1. Introduction to the *Handbook of Parliamentary Studies*

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In this *Handbook*, our primary ambition is to offer a comprehensive overview of accumulated knowledge across disciplinary traditions on parliaments and legislatures.¹ As amply shown by the contributions gathered in this book, such knowledge connects rich and diverse fields of inquiry that echo a number of both scholarly and more practical debates. These various far-reaching and long-lasting efforts are here designated through a unifying term, namely ‘parliamentary studies’. Before discussing in greater detail our motivations and the rationale for this *Handbook*, it is thus important to justify this choice and, more fundamentally, to consider whether parliamentary studies actually exist.

By this term, we hereinafter broadly mean the body of knowledge concerning the origins, operation or functions performed by legislative institutions. Parliamentary studies should thus not be regarded as a functional equivalent of, for instance, gender studies, which regards the significance of gender in different historical, social and cultural contexts (see Davis et al. 2009). Indeed, according to our definition, contributions to parliamentary studies might or might not consider the significance of parliaments in the cases under study. With a less integrative purpose in mind, this definition instead helps group the diverse forms of attention that have been paid in the humanities to a given socio-political object, namely parliament as a political institution, attention that has developed in parallel with the formation (and often with the fragmentation) of social sciences. There are now many disciplinary traditions that can legitimately claim to belong to parliamentary studies, and, equally, a number of disciplines that possess their own sector of scholarship dedicated to the study of parliaments. These institutions have, for instance, long attracted the interest of historians – an obvious fact since parliaments have existed for a long time, even a thousand years in some cases, and have generated many written sources of various types. They have also stimulated thought among numerous and prominent legal scholars. This is unsurprising: parliaments are tasked with legislating; they are a key component of constitutional architectures; they are major players of modern political regimes; and they are, more fundamentally, entities operating in richly textured legal environments. That political scientists have long paid particular and careful attention to legislatures as political loci *par excellence* will also come as no surprise.

The study of parliaments thus constitutes an old and well-explored domain in these three areas (history, law and political science), often covered by or included as a central part of a specific subfield of the discipline in question – see, for example, the role research on parliaments has played in the structuring of political history, of constitutional law and of legislative studies in political science. A significant number of other academic branches have greatly contributed to our understanding of parliaments and their members, including sociology, anthropology, economics, philosophy and rhetoric. Granted, the study of

parliaments per se usually holds a rather marginal place in these disciplines compared to the three mentioned above. Yet some contributions originating from scholarly discussions in these spheres, typically from economics or philosophy, have helped substantially to improve our understanding of legislatures and have critically shaped some fundamental controversies in other domains of knowledge.

This rapid overview suggests that parliamentary studies do not exist as a classifiable or well-identified academic subfield, but that they *do* exist as a rich, lively area of interest for the study of parliaments that is or has been expressed in nearly all domains of human thinking. Parliaments, it seems, are central enough, their role sufficiently acknowledged, to be subjected to a variety of disciplinary reflections. They are central and common enough, too, to generate some agreement on the role such institutions perform in modern (and past) societies, or at least to provide a fertile ground for an array of different reflections that are sometimes very alike in form. Overall, the broad dissemination and, crucially, the commonality of this specific institution enable scholars focused on some of its particular features to produce results that may be of interest from different disciplinary perspectives. Whatever their names, and despite their local specificities (Detienne 2003), political assemblies have enough in common to constitute a basis for sharing knowledge. Such a commonality may be less obvious when considering other political institutions (states, parties, and even voting systems, etc.).

It was this simple, elementary diagnosis that first motivated the two editors of this book to gather more than thirty specialists in parliament from different disciplines and to ask them to map the state of knowledge in their own fields. While edited by two political scientists, this *Handbook of Parliamentary Studies* is thus not just focused on so-called *legislative studies* (the name given to parliamentary studies in political research), first since there is already an excellent collection that covers this question (Martin et al. 2014), and second, crucially, as our aim differs from that of this previous collection. Indeed, what we would like to offer here is a panoramic view of the diversity of reflections on parliaments in the social sciences and humanities, ranging from public law to gender studies, and including approaches as seemingly disparate as the mathematical conceptualisation of legislatures to the sociological study of their members.

In summary, parliamentary studies do not exist as a field, yet *parliaments* exist – and they have formed an integral part, sometimes a building block, of numerous scholars' reflections. The *Handbook of Parliamentary Studies* modestly attempts to unite these assorted bodies of knowledge in a single volume in order to better understand the many aspects of this thinking. It also aims to illuminate how the study of legislatures or simple envisioning of its developments, its many roles, or its mere presence has shaped human knowledge on politics and society over the last decades.

