POWER BEHIND THE SCENES:

THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMAL SPACE IN LEGISLATURES[1]

Studies of legislatures focus on what happens in formal space, principally the chamber and committee rooms. Such studies are necessary, but not sufficient, for explaining behaviour within legislatures and its consequences. The use of space for member to interact informally with one another – informal space – can contribute to the institutionalisation of a legislature through facilitating autonomy. Such space provides an arena for socialisation, information exchange, lobbying, and mobilising political support. This paper examines the significance of informal space, drawing on the experience of the UK Parliament.

KEY WORDS: information exchange, institutionalisation, legislatures, lobbying, mobilising political support, informal space, UK Parliament

Legislatures are typically multi-functional and functionally adaptable bodies, fulfilling a range of functions beyond their core defining function of giving assent to measures of public policy in order for them to be binding (Packenham 1970, Mezey 1979, Norton 1990). The fulfilment of a legislature's functions, or tasks, depends on the behaviour of members. Behavioural analysis has been a significant feature of political science. The behaviour studied has predominantly been observable and empirically testable (Sanders 1995: 58). Behavioural analysis has been a notable feature of legislative studies, especially in the USA, from the 1950s onwards (Fiorina and Rohde 1989: 1-15; see also Hirsch and Hancock 1971). What members of legislatures say in debate, how they vote (in roll call votes), what amendments or bills they promote, are usually matters of record and are quantifiable. Even

meetings that are private, such as of parliamentary party groups, may lend themselves to some measure of empirical analysis as a result of minutes, leaks, interviews or informal note-taking.

The behaviour that is being analysed occurs within a particular physical space, what we term formal space. By this, we mean space used for specified meetings, with a presiding officer, an agenda and behaviour governed by rules and procedures. It thus encompasses the chamber and committee sessions. It also includes space used for gatherings of parliamentary party groups, cross-party groups, and caucuses. Such groups generally have scheduled meetings, may maintain minutes or some record of proceedings, and have officers, with these officers having some recognition for parliamentary and party purposes (see, e.g., Goodhart 1973, Heidar and Koole 2000, Norton 1995, 2013a). We also include gatherings such as private dining groups and organised factions, given that they generally meet at specified times and are confined to an invited and exclusive group, with officers or a convenor (for the UK, see Grant 2010). The activity by definition is collective activity.

None of the characteristics of formal space applies in the context of informal space. By this, we mean space where members gather and converse, but where the gathering is not formally scheduled, has no set agenda, is not minuted, and there is no-one presiding formally over proceedings. As we are taking informal space as the obverse of formal space in legislatures, our focus is the use of such space by members within the legislature. Members may meet people outside the legislature, and indeed staff within, for formal (that is, scheduled and recorded) meetings as well as informal. Here our concern is purely the functions (which we define, following Packenham, as consequences) of the use of space within an institution for informal discourse between members of that institution. As formal space is usually where members meet physically, we confine our immediate study to physical space where members meet. Although some parliamentary bodies may engage in online consultations, and employ the Internet for circulating papers, there is little use made of it for formal discourse purely

between members. Its use for informal contact between members is, as we shall discuss later, an area for further research, but falls outside the remit of this analysis.

By its nature, informal activity is difficult to measure. As Dexter recalled of information influencing members of Congress on a particular policy, 'the influence of other congressmen is very important, but frequently this is exerted in a casual, unplanned way, so it is not recognized or remembered except in the clear-cut cases' (Dexter 1971: 38). Insofar as outcomes are affected by informal discourse between members, the impact of activity in such space resembles Bertrand Russell's 'power behind the scenes' (Russell 1938: 33). The power that is being exercised is influence rather than coercion (see Lukes 2005: 36; Norton 2013: 5) and the behaviour diffuse and unstructured, taking place usually away from public observation. For the researcher, if not the legislator, it is largely hidden behaviour.

This may explain why the use made of informal space is the orphan of legislative studies. According to Bell, 'the theorist must attempt to systematise in an economical way what is "going on" in legislatures' (Bell 1971). There is a substantial body of path-breaking research that seeks to explain what is 'going on' (for an early anthology, see Hirsch and Hancock 1971 and, for more recent work, Norton 1998), but it is largely silent on how parliamentarians interact informally. The focus has tended to be on background, behaviour in public space, and the roles of members. White's classic work on the US Senate, *Citadel* (1956), covered these, as well as how Senators saw themselves and what they sought to achieve, but without discussing the informal intercourse at the heart of the 'inner club'. Subsequent works have examined the importance of learning norms (Asher 1973, Crowe 1983, Loewenberg and Mans 1988), Uslaner (1993) doing so in terms of comity (a set of norms that include courtesy and reciprocity) and its decline in the US Congress. Others have addressed how members see their roles (Wahlke et al. 1962, Fenno, 1978, Parker and Davidson 1979, Searing 1994; see also Andeweg 2014). There has also been seminal scholarship emphasising rules and

procedures and how they shape behaviour (e.g. Shepsle 1978, Shepsle and Weingast 1984, 1987, Gilligan and Krehbiel 1989, Krehbiel 1989, 1991; see also Műller and Sieberer 2014). Casting our net somewhat wider, to the whole sub-field, the most recent compendium, *The Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies* (Martin, Saalfeld and Strøm 2014), identifies and assesses much of the substantial literature on legislatures. The literature is extensive, variously cutting edge, but there remains a lacuna. What has been missing has been a study of the use made of space for informal gatherings of members. Even Uslaner, in addressing courtesy and reciprocity, makes virtually no mention of it.

The literature that has proved most relevant for our purposes derives not from behavioural analysis, but rather that identifying the importance of place, design and architecture (Flinders et al., 2018, McCarthy-Cotter et al., 2018, Norton 2017, Parkinson 2012, Goodsell 1988). As Flinders, Cotter, Kelso and Meakin have argued in the context of the United Kingdom, 'architecture and design matter because the Palace of Westminster was explicitly designed to embed a very specific type of politics' (Flinders et al., 2018: 149). Space within legislatures is not distributed randomly. It is the product of political choice. These studies provide a valuable context for understanding the importance of space and its configuration within legislatures. They help focus attention on how and why it exists. Our study addresses how particular space is utilised.

