hardcover

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The Handbook on Lobbying and Public Policy comes at a time when research on the subject is well developed and in need of taking stock. This is the task that editors David Coen and Alexander Katsaitis have taken up in their book. Spanning 37 chapters and counting 50 contributors, the handbook provides those new to the field with a highly useful primer and those who are well versed in (a part of the) research on lobbying an opportunity to reflect on the state of the art and learn about relevant debates in adjacent literatures.

The editors organized the handbook along five parts. The first three approach the subject from a macro, meso and then a micro level. The macro level focusses on the relationship between lobbying and public policy as such and contains, for instance, chapters on pluralism (Grant, 2024) and corporatism (Christiansen, 2024) as well as a reflection on how populations of lobby groups are to be understood and studied (Berkhout, 2024). The meso level addresses different steps and activities of policymaking. Commonly researched steps as agenda setting (Bonafont, 2024) and policy formulation (Braun, 2024) are considered here. This meso part also contains chapters that go beyond the political science dominated focus of lobbying research, bringing in the use of courts as relevant venues (Provost, 2024) and providing reflections on how different forms of collaborative governance may affect lobbying (Torfing & Öberg, 2024). The micro level part locates the analysis in individual actors at the giving- or receiving end of lobbying. The chapters of the micro part consider, to give a few examples, the careers of those that lobby (Bradley, LaPira & Thomas, 2024), the link between politicians and lobby groups, either by looking at their ties with parties (Allern & Hansen 2024) or parliamentarians (Huwyler, 2024), and the strategies of NGOs (Junk 2024) in shaping public policy.

Studies on lobbying often conclude that, while some mechanisms are universal, much depends on the context in which it takes place. The handbook takes this observation to heart by dedicating its last two parts to how lobbying happens in different polities and across different sectors. Usual suspects such as the US (Wilson, 2024) and the EU (Coen, Katsaitis & Vannoni, 2024) are considered in the former, but also Brazil (Santos, Resende & Cesário, 2024) and Japan (Fukumoto & Inatsugu, 2024) are addressed. For EU and US based researchers it is especially useful to consider the latter two chapters to see how other systems of interest mediation are set up. The different sectors

considered in the last part span from tech (Harcourt, 2024) and financial (Chalmers & Young, 2024) to health (Brooks, Lauber & Greer 2024) and LGBTIQ+ (Dunlop, 2024) policymaking.

The many different chapters show how diverse the field has become. The strength of the book is in bringing insights from different disciplines, such as business and management studies, political science, public administration, and international relations, and presenting them as one collection. This not only provides an impressive and usable overview, but the book also shows how these literatures can be bridged and where there is a particular need to do so.

Many chapters of the book are set up as literature reviews with accompanying research agendas. Others present a synthesis of existing insights and provide a novel theoretical take on the matter as inspiration for future studies. Some present empirical material collected by the authors. This diversity in approaches is enjoyable but nonetheless limits the integration of the insights the chapters provide. The chapters should therefore be seen as a collection of standalone pieces along a common framework. The reader can jump in at any point and learn about aspects in which they are interested. Inevitably there is, therefore, some overlap in explanations of theory and concepts and some chapters cover similar subjects. For instance, the different career trajectories of lobbyists are discussed in the chapter on revolving doors (Bradley, LaPira & Thomas, 2024) and then again in the chapters on the EU (Coen, Katsaitis & Vannoni, 2024) and US (Wilson, 2024) lobbying systems. Furthermore, both the chapters on impact assessment and on consultations mention the US notice and comment procedure as an example of these activities (Dunlop & Radaelli, 2024; Albareda, 2024). Added crossover and signposting to other chapters may have helped readers to figure out how they can continue reading about a subject that piqued their interest.

The book comes with particularly interesting insights when it uses a specific focus to illustrate subjects from the broader chapters on policy cycle phase, issue, and sector level variation in lobbying. For instance, a comparative case study of tobacco ad restrictions in two countries shows how concentrated and diffuse costs and benefits of a policy shape the type of political debate and hence interest group strategy (Vannoni, 2024). Furthermore, the chapters on health policy (Brooks, Lauber & Greer, 2024) and LGBTIQ+ lobbying (Dunlop, 2024) demonstrate how issues that span multiple sectors require lobbyists to adopt specific approaches. It is these and other such contributions that not only provide a reflection on the current state of the art but also address larger questions of lobbying and public policy. These are ideal readings to use in education.

This book review is not the place to do justice to the breath of the arguments and findings presented in the entire book, but it is safe to say that if lobbying or public policy interests you, you will find at least multiple chapters of this book highly useful and instructive. It is a real pick-and-choose book but nonetheless follows a cohesive and

distinctive argument; that lobbying to shape public policy is done in many different ways, by many different actors and in many different venues. The book does justice to this diversity and is therefore a welcome addition to the field.