1.1 THE *HANDBOOK OF PARLIAMENTARY STUDIES*: RATIONALE AND FINDINGS

In assembling various disciplinary contributions on parliaments, our ambition was not to provide the reader merely with a collection of essays with only a few words, or even a single word, in common. Our prime motivation, the rationale for this collective book, derives instead from the assumption that a range of similar patterns has affected the study

of parliaments over the last twenty years. We think that such patterns are due to shifts in disciplinary boundaries and agendas as well as, critically, to changes in the roles and places of parliaments in contemporary societies. In turn, we expected that gathering specialists from different disciplines involved in the study of parliaments could help identify commonalities to generate new questions or aid in advancing existing research agendas.

On this basis, we have retained the five main disciplines (history, law, political science, economics and sociology) that have, over the last fifty years, made the most substantial contributions to the study of parliaments according to the definition adopted in this volume. We have then identified a number of subdisciplines and key themes and asked their respective specialists to write essays mapping the current state of knowledge in the field, and to identify future research questions or topics on these bases that would merit further investigation. As such, this *Handbook* collects in a single volume the main means to conceptualise and to think about parliaments in 2020, and hopefully in the years to come. While multidisciplinary in nature, it does not offer interdisciplinary contributions per se, since these are quite rare in existing scholarship. Yet it provides an ideal foundation for such an effort, as it offers a range of critical and synthetic states of the art from about 25 different approaches to parliaments and legislative institutions.

Unsurprisingly, the book might at first give a preliminary impression of heterogeneity. Disciplinary specialisation into subfields and new disciplines (so-called ‘fractal differentiation’, in Abbott’s parlance) is indeed a prominent trend in social science research (Abbott 2001), and the study of parliaments is no exception to the rule. Increasing sophistication and greater precision in terms of research questions and methods, in parallel with an overall decline in knowledge sharing and common vocabulary, are common features in disciplines concerning broad topics. In our field, too, disciplinary specialisation thus provides some benefits at a certain price. Such a cost is undoubtedly increased by the greater complexity of methodological approaches developed in some disciplines, such as, recently, in political science and economics, which separates them from the rest of social research. Yet, in the same vein, our initial assumption that there are valuable similarities between each approach, notably due to similar patterns of development, is also clearly reflected by the various contributions reunited in this *Handbook*. We observe at least three facets that prevail in the majority of these fields, which we hope will provide solid groundwork for future reflections by scholars interested in the study of parliaments, irrespective of their disciplinary specialisations.

1.1.1 Founding Authors and Debates

At a certain level of abstraction, it is possible to identify broad similarities among the various disciplinary contributions collected in this volume. This particularly applies to the intellectual figures that numerous participants in the book cite as having played a crucial role in institutionalising their respective fields. Thus, (sub)disciplines share foundations and common ground. From economics to sociology, from law to philosophy, some – not all – canonical authors recur: Condorcet, Bentham, Stuart Mill, Bagehot, May and Pierre, Kelsen, Habermas, Arrow, Sartori and, recently, Cox, Norton, Shepsle and Strøm, to name a few.

The similarities are not limited to the more or less recent intellectuals that have participated in shaping the general controversies in these different fields. Crucially, a number of

issues (and often findings) discussed here are similar across disciplines. This is notably the case for subjects like the stability of parliamentary outputs, the level of constraints exercised by formal and informal rules on the behaviour of individual MPs, and the problems of collective action in legislatures. This statement also applies to the various conditions under which parliamentary rules can be changed, and how they both shape and limit actors' discretion in parliamentary games, as well as the question of these institutions' relationships with external entities – whether they are endogenous to the institution's daily activities, such as parties, or formally external to their internal procedures, such as interest groups. Each discipline involved in this collective book has developed positive theories to account for these topics and their effect on the origins, operation and various functions of parliaments and legislative institutions.

Some normative implications that span disciplines in similar forms also served as a basis for these investigations or were drawn from their findings. Although science requires putting aside value judgements, social scientists often have difficulty in fully distancing themselves from the normative implications of their inquiries when they deal with legislatures. The reason for this is that parliaments are located at the core of political representation. In more concrete terms, many studies implicitly or explicitly question the contradiction between the democratic promise of a 'government by the people' and the stark reality of legislatures. Parliaments are elite organisations (often) operating in a majestic setting, supported by a sizeable array of legal, material and symbolic resources. They exhibit sophisticated interactions through rhetoric or backdoor politics. In the Western world and beyond, parliamentary membership has become increasingly professionalised since the end of the Second World War (Best and Cotta 2000, Interparliamentary Union 2012). One may argue that the discrepancy between democratic ideals and parliamentary politics is at the core of modern politics, rather than a pathology of developed democracy. And humanities scholars and social scientists are typically attracted to structural contradictions, especially when they lead to revelations about the very nature of representative democracy.