The use of informal space, we argue, is important to the legislature for the process of institutionalisation and, to members, for socialisation into the institution, for information exchange, for lobbying, and for mobilising political support. Institutionalisation and the socialisation of members underpin the stability of the legislature. Information exchange and lobbying can impact on ministerial actions and outcomes of public policy. Mobilising political support can determine who holds office. These are hardly insubstantial consequences.

Given the absence of scholarly research, our methodology is essentially one of social anthropology, utilising participant observation, drawing on the recollections of MPs and former MPs from interviews,[2] diaries and memoirs, and by observation derived from the author's immersion in parliamentary life over two decades. Our aim is to establish that there is a gap, a significant, gap in the study of what is 'going on' within legislatures. We employ the term 'gap' in two senses. One is in indicating there is something missing, in this case in the academic literature. The other is in denoting a space between two sides: in this case, academics and practitioners. Whereas the use of informal space has not engaged notable academic attention, practitioners – certainly in the UK – have long been aware of its significance.

Given the absence of previous studies that provide empirical analysis of the actual use of informal space, this is essentially the first step towards partially filling the gap. As we shall conclude, there is scope for more extensive analysis of the use of informal space by legislators. How design and changes in configuration of space shape behaviour is a particularly rich seam for enquiry.

Institutionalisation

The use of space for informal contact is a component, albeit largely neglected, in the institutionalisation of a legislature. Such space is likely to be at a premium in democratic polities, with legislatures meeting on a regular basis. Legislatures in authoritarian regimes typically have limited meeting times and hence limited time for informal gatherings of members. The opportunity to meet may in any event be constricted by the absence of space for such informal intercourse. There is no incentive for the regime to create such space.

In legislatures in democratic systems, there will, typically, be space designed for members to meet informally with one another. This will include dining, tea and reading rooms, and

possibly even sporting facilities. Charles Clapp recorded in his classic study of members of the US Congress in the 1960s that 'Participants emphasized the value of informal contacts such as the gym and playing cards provide' (Clapp 1964: 16). Both chambers of Congress have notable space in the form of cloakrooms, used now principally for monitoring business and dealing with inquiries, but 'historically have been used for whispered conversations off the floor of the chamber' (*New York Times*, 21 Jan. 1986). The House Democratic Cloakroom, according to its own website, 'provides Members the ability to converse, relax, discuss legislative strategy, or prepare for Floor business' (https://democraticcloakroom.house.gov/about). In the United Kingdom, there is space within the Palace of Westminster that has been, and is, exclusive to or occupied primarily by members. As one leading text on Parliament observed, 'From the start the clublike rooms and common spaces of Barry's Palace have encouraged members of both Houses to congregate and meet informally. In the Commons, the Smoking Room…, the Tea Room and the Members' Lobby after a big vote (as well as the division lobbies themselves during it) are places where opinions are formed and exchanged, support is canvassed and tactics planned' (Rogers and Walters 2015: 11-12.)

These spaces have been, and remain, important for informal political discourse. As such, the use of such space facilitates autonomy, differentiating the institution from the wider environment, a key feature of institutionalisation (Polsby 1968: 145; Patterson 1995: 16). Its use may serve also to dissipate the capacity of an external force (such as a party leadership) to determine outcomes. In some systems, where hierarchy rather than bargaining characterises the relationship between the leadership and party members (Cooper and Brady 1981), the strength of party overrides formal constitutional barriers between legislature and the executive, enabling the party leadership, wherever located, to issue instructions to party members in the legislature. Indeed, this is a common, and longstanding, characteristic of parliamentary systems and, indeed, many presidential systems. The 'principle of Parliament', declared Bagehot, 'is obedience to leaders' (Bagehot 1963: 158; first pub. 1867). However,

the conduit through which instructions flow may be subject to leakage as result of interactions in informal space. Leadership decisions may be questioned in informal gatherings of members, giving rise to resistance or even refusal to comply, initial conversations tapping concerns that are taken up by other members.

The use of such space may also, though, help integrate party leaderships in the institution. As we shall see, informal space provides members with opportunities to exchange information and also to lobby other members. The space may also be used by party leaders, or their surrogates, for the same purposes, enabling them to know what is happening and to mobilise support for particular policies or even to maintain their own positions. The use of informal space may thus serve to reinforce other characteristics of institutionalisation, not least complexity (Polsby 1968: 145, 153-60; Patterson 1995), embedding modes of behaviour and hence adding to the complex of interactions between members over and above those in chamber and committee deliberations. Its use also reinforces the distinctiveness and stability of the legislature. The contours and domain of informal space may provide members with a sense of ownership of that space, particularly where it is exclusive to members, and provide an established framework for private discussion. Having that space available underpins the utility of the institution.

Consequences for members

The value of space for informal gatherings for members was neatly encompassed in the advice given by one British MP to new members of the House of Commons:

> … locate the leisure facilities, which is the safest description of the tea room, for
> Labour Members; the smoking room, for Conservatives; the bar, formerly SNP
> [Scottish National Party] territory…. All these, but particularly the tea room, serve as
> the great gossip exchange... Members put this in romantic terms: 'the walls of

Parliament have ears and the stones speak', which may be true, but the tongues are

human and they mainly wag in the tea and smoking rooms and the House's nine bars.

(Mitchell 1982: 59)

The advice neatly encompasses various consequences of such space. Our purpose here is to

identify the principal consequences. We draw on the experience of the UK Parliament to

demonstrate the salience of each.

Socialisation

Socialisation is the process by which a person becomes acclimatised to an environment,

especially the culture, that is, the norms and values of the body. Newcomers may learn the

ways through contact with existing members and/or through observation. As one British MP

observed of the House of Commons, 'the best basis for effective action is to absorb through

the pores of the skin the way the House works and how to operate according to custom and

practice' (Holland 1988: 47). The process may be a speedy one. As Richard Fenno

recorded, 'Not only must the newcomer absorb a multitude of lessons, he must learn them

quickly – especially if he aspires to become influential in the chamber' (Fenno 1971: 130; see

also Asher 1973). Some may arrive having experienced some degree of prior socialisation

(see Best and Vogel 2014: 60), through activity in a political party and through some

experience of the institution. Once members, they can then fit in much sooner than if they

were complete strangers. The most significant challenge tends not to be adapting to party

norms and expectations, but to the social and procedural norms of the institution (Norton

2016a: 187-8).