Concerning this *Handbook's* rationale and purpose, such commonalities in terms of founding authors and broad positive and normative questions, in spite of disciplinary specialisation, themselves constitute an interesting finding. This conclusion supports the idea that interdisciplinary integration is less difficult to achieve than second-order methodological or epistemological differences would suggest, as common dilemmas seem to transcend disciplinary traditions, specialisations and dynamics.

1.1.2 (Sub)disciplinary Patterns

Similar inquiries across disciplines come about not only by chance or, more credibly, as a result of real-world transformations that various parliamentary institutions have faced over the last few decades. In many areas, a range of (sub)disciplinary internal patterns has also, it seems, favoured renewed interest in the study of parliaments and legislatures. These changes have arguably transcended the growing specialisation of knowledge during the same time period – and they constitute a second finding emerging from the collection of various disciplinary contributions for the purpose of this *Handbook*.

Indeed, most contributors report that interest in parliaments (and, more broadly, political institutions) has had a strong resurgence in their own subfields over the last two or

three decades. Though for years legislatures were largely considered merely the subjects of broader economic, social, political or legal forces, scholars from different disciplinary traditions have gradually come to realise that these institutions do matter in both past and contemporary societies. This is especially the case in constitutional law, where research on parliaments is on the rise, as shown by Armel Le Divellec in Chapter 7. In Chapter 11, Guillaume Tusseau contends that constitutional legal scholars have recently rediscovered parliaments' tendency to act as decisive protectors of fundamental rights. This growing interest has therefore occurred in parallel to some crucial real-world developments. The renewed attention to parliaments is also evident in political history research. Paul Seaward shows in Chapter 3 that, if the discipline still lacks a broader narrative on parliament, promising recent works have paved the way for a wider understanding of how parliament has shaped a number of critical transformations in the relationship between politics and society. The application of economic models to the study of legislative institutions is not necessarily new, as shown by Hervé Crès (Chapter 18) and Garcia Perez de Leon and Dumont (Chapter 19) in their respective contributions. Yet formal modelists have increasingly included the specificities of parliaments in their mathematical conceptualisations of legislative politics, notably the dense framework of rules and procedures that characterises decision-making processes in these institutions. Political scientists, who have long dismissed parliament as simply a vacuum through which various special interests transited, have over the last thirty years reconsidered how the many institutional features of parliament have made it a vital conduit in the policy-making process, an idea we develop in our own contribution about legislatures' place in political science (Chapter 12).

Over the last forty years, political science, economics and sociology have also been significantly transformed by the neo-institutionalist 'turn' – that is, a renewed interest in how institutions as humanly devised formal (and informal) rules and norms have structured political, economic and social interactions (North 1991). There are few places where rules and norms, both formal and informal, are more numerous than in parliaments. The spread of neo-institutionalism and its many forms in social research (see Binder et al. 2008) certainly helped restore parliament to the centre of research agendas. It also revitalised approaches to interactions and conflicts within parliaments, with scholars today paying more attention to institutional design both within and via parliaments, or to the interaction between formal and informal provisions and their effect on parliamentary behaviour. Thus, while neo-institutionalism and its numerous variants have been strong factors in subdisciplinary specialisation, they bring research questions and findings closer – an expectation largely supported by several contributions to this *Handbook*.

A number of similar developments in the outside world partly account for the increasing or at least persisting popularity of parliaments as relevant objects of study among social scientists. Public policy is now a dominant form of governance among advanced liberal democracies (Orren and Skowronek 2017), and parliaments are a (quasi) obligatory step within the policy-making process, even if they are not always at the forefront. In addition, parliaments are essentially transparent institutions that have increasingly made their data available in recent times, providing, as such, a reservoir of responses to a wide range of potential questions. Recently, the expansion of open data produced by legislatures has transformed social scientists' methodological approaches, as well as those of networks of NGOs and civic tech actors. Easily comparable, legislatures offer a rare combination of strategic individual behaviour and dense collective institutional settings,

constituting a possibly inexhaustible source of both old and new questions for virtually all social scientists – if one broadly conceives social sciences as the study of individual behaviour mediated by collective institutions, or vice versa (see Park 1921).