The process by which parliamentarians are socialised has been the subject of various studies,

foremost among them in the context of Westminster parliaments Docherty (1997) and Rush

and Giddings (2011). Crewe has also undertaken an anthropological study of both the British

House of Lords (2005) and House of Commons (2015). What is notable about such works is the extent to which they focus on the formal activities of each House and how members learn about that activity, not least through induction processes arranged by party or House authorities (Rush and Giddings 2011, Ch. 4. See also Lewis and Coghill 2016 and, for the USA, Price 1992: 31-2). The other focus has tended to be learning through practice, examining primarily activity in formal space, such as asking questions and taking part in other proceedings.

We know from existing studies how new members learn from longer-serving members, but that encompasses not just watching how existing members operate in formal space – speaking in the chamber, moving amendments in committee – but also through engaging with them in the privacy of dining and tea rooms. Part of that engagement may be passive ('a splendid place to get to know colleagues and discuss events'; Waddington 2012: 74), but may also be more proactive, through seeking out fellow members as guides and mentors (Rosenblatt 2006, Rush and Giddings 2011; see also Dickinson 2017). The interaction has not necessarily been between new and longer-serving members. In some parliaments, cohorts of newly elected members have tended to stick together (Norton 2016a: 194-5). Indeed, the origins of the Conservative Party's 1922 Committee, in effect the Conservative parliamentary party, lay in some Tory MPs newly elected in 1922 getting together to acclimatise themselves to the House through forming what amounted to a self-help group (Norton 2013a: 6).

The use of informal space may serve to reinforce hierarchical and tribal norms. How does one fit in with other members, not least those of some seniority? Social norms help establish and consolidate hierarchy. Tony Banks recounts the experience of two new Conservative MPs, Sebastian Coe and Gyles Brandreth, who went into the Members' Dining Room, saw an empty table in the otherwise packed room and sat themselves at it, despite being conscious that other Members were staring at them:

9

> the head waiter approached at a stately pace… 'Good evening, gentlemen, 'he said. 'Seeing as you are sharing his table, I assume you will be dining with the Chief Whip and his party this evening?' The walk back through the crowded tables seemed to last a lifetime…' (Banks 1993: 31)

How informal space is configured may reflect and reinforce not only hierarchy, but also tribal attachments. In the US Congress, each party in the House and Senate has its own cloakroom. In the UK Parliament, the use of space for informal discourse differs between the two Houses. MPs, unlike Lords, normally dine on a party basis, so there is little interaction between members of different parties. 'In the Members' Dining-room, strict segregation is the order of the day: Tories at one end, Socialists at the other, with the clerks and the rest in the middle… In the Tea Room also… ideologically sound soul-mates tend to stick together' (Edmonds 1989: 20-1). Members of the House of Lords, in contrast, employ what is known as the 'long table' principle: peers dining on their own join others sat at a long dining table, with party being irrelevant. Even when not dining alone, there is a degree of fluidity as to dining companions. There are problems in proving a causal relationship, but the practice in the Commons may be taken to reinforce the adversarial nature of the House.

The use of informal space may serve also to socialise women into the legislature, countering the male-dominated norms that characterise formal space. Some of the women MPs first returned in 1997 who were interviewed by Childs did not feel comfortable in the chamber, which, in the words of one, provides an 'institutional framework that demands performance, that demands adversarial conflict' (Childs 2004: 9). Though some women MPs have been able to adapt to a 'male' style of politics, others have found it uncomfortable and chosen not to engage fully with the chamber. Childs queried whether the House of Commons provided a 'safe space' for women (Childs 2004: 8). Although some informal space has served to reinforce the male nature of Westminster (in the past, some women MPs 'found it difficult to stroll into the smoking room… unless they were invited in by a male colleague'; Phillips

1980: 172; see also Ridge 2017: 133), it has served also to provide safe or at least safer space than formal space, not least in the form of dedicated women's rooms in both Houses. (Women MPs were first provided with a room in 1929; see Honeyball 2015: 131.) Indeed, in the 1960s, when MPs had difficulty finding desks, the few women MPs elected had not only their own space, but could also utilise desks in the Lady Members' Room (Knight 1995: 52-3; though on the use of dedicated rooms, see also Vallance 1979: 110-11), though later it could become crowded (Ridge 2017: 133). Women may find the use of informal space less challenging, certainly less confrontational, than the use of formal space. It facilitates working together and may help integrate women who do not want to 'act like men' (Childs 2004: 10).

Information exchange

For members, informal space can be valuable for finding out what is going on and for exchanging views with fellow members. The tea rooms and bars of the House of Commons are, in the words of one Member, 'a launderette for information exchange' (Mitchell 1982: 60). As in the Members' dining room, MPs in the House of Commons sit in the tea room on a party basis, so one is generally sharing information with other party members.

One MP described the tea room in the Commons as the

> archetypal venue for the hatching of plots; the starting post for those famous 'murmurings of backbench discontent'. MPs feel safe here. Away from staff, journos and members of the public, they can gripe away happily to their heart's content, in the sure knowledge that they can be as indiscreet as they like. (Banks 1993: 129)

As such, it is a useful source of intelligence as to the mood of members. Given that, it attracts ministers, whips, and ministers' parliamentary private secretaries (PPSs), unpaid assistants who act as an additional set of eyes and ears.

> Ministers… are often seen in the Tea Room gauging the 'mood of the Party'
> (Needham 1983: 78).

> The clamour for whips to get information knew no bounds. They would attend all committee meetings, patrol the bars, sit in the Tea Room and strategically plonk themselves in the Members' dining room (Hayes 2014: 153; see also Renton 2004: 23).

> A favourite place for the PPSs of the Party Leaders to 'take soundings', ie find out what people are saying about the boss. Very occasionally the boss will sally forth.
> (Banks 1993: 129)

We shall return to the importance of 'the boss' – that is, the party leader – sallying forth. For the moment, the key point is the use made of informal space by ministers, whips and PPSs to acquire information about the mood and views of members. If there is discontent with a particular policy, or with the general direction being taken by the party, this will often find its outlet in the informal space where members gather. As two former clerks observed, 'informality and personal contact… produces volatility: rumours travel quickly, even through so large a membership; views – and perhaps backbench rebellions – can gather momentum with surprising speed' (Rogers and Walters 2015: 12).

During a particularly difficult time for the Conservative Government of John Major in April 1993, one Tory MP recorded in his diary, 'There's a scratchy atmosphere in the tea room. When they are not grumbling about the Chancellor and VAT on fuel, they're muttering about

[Education Secretary] John Patten's classroom tests' (Brandreth 1999: 168). Such grumblings can fester into serious discontent. As the same MP recorded the following January: 'I have just returned from the smoking room. The Right think it's a shambles, the Left think it's a pantomime' (Brandreth 1999: 232). A year after Gordon Brown became Prime Minister, Chris Mullin reported: 'In the Tea Room, open talk of insurrection, mainly but not entirely from the Usual Suspects. The difference is that they no longer trouble to lower their voices' (Mullin 2009: 242).

At times of crisis for a party, including when there is pressure for a party leader to go, informal space can complement or supersede the chamber as the place to be. At the end of the dramatic first day's debate in May 1940 on the wartime conduct of the government – leading to the downfall of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain – Members 'gathered in the smoking room and bars and nooks and crannies of the House of Commons. They stayed for many hours to rehash and rethink and resolve their plans' (Schneer 2015: 17). One Labour MP recorded the scenes in 2002 when there was a particular crisis for the Conservatives under their leader Iain Duncan Smith: 'Tories are gathering in the corridors and lobbies in earnest little groups which go quiet whenever someone from another party approaches… Meanwhile, the Tories have practically abandoned the chamber' (Mullin 2009: 324). For those wanting to know what MPs think, and plan to do, spending time in the tea room, smoking room and other social spaces is thus necessary.

Whips monitor and report back any discontent: 'I reported to the Chief [Whip] that there was much muttering in the Smoking Room about some business on the Order Paper. There were rumours of a rebellion and the possibility of a government defeat' (Waddington 2012: 108). The information, according to one Chief Whip, is all fed back and discussed by the whips collectively while the House is sitting (Renton: 2004: 23). PPSs are keen to find out how their ministers are viewed by backbenchers and whether any action is needed to head off growing disquiet. This can be especially important for the Prime Minister's PPS, for whom

spending time in informal space complements attending the weekly meeting of the parliamentary party in order to assess the mood of the party. Tony Blair as Prime Minister may not have spent much time in the tea and dining rooms, but his PPS, Bruce Grocott, certainly did, regarding it as an essential part of his role. It was also a means of knowing how others in the party were regarded. He would be present when the PM was contemplating a change of ministers and, drawing on his knowledge of the standing of those being considered for promotion, applied his 'reshuffle test': if the person died, how many MPs would turn up to the funeral? (Lord Grocott to author).

Conversely, PPSs use the space to keep members informed of their ministers' 'plans, reactions and hopes' (Renton 2004: 73) as well as address any concerns. The ministers may seek personally to persuade doubters. One Labour Cabinet minister, Jack Straw, renowned for negotiating with backbenchers, was described by one MP as 'the senior minister most often in the tea room' (Cowley 2005: 68). Whereas space for informal discourse in Congressional cloakrooms is confined to members and staff, the separation-of-powers ensuring that members of the executive are excluded, in Parliament there is interaction between backbench members and members of the executive. In such space, ministers may be prepared to share confidences they would not be willing to share in formal space.

The presence of ministers may also extend beyond exchanging information to fulfilling a safety valve function. Space used for informal gatherings may be a breeding ground for discontent, but the presence of ministers may also serve to absorb it. If ministers are prepared to listen, members with grievances may feel it is sufficient to know that they have been heard and not take their grievances as far as abstaining or voting against the party line (former Cabinet minister to author). When issues generating backbench unease are being pursued, the whips are keen to encourage ministers to spend time in the tea room (former Deputy Chief Whip to author). For ministers, spending time in such space may be a prudent investment.

Lobbying

There can be a more proactive side to employing informal space, namely to see backbench members, or for those members to see ministers, to encourage them to support a particular policy or political action. Members may call to see colleagues in their offices or may simply position themselves in areas where members gather in order to persuade them to sign up to their campaign. Those who are not members may also arrange to meet and to lobby parliamentarians in public or private parts of the legislature.

If a backbench MP wants to lobby a minister to take some particular action, the way to do it is not to confront the minister publicly. 'What you can do is to take him to one side, have a drink with him or a meal with him, talk to him in the Lobby. Give him the idea, persuade him, let him promote it as his idea' (Sir Richard Body MP, quoted in Mitchell 1982: 63; see also Rose 1981: 89). One of the arguments for retaining the method of voting in person in division lobbies (rather than electronically) has been that it brings ministers in and provides other members with an opportunity to lobby them. 'It is', as Labour MP Linda Gilroy recounted, 'a great opportunity to meet Ministers to talk with them' (McDougall 1998: 173). A particular prize is the Prime Minister. 'Once the Prime Minister is inside and the doors are locked you can touch his arm or, *in extremis*, grab him by the throat and tell him what you think. There's no hiding place even for the PM in lobbies' (Sedgemore 1995: 54). When Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister and there was a division in which she participated, queues used to form of backbench MPs wanting to see her (former Deputy Chief Whip to author).

Corridors supplement the division lobbies as sites for lobbying. Chance, or not so chance, encounters can produce results. Some campaigning members are adept at using such informal opportunities. They typically use such space to complement asking questions or raising issues in debate. 'Any new MP has got to realise that he doesn't alter anything just by tabling

a motion or asking a question. He's got to work at it. He's got to talk to them in the tea room' (George Cunningham MP, quoted in Mitchell 1982: 62).

In the inter-war years, one Independent MP, Eleanor Rathbone – described by one biographer as the most important women politician in Britain in the first half of the 20th Century (Pedersen 2004) – was variously successful in achieving policy changes (Stocks 1949, Alberti 1996, Pedersen 2004, Norton 2016b). She utilised formal space, but was also notably effective in using informal space. She would pace the corridors of the Palace of Westminster, weighed down with papers related to her campaigns, and waylay ministers, who came to treat her advancing figure with some trepidation (Nicolson 1946; see Norton 2016b: 7). She would persist until she got her way.

Some members can be persistent, in some cases a little too persistent, in lobbying ministers and fellow members, whereas others are more selective. Rathbone complemented her own direct lobbying – which she recognised could sometimes put ministers off – by persuading some of her supporters to pursue ministers on her behalf.