1.1.3 Parliamentary Resilience

Whatever the underlying reasons behind this enduring and at times growing interest in the study of parliamentary institutions, it also suggests that these entities have survived the massive shocks they have weathered over the past century or so. As parliaments embody representative democracy, or at least a certain idea of representation in society, which might be jeopardised by a wide range of adverse forces, such institutions have widely proven surprisingly resilient and adaptable (see also Mahoney and Thelen 2010). This finding is not particularly new, but it is strongly reinforced by the juxtaposition in this book of a number of various national experiences, past and present, all over the world.

Similarly, several contributions in this *Handbook* indicate, often explicitly, that the current ‘crises’ parliaments are now said to face may prove temporary. An obvious case in point is the new resurgence of populism characteristic of a number of countries worldwide. If populist forces, with their anti-pluralistic and anti-establishment rhetoric, constitute a serious challenge for representative institutions, they do not necessarily pose a major threat for the day-to-day of most parliaments. This is what Toru Yoshida argues in Chapter 17, where he concludes that populist forces certainly have an effect on the kind of politics played in parliament, but a rather limited impact on policies per se. This is partly due to the fact that parliaments are composed of a dense framework of rules that often prove hard to remove. In the end, they are organisations that seemingly always mediate (and sometimes reframe) external shocks, to which they are never fully subjected.

Ultimately, the various contributions gathered in this book affirm that parliaments are not only agents of a representative system regularly confronted with pressures from outside; they are also living organisations and places where such pressures express and are mediated by a wealth of institutional provisions, both formal and informal. Herein lies a powerful explanation, which mostly transcends disciplinary divides, for their endurance: it could both apply to the recent upsurge of nationalist parties in regional parliaments discussed by Field and Wuhs in Chapter 16, and to members of parliaments faced with the transformation of their mandate as a result of globalisation, a topic analysed by Fasone in Chapter 8.

1.2 THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

1.2.1 Contents and Limitations

The *Handbook of Parliamentary Studies* gathers 26 articles from the five disciplines that, in our view, have contributed the most to our understanding of parliaments over the last fifty years. These disciplines are respectively history, law, political science, (political) economy, and sociology. Each discipline is covered in one part consisting of four to six chapters. Twelve chapters² are mostly revised versions of book contributions that were

first published in French in a prior treatise on parliaments and legislatures (Rozenberg and Thiers 2018).

Some specifications regarding disciplinary approaches can be provided. The first part, on history, also includes elements on political theory and on the history of political thought. As elucidated in Paul Seaward's contribution (Chapter 3), political history is largely characterised by a strong national vision that results both from frequent specialisation over a particular legislature and by the liveliness, richness and long history of the domestic scientific debates, traits that allow some of these works to stay monographic. Therefore, the choice of a particular author in this part of the book has a great influence on the content of the chapters, probably more so than elsewhere in the book.

The choice to dedicate one part of the book to legal approaches is self-evident, given the legal nature of legislatures' output and regulations. We attempted to mix classical considerations on public law and parliamentary statutes with emerging issues of fundamental rights and legislative procedure. Part III, on political science, offers an overview of various approaches to legislatures within this broad discipline. It may surprise some that we devote a whole part of the book to political economy, as this discipline may at first glance seem more tangential to parliaments than the three others aforementioned. We nonetheless made this editorial choice for two reasons. First, the approaches falling under this umbrella have evinced an unquestionable dynamism over the last few years, whether adopted by economists or political scientists interested in economic methods and concepts. Several chapters were therefore needed to depict the diversity of this broad trend, from articles on public choice to historical accounts, or from formal modelling to more empirical institutional analysis. Second, these approaches are often characterised by a higher degree of (typically mathematical) sophistication. Accounts destined for non-specialists are thus all the more necessary. The last part of this *Handbook* covers diverse approaches that may fall under the umbrella of sociology, broadly understood. One chapter is focused on anthropology, a discipline arguably distinct from but close to sociology. Another considers the specific issue of discourse and deliberation.