Ministers too can utilise the space. Indeed, at times the lobbying may be as much from a minister as a backbencher. One new MP recalled the occasion when 'Peter [Walker, housing minister]… caught up with me in the Division Lobby and encouraged me to put pressure on him to allow discounted sales of new-town authority houses' (Tebbit 1989: 124). Labour MP Chris Mullin recalled Justice Secretary Jack Straw seeing him in the tea room 'to bend his ear' to support the Government's policy of pre-charge detention (Mullin 2010: 250). Lobbying can be a two-way process.

Lobbying can result in ministers accepting particular proposals or in them amending or withdrawing existing ones. Letting a minister 'promote it as his idea' may facilitate getting it accepted, but means that in its public presentation its genesis may be hidden. It may also be

difficult to isolate the effect of lobbying in informal space from that in public space, in the form of questions and debates. Lobbying a minister in the tea room or lobbies may be a contributory element or it may be crucial in tipping the balance in favour of the proposal. What is apparent is that members regard space for informal intercourse as a valuable arena for lobbying. It thus shapes their behaviour. That applies to ministers as well as backbenchers.

Mobilising political support

Informal space also constitutes a valuable arena in which to mobilise support for one's own position. It can be used protectively, to maintain support, or proactively for the purpose of career advancement. In the words of one former Cabinet minister 'there is no substitute for ensuring that you meet regularly with your own parliamentary colleagues… When the going gets rough these are the people who can help you through a crisis in one piece' (Hutton and Lewis 2014: 149). As Emma Crewe recounted:

> MPs told me that working the tearoom to nurture your relationships with your colleagues, and maybe even converting your critics once in a blue moon, is useful to any Minister. Those who don't find the time to do this, or keep away because they don't relish Parliament's strange eating places, may be vulnerable when in trouble or as a reshuffle or election approaches (Crewe 2015: 121)

The value to ministers was recorded by one Tory MP, who, in a meeting with a minister he anticipated would run into trouble on a particular policy, advised him to spend time in the tea room: 'increasingly, he's out of touch. Howard, Portillo, Lilley [Cabinet ministers], they work the tea room. Howard told me he eats in the dining room at least once a week "without fail – you must"' (Brandreth 1999: 249).

This can apply not only to senior ministers, but also to the most senior. Candidates for a party leadership may stalk the tea rooms and dining rooms to solicit support from fellow members. Leaders wishing to maintain their position do likewise. Prime Ministers neglect informal space of Parliament at their peril. Given their schedules, finding time to utilise informal space can be a challenge. 'Prime Ministers have to be very determined to find time to drop into the Tea Room of the House, to walk over to Party headquarters or to invite a few colleagues and their wives to dinner or the theatre' (Baker: 1993: 389). Political imperatives may mean that some do make the effort. Some have used it to effect. Prime Minister James (Jim) Callaghan, heading a minority government (1976-9), was keen to keep minor parties on side. One MP reported a conversation with Callaghan's Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees: 'he told me how he and Jim used to patrol the Tea Room and bars and "give the boys what they wanted". So Plaid Cymru got their own TV channel in Welsh, and the Northern Ireland and Scots nationalists got a few gerrymandered seats' (Hayes 2014: 125). This may be an exaggeration – concessions were made as part of negotiations (Callaghan 1988: 452-3), but the calling of the 1979 general election prevented the pledge to Plaid Cymru being implemented by the Callaghan Government – but it reflects the significance ascribed by senior figures to informal space.

Courting MPs in such space can deliver benefits. Neglecting it can have significant political costs. Some Prime Ministers have made infrequent use of the space and it has been obvious when they make rare appearances. Clement Attlee made a few and largely unfruitful forays into the tea and smoking rooms following an 'Attlee must go' campaign (Driberg 1988: 93-4). Neglect of such space was viewed by many Tory MPs as having contributed to two Conservative party leaders losing their party leadership and in one case, consequently, the premiership.

Edward Heath's loss of the Conservative party leadership in 1975 was in part attributed to his failure to utilise informal space. He was not prone to socialise with backbench MPs and

encounters with them in the tea or dining rooms were awkward. As one MP recalled, reflecting on the 1975 leadership campaign: 'His rather rare visits to the Members' smoking room were unrewarding because, as a friend of his put it to me, he could not talk about unimportant things to unimportant people. It bored and embarrassed him' (Fisher 1977: 166). In the recollection of one of Heath's Cabinet colleagues:

> At one point I advised Ted to spend more time in the smoking room since MPs were seeing too little of him as Prime Minister. I went into the smoking room a few days later to find that he had taken my advice and was talking to a distinguished Tory. As I passed, I heard him say, "That was a dreadful speech you made last Wednesday" (Walker 1991: 120).

For a leader, mishandling of informal space can be as bad as avoiding it. Heath's failure to use such space effectively was not the cause of his loss of the Conservative party leadership, but it was seen by supporters as a contributory factor. It was not simply a feature of his campaign to be re-elected, but was symptomatic of his period as Prime Minister (Norton 1978: 228-30; Clarke 2016: 88-9). By the time of the leadership election, following two general election losses, Heath's failure to communicate with his backbenchers meant he had no significant body of goodwill on which he could draw. He was vulnerable by the time the leadership election was triggered.

He was replaced as party leader by Margaret Thatcher, who was determined not to repeat his mistakes, but once ensconced in Downing Street in 1979 she too tended to neglect the places in which MPs gathered. She would occasionally descend on unsuspecting Conservative Members when trouble loomed. 'She is even known to visit the Tea Room when rumblings of backbench rebellion percolate as far as Number 10 and potential poll-tax and social-security-cuts refuseniks have been made to feel very uncomfortable' (Edmonds 1989: 21). Such behaviour, though, was reactive, a sign of panic rather than part of regular activity to

maintain support. As one MP noted, her appearance 'just prior to her departure in 1990, was a rare sighting, and a sign of panic' (Banks 1993: 129).

Thatcher was challenged for the party leadership in 1990 and failed to get the requisite number of votes for victory in the first leadership ballot against her challenger, Michael Heseltine. The extent to which informal space was significant in Thatcher's loss was clear from the recollections of former Cabinet minister and Conservative Party chairman, Kenneth Baker. He noted that Heseltine, having previously neglected the informal space of Westminster, now 'haunted the place': 'I had never before seen him in the Tea Room, and he only went into the Smoking Room after he had made a successful speech. He was rarely to be seen in the Dining Room. But now he was everywhere...' (Baker 1993: 390; see also Shepherd 1991: 22; Parkinson 1992: 25-6; Crick 1997: 348; Aitken 2013: 622-3). After resigning the leadership, Thatcher told Baker '"You… told me that I would have to ring up MPs and spend time in the Tea Room. That's not for me after eleven years"...' (Baker 1993: 390). When she did make the effort to visit the tea room, she realised the effect of her neglect: 'I had never experienced such an atmosphere before. Repeatedly I heard: "Michael has asked me two or three times for my vote already. This is the first time we have seen you"' (Thatcher 1993: 850). As Shepherd wrote of the campaign, 'Tory backbenchers complained that "she hadn't even been tearooming before the first ballot"'(Shepherd 1991: 21).

Heseltine's invasion of informal space, and Thatcher's neglect of it, was seen as significant given the narrowness of Thatcher's failure to reach the required threshold in the first ballot. She was four votes short of the majority necessary to be declared re-elected. According to one of her supporters, her failure to see Members 'forfeited anywhere between ten and thirty vital votes' (Aitken 2013: 624). Had she spent time in the tea room rallying waverers, sufficient to sway two or three Heseltine-voting MPs to her cause, she would have carried the

day. 'Four votes, that was all there was in it…. For want of a nail a kingdom was lost' (Clark 1993: 358).

Just as the use of space for informal gatherings was seen as a factor in the downfall of both Heath and Thatcher, it also figured prominently in the campaign of Thatcher's successor, John Major. Major knew the value of utilising informal space. As his biographer noted, 'Major had been an assiduous House of Commons man from 1979 to 1990, an avid networker of Tea and Dining Rooms, a soaker-up of atmosphere in the chamber and committee rooms…' (Seldon 1997: 211). When he stood for the party leadership, his supporters utilised informal space to good effect. As his campaign manager recalled, in addition to utilising the press and television, 'canvassing went on hourly in the Smoking Room, the Tea Room, the corridors and the other parts of the House of Commons' (Lamont: 1999: 24; see also Shepherd 1991: 75). Major's PPS, for example, during a division 'was loitering at the near end of the "no" lobby, catching MPs as they passed' (Major 1999: 192). Although Major's campaign team was put together quickly, it proved highly effective in utilising informal space and making sure supporters utilised it to monitor and to mobilise support.

However, like his two predecessors, Major as party leader tended to neglect informal space. He became somewhat isolated from backbenchers at a time when the parliamentary party became notably restless, not least over the issue of European integration (Riddell 1994: 51-3; Baker, Gamble and Ludlam 1993: 151-66). He did venture to the tea room to bolster support when he triggered a leadership contest in 1995 (Norton 1998: 101), but that was the exception rather than the norm. 'It is a surprise… that the House did not loom larger in his life as Prime Minister, and that he did not spend much time there picking up the mood' (Seldon 1997: 211). As Anthony Seldon recorded, the neglect was puzzling, given that Major was well aware of the effect that neglecting informal space had for his predecessors. 'Lack of time must be the chief reason, although high office tends to distance its occupants' (Seldon 1997: 211).

Space for informal discourse thus matters in that it can affect who holds office. Ministers may devote time to maintaining support among backbenchers. A failure to do so may render them vulnerable if they encounter a political crisis. The shift of Conservative Party leadership from Edward Heath to Margaret Thatcher had significant consequences for British politics. So too did the demise of Thatcher as party leader, and hence Prime Minister, in 1990.

Conclusion

The use of space for members meeting informally is an intrinsic part of parliamentary life, important to members for learning the rules and practices of the institution, for sharing information with colleagues, especially party colleagues, for gaining support for one's causes, and for one's own political advancement. One cannot understand how Parliament operates with the use of informal space omitted from consideration. Exploiting it effectively can deliver notable rewards. Neglecting it can mean one fails to achieve one's policy goals and to reach the top – or to stay at the top – of the political ladder.

Informal space in legislatures thus merits serious analysis. Our study provides an initial, indeed somewhat tentative, examination, adumbrating the functions fulfilled by the use of such space in the UK Parliament, principally the House of Commons. There is scope for further research on its use for particular policy outcomes. As we have noted in opening, a particularly rich seam for further study is the configuration of social space and the effects of change in that configuration. In the UK Parliament, the opening in 2001 of a new building – Portcullis House, with a major social space at its heart and located at the intersection of several parliamentary buildings and the Palace of Westminster – transformed informal space. Further change in informal space will result from both Houses leaving the Palace of Westminster for several years during a programme of restoration and renewal of the Palace. The consequences have yet to be fully assessed, not least for informal discourse between members of both Houses.[3] The use of informal space in a legislature may be affected not

only by physical changes with new or redesigned buildings, but also by a change in procedures (such as sitting hours) or members' preferences. There is thus the basis for examining the use of informal space as dynamic rather than fixed.

We have confined our study to physical space. Increasingly, informal space has expanded into virtual space, the use of social media, not least WhatsApp groups, complementing what goes on in tea rooms and lobbies. Members may converse via social media, utilising it to exchange information or lobby support for a cause or their own advancement. Whips and party managers may use it to keep members informed. The extension of internal interactions into cyberspace has advantage for members – not only convenience in terms of timing, but also privacy, away from any prying eyes, not least of the whips or in some cases backbench colleagues – but has the disadvantage for scholars as well as whips in being even less observable than meetings in physical space. Interaction via social media with constituents and others via Facebook, twitter and blogs can be monitored (see e.g. Jackson 2008, Jackson and Lilleker, 2009, 2011), but the interactions purely between members create problems for determining its extent and its effect.

There is thus scope for examining not only changes in informal space over time, but also its expansion into cyberspace. The other challenge is to extend the study beyond examining the dynamic in one nation to a more global perspective. Our study is confined to the UK, but provides the framework for comparative analysis, examining the configuration of informal space in other legislatures, national and sub-national, and its use for informal discourse between members. To what extent are the functions we have identified in the UK fulfilled elsewhere and with what effect? Is the significance we have attached to them replicated elsewhere?