Overall, three types of contributions can be found in this book. Some focus on a specific and well-identified subdiscipline of a broader field and examine how parliaments have been studied in this subdiscipline. This is the case, for example, in Chapter 7 on constitutional law and in Chapter 3 on political history. A second type of contribution refers to a specific approach that has been developed within, or sometimes at the intersection of, different disciplines, as in Chapter 20 on historical political economy or Chapter 5 on the conceptual history of parliaments. Finally, some chapters consider a specific topic that has received extensive coverage in a particular discipline, such as legislative-administrative relations in political science (Chapter 15) or gender and women's studies in sociology and political sociology (Chapter 24). Chapters are grouped by discipline mainly because we think that this will help the reader grasp the main features, controversies and insights of each discipline. However, as already suggested in the previous sections, many similarities and ramifications become clear from reading the book in its entirety.

Although we tried to provide the reader with the most exhaustive collection on parliaments and parliamentary studies, some limitations inevitably render our undertaking incomplete. In focusing on social and legal sciences, stressing their many connections and their potential for intra- and interdisciplinary analysis, we have not given some disciplines the place they undoubtedly deserve. Here, we refer particularly to philosophy (which is

only approached through Chapter 6),³ psychology and linguistics – even if the reader will find many traces of these fields’ numerous insights in social research in some of the following chapters. Some judgements also had to be made within each discipline. For example, parliamentary voting, parliaments and international relations, and parliaments and public opinion are topics that we excluded, yet they all deserve their own chapter. As these topics are addressed in other publications (see especially Martin et al. 2014), we have asked authors to include reflections on these issues in their respective chapters. Although these choices have resulted in a certain loss, we are convinced that the main features and parameters of academic debates in all disciplines retained in this book may be found in the following pages, along with material to forge new interdisciplinary research in the years to come.

1.2.2 Contributions to the *Handbook*

The *Handbook of Parliamentary Studies* opens with Olivier Rozenberg’s chapter (Chapter 2), in which he intends to provide the conceptual foundations for conducting interdisciplinary research on parliaments and legislatures. To this end, he starts with a straightforward question: which features identify a particular organisation as a parliament? On this basis, he characterizes three dimensions that he then justifies and illustrates, namely a set of organisational properties, an orientation towards the monopolisation of specific tasks and instruments, and a democratic quality.

Part I gathers various contributions made by historians and political theorists adopting a long-term approach to the study of legislative institutions. In Chapter 3, Paul Seaward first discusses how historiography has changed its approach to the study of parliament, taking Westminster as his case study. He illuminates the back-and-forth between an historiography attributing to Westminster a privileged role in English history and in the making of the State – so-called Whiggism – and more critical accounts. Seaward contrasts his peers’ long-standing interest in this entity with the scant development of broader reflections on parliament as a global institution. Yet he also shows that some promising recent contributions have started to work in the latter direction.

It is widely acknowledged that modern parliaments have a long pre-history. Similar assemblies of individuals entitled to speak and act in the name of a community and in search of the common good were established long before modern revolutions. In Chapter 4, Michel Hébert discusses the historiography of such entities. While emphasising the need to avoid the teleological bias, Hébert shows to what extent parliamentary pre-history shaped the institutionalisation of rules and procedures of modern-day parliaments.

Parliaments are institutions, but acting politically in such institutions always involves a range of concepts whose meanings have varied greatly across time and space. Where do these concepts come from? And how have their long-term transformations shaped parliamentary politics? These questions are addressed by a rich historiographical trend, namely conceptual history. Kari Palonen discusses its main insights and developments in Chapter 5.

At the crossroads of political philosophy and legal theory, and strongly entrenched in historical, long-term reflections on the evolution of parliaments, political theory has long been the ‘poor cousin’ of parliamentary studies, as Didier Mineur asserts in Chapter 6. Yet the study of parliaments from a theoretical angle has greatly augmented our understanding of democracy, as revealed in his review of reflections by political theorists over

the twentieth century. Mineur recounts the debates between Carl Schmitt and Hans Kelsen before questioning the deliberative potential of parliamentary debates in light of Habermas's unique contribution.

The second part of the *Handbook* concerns legal research on parliaments. In Europe, legal studies have been instrumental to subsequent reflections in other disciplines, and they still constitute a bedrock in the wider domain of parliamentary studies. While parliaments arguably lie at the centre of constitutional regimes, their study is still marked by a number of grey areas and conceptual ambiguities. So Armel Le Divellec contends in Chapter 7. This situation is strongly related to parliaments' positions in modern constitutional orders as the outcome of historical, contingent and essentially national developments – affecting, in turn, the legal doctrine and positive law of parliaments.