We assume the use of informal space in legislature to have consequences wherever such space exists. Where it exists, it merits study. To date, that has what has been largely missing.

REFERENCES

Aitken, J. (2013), *Margaret Thatcher: Power and Personality*, London: Bloomsbury.

Alberti, J. (1996), *Eleanor Rathbone*, London: Sage Publications.

Andeweg, R. (2014), 'Roles in Legislatures', in S. Martin, T. Saalfeld and K. W. Strøm (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Asher, H. B. (1973), 'The Learning of Legislative Norms', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 67, pp. 499-513.

Bagehot, W. (1963), *The English Constitution* [first pub. 1867], London: Fontana.

Baker, D., Gamble, A. and Ludlam, S. (1993), 'Whips or Scorpions? The Maastricht Vote and the Conservative Party', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 46, pp. 151-66.

Baker, K. (1993), *The Turbulent Years*, London: Faber & Faber.

Banks, T. and Goodwin, J.-A. (1993) *Out of Order*, London: Century.

Bell, R. (1971), 'Notes for a Theory of Legislative Behavior: The Conceptual Scheme', in H. Hirsch and M. D. Hancock (eds), *Comparative Legislative Systems*, New York: The Free Press.

Best, H. and Vogel, L. (2014), 'The Sociology of Legislators and Legislatures', in S. Martin, T. Saalfeld and K. W. Strøm (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brandreth, Gyles (1999), *Breaking the Code,* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Callaghan, J. (1988), *Time & Change*, London: Fontana.

Childs, S. (2004), 'A Feminised Style of Politics? Women MPs in the House of Commons', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 6, pp. 3-19.

Clapp, C. L. (1964), *The Congressman: His Work as He Sees It*, Garden City NY: Anchor Books.

Clark, A. (1993), *Diaries*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Clarke, K. (2016), *Kind of Blue*, London: Macmillan.

Cooper, J. and Brady, D. W. (1981), 'Institutional Context and Leadership Style: The House from Cannon to Rayburn', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 75, pp. 411-25.

Cowley, P. (2005), *The Rebels*, London: Politico's.

Crewe, E. (2005), *Lords of Parliament*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Crewe, E. (2015), *The House of Commons: An Anthropology of MPs at Work*, London: Bloomsbury.

Crick. M. (1997), *Michael Heseltine: A Biography*, London: Hamish Hamilton.

Crowe, E. (1983), 'Consensus and Structure in Legislative Norms: Party Discipline in the House of Commons', *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 45, pp. 907-31.

Dexter, L. A. (1971), 'What Do Congressmen Hear?' in N. W. Polsby (ed), *Congressional Behavior*, New York NY: Random House.

Dickinson, N. (2017), 'Advice Giving and Party Loyalty: an Informational Model for the Socialisation Process of New British MPs', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 2017, https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsx035

Docherty, D. (1997), *Mr Smith Goes to Ottawa,* Vancouver: UBC Press.

Edmonds, F. (1989), *Members Only*, London: Heinemann.

Fenno, R. F. (1971), 'The Freshman Congressman: His View of the House', in N. W. Polsby (ed), *Congressional Behavior*, New York NY: Random House.

Fenno, R. F. (1978), *Home Style: Members in their Districts,* Boston: Little, Brown.

Fiorina, M. and Rohde, D. W. (1989), 'Richard Fenno's Research Agenda and the Study of Congress', in M. P. Fiorina and D. W. Rohde (eds), *Home Style and Washington Work*, Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press.

Fisher, N. (1977), *The Tory Leaders*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Flinders, M., Cotter, L-M., Kelso, A. and Meakin, A. (2018), 'The Politics of Parliamentary Restoration and Renewal: Decisions, Discretion, Democracy', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 71, pp. 144-68.

Gilligan, T. W. and Krehbiel, K. (1989), 'Asymmetrical Information and Legislative Rules with a Heterogeneous Committee', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 33, pp. 459-90.

Goodhart, P. (1973), *The 1922*, London: Macmillan.

Goodsell, C. T. (1988), 'The Architecture of Parliaments: Legislative Houses and Political Culture', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 18, pp. 287-92.

Grant. L. (2010), *An historical study of unofficial parliamentary party groupings in the Conservative Party from 1830*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Hull.

Hayes, J. (2014), *An Unexpected MP*, London: Biteback.

Heidar, K. and Koole, R. (2000) (eds) *Parliamentary Party Groups in European Democracies,* London: Routledge.

Hirsch, H. and Hancock, M. D. (1971) (eds) *Comparative Legislative Systems*, New York: The Free Press.

Holland, P. (1988), *Lobby Fodder?* Oxford: The Alvescott Press.

Honeyball, M. (2015), *Parliamentary Pioneers: Labour Women MPs 1918-1945*, Chatham: Urbane Publications.

Hutton, J. and Lewis, L. (2014), *How to be a Minister*, London: Biteback Publishing.

Jackson, N. (2008), 'Representation in the Blogosphrere: MPs and their New Constituents', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 61, pp. 642-60.

Jackson, N. and Lilleker, D. (2009), 'MPs and E-representation: Me, MySpace and I', *British Politics,* Vol. 4, pp. 236-64.

Jackson, N. and Lilleker, D. (2011), 'Microblogging, Constituency Service and Impression Management: UK MPs and the Use of Twitter', *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol. 17, pp. 86-105.

Knight, J. (1995), *About the House*, London: Churchill Press.

Krehbiel, K. (1989), 'Spatial Models of Legislative Choice', *Legislative Studies Quarterly,* Vol. 13, pp. 259-319.

Krehbiel, K. (1991), *Information and Legislative Organisation*, Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press.

Lamont, N. (1993), *In Office*, London: Little, Brown & Co.

Lewis, C. and Coghill, K. (2016), (eds) *Parliamentarians' Professional Development*, Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Loewenberg, G. and Mans, T. C. (1988), 'Individual and Structural Influences on the Perception of Legislative Norms in Three European Parliaments', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 32, pp. 155-77.

Lukes, S. (2005), *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd edn., Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

McDougall, L. (1998), *Westminster Women*, London: Vintage.

McCarthy-Cotter, L-M., Flinders, M., and Healey, T. (2018), 'Design and Space on Parliament', in C. Leston-Bandeira and L. Thompson (eds), *Exploring Parliament*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Martin, S., Saalfeld, T. and Strøm, K. W. (2014) (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Major, J. (1999), *John Major: The Autobiography*, London: HarperCollins.

Mezey, M. (1979), *Comparative Legislatures,* Durham NC: Duke University Press.

Mikado, I. (1988), *Back-Bencher*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Mitchell, A. (1982), *Westminster Man*, London: Thames Methuen.

Müller, W. C. and Sieberer, U. (2014), ''Procedure and Rules in Legislatures', in S. Martin, T. Saalfeld and K. W. Strøm (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mullin, C. (2009), *A View from the Foothills,* London: Profile Books.

Mullin, C. (2010), *Decline & Fall,* London: Profile Books.

Needham, R. (1983), *Honourable Member*, Cambridge: PSL.

Nicolson, Harold (1946), 'Eleanor Rathbone', *The Spectator*, 11 January.

Norton, P. (1978), *Conservative Dissidents,* London: Temple Smith.

Norton, P. (1998), 'The Conservative Party: "In Office but Not in Power"', in A. King et al., *New Labour Triumphs: Britain at the Polls*, Chatham House NJ: Chatham House Publishers.

Norton, P. (1990), 'General Introduction', in P. Norton (ed), *Legislatures,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Norton, P. (1995), 'The Parliamentary Party and Party Committees', in A. Seldon and S. Ball (eds), *Conservative Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Norton, P. (1998) (ed) *Legislatures and Legislators*, Aldershot: Dartmouth.

Norton, P. (2013a), *The Voice of the Backbenchers. The 1922 Committee: the first 90 years, 1923-2013,* London: Conservative History Group.

Norton, P. (2013b), *Parliament in British Politics*, 2nd edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Norton, P. (2016a), 'Learning the Ropes: Training MPs in the United Kingdom', in C. Lewis and K. Coghill (2016), (eds) *Parliamentarians' Professional Development*, Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Norton, P. (2016b), *Eleanor Rathbone: An Independent Force of Nature,* Hull: University of Hull.

Norton, P. (2017), 'Legislatures and the Courts: The Importance of Place', *Journal of International and Comparative Law*, Vol. 4 (2), pp. 171-87.

Packenham, R. (1970), 'Legislatures and Political Development', inA. Kornberg and L. D. Musolf (eds), *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective,* Durham NC: Duke University Press.

Parker, G. R. and Davidson, R. H. (1979), 'Why Do Americans Love Their Congressmen More Than Their Congress?' *Legislative Studies Quarterly,* Vol. 4 (1), pp. 53-61.

Parkinson, C. (1992), *Right at the Centre*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Parkinson, J. R. (2012), *Democracy and Public Space: The Physical Sites of Democratic Performance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Patterson, S. C. (1995), 'Legislative Institutions and Institutionalisation in the United States', *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol. 1, pp. 10-29.

Pedersen, S. (2004), *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience*, New Haven CT: Yale University Press.

Phillips, M. (1980), *The Divided House,* London: Sidgwick & Jackson.

Polsby, N. W. (1968),'The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives',

American Political Science Review, Vol.62, pp. 144-68.

Price, D. E. (1992), *The Congressional Experience: A View from the Hill*, Boulder CO: Westview Press.

Renton, T. (2004), *Chief Whip,* London: Politico's.

Riddell, P. (1994), 'Major and Parliament', in D. Kavanagh and A. Seldon (eds), *The Major Effect*, London: Macmillan.

Ridge, S. (2017), *The Women Who Shaped Politics*, London: Coronet.

Rogers, R. and Walters, R. (2015), *How Parliament Works*, 7th edn., London: Routledge.

Rose, P> (1980), *Backbencher's Dilemma*, London: Frederick Muller.

Rosenblatt, G. (2006), *A year in the life*, London: Hansard Society.

Rush, M. and Giddings, P. (2011), *Parliamentary Socialisation*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Russell, B. (1938), *Power,* London: George Allen& Unwin.

Sanders, D. (1995), 'Behavioural Analysis', in D. Marsh and G. Stoker (eds), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Schneer, J. (2015), *Ministers at War*, London: Oneworld.

Searing, D. D. (1994), *Westminster's World,* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Sedgemore, B. (1995), *The Insider's Guide to Parliament*, Cambridge: Icon Books.

Seldon, Anthony (1997), *Major: A Political Life*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Shepherd, R. (1991), *The Power Brokers,* London: Hutchinson.

Shepsle, K. A. (1978), *The Giant Jigsaw Puzzle: Committee Assignments in the Modern House*, Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press.

Shepsle, K. A. and Weingast, B. R. (1984), 'When Do Rules of Procedure Matter?' *Journal of Politics,* Vol. 46, pp. 206-21.

Shepsle, K. A. and Weingast, B. R. (1987), 'The Institutional Foundations of Committee Power', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 81, pp. 85-104.

Stocks, M. D. (1949), *Eleanor Rathbone: A Biography*, London: Victor Gollancz.

Tebbit, N. (1989), *Upwardly Mobile*, London: Futura.

Thatcher, M. (1993), *The Downing Street Years*, London: HarperCollins.

Uslaner, E. M. (1993), *The Decline of Comity in Congress*, Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press.

Vallance, E. (1979), *Women in the House,* London: Athlone Press.

Waddington, D. (2012), *Memoirs: Dispatches from Margaret Thatcher's Last Home Secretary*, London: Biteback Publishing.

Wahlke, J., Eulau, H., Buchanan, W. and Fertguson, L. (1962), *The Legislative System*, New York: Wiley.

Walker, P. (1991), *Staying Power*, London: Bloomsbury.

White, W. S. (1956), *Citadel*, New York NY: Harper and Brothers.

---

[1] This paper was first presented at the Political Studies Association Parliaments Group Conference, 'Legislatures in Uncertain Times', at the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, on 17 November 2017. The author is grateful to participants, as well as Michael Mezey and three anonymous referees, for their comments on the paper.

[2] Interviews, or conversations, with MPs and former MPs took place in a semi-structured form in the Palace of Westminster. I am grateful to all those who contributed their recollections.

[3] This was the theme explored in a short paper given by the author at the panel '"Designing for Democracy" – The Role of Architecture and Design in Parliamentary Buildings', 67th Political Studies Association Annual International Conference, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, 11 April 2017. It will form the basis of a later study.