Comparative legal analyses are widely accepted as a relevant remedy to these pitfalls. In Chapter 8, Cristina Fasone introduces and discusses this literature. She particularly emphasises works on the status of MPs, parliamentary functions and internal organisation, as well as on constitutional review and parliaments. Throughout her chapter, she considers how these studies have enhanced our understanding of the role played by parliaments in contemporary governance.

Outside the subfield of constitutional law, the study of law-making procedure has long been one of the most neglected in legal scholarship, as shown by Ittai Bar-Siman-Tov in Chapter 9. Contrasting American and European scholarship, however, he argues that they now are the subject of growing attention. Bar-Siman-Tov also identifies promising avenues for future research in the field. Calling for more cross-disciplinary fertilisation, he argues that topics such as artificial intelligence and legislation in the age of populism lend themselves to such efforts. Reflections on parliamentary law and its relations to politics could conceivably offer similar ground for cross-disciplinary inquiries. This fruitful field of study is presented in Chapter 10 by Nicola Lupo and Eric Thiers. Here also, the changes in parliamentary law appear an excellent vantage point to comprehend the transformation of the role played by parliamentary assemblies.

A focus on parliaments can also serve to evaluate how these institutions help change some crucial legal features of contemporary political orders. Guillaume Tusseau shows in Chapter 11 how the most traditional parliamentary functions might all enhance and protect fundamental rights. In particular, he highlights how classical views that legislatures may threaten fundamental rights now seem outdated.

In the third part of the book, six chapters map the state of knowledge on parliaments in political research. As in the first two parts of the book, the third part shows how varied the study of such institutions might be within a single discipline. Cyril Benoît and Olivier Rozenberg (Chapter 12) offer a glimpse of this rich diversity through a broader reflection on the place held by parliaments in political research. After several decades of a certain disregard for the role they play in contemporary political systems, Benoît and Rozenberg argue that research gradually (re)discovered their importance, and that their study has also served to address wider political science questions over the recent period. This finding is largely echoed by the specific yet broad and thriving field of parliaments and democratic transitions. Drawing on various bodies of research produced in this domain, which typically combine insights from comparative politics, democratisation, state building and area studies, Alexandra Goujon demonstrates that the place held by parliaments in regime change processes is now increasingly acknowledged (Chapter 13).

Parliamentary ethics, namely the study of the formal and informal norms regulating certain conducts and behaviours of MPs, is also a field that has rapidly expanded over recent years. Discussing this literature, Denis Saint-Martin (Chapter 14) concludes that such scholarly interest has not been paralleled with a radical transformation of parliamentary ethics, as only a few parliaments around the world have ethics codes. His chapter also offers an illustration of historical institutionalism, and how it can help the study of rule formation and transformation in legislatures.

More classical reflections on parliaments in political research involve the study of their relationship with the administrative state, which has been the focus of a plentiful body of literature reviewed by Cyril Benoît in Chapter 15. While Americanists have focused heavily on legislative-administrative relations, Benoît shows that Europeanists have done so far less extensively, which in turn could lead to an underestimation of legislative influence over bureaucratic behaviour in Western Europe.

As suggested by Chapters 12 to 15, most modern political science contributions in legislative politics generally focus on how parliamentary behaviour is both constrained and enabled by the rich institutional setting in which it operates. This is further illustrated in the next two chapters. In Chapter 16 on parliaments and regionalism, Bonnie N. Field and Steven T. Wuhs examine how social foundations and institutional features might support or mitigate the promotion of regional interests in parliaments. In this part's last chapter, Toru Yoshida provides a comparative assessment of research on parliaments faced with the recent upsurges of populist forces (Chapter 17). While populism is clearly changing the kind of politics at play in a number of legislatures, it has proven, for the moment, to have a much more limited impact on policies.

Part IV gathers contributions from the field of political economy, a fertile domain of study that has always had strong links to political science, with many political scientists identifying as political economists and vice versa. Hervé Crès in Chapter 18 first considers a theme that has long been common to both political scientists and economists: the study of assembly decisions. Crès reviews in detail the responses to the problems and dilemmas that arise from aggregating individual preferences through majority voting. Understanding how collective decisions in turn shape individual preferences, Crès argues, might require a greater connection between economic research and other fields of social sciences than currently exists.

The formal study of legislative politics is another closely related domain where political scientists and economists have developed fruitful collaborations. Agenda-setting, informal policy-making, coalition-building and committee policy-making are all crucial aspects of legislative politics that are now addressed through rich and subtle mathematical conceptualisations, introduced and discussed in Chapter 19 by Cesar Garcia Perez de Leon and Patrick Dumont. The formal study of institutions and behaviours is also employed by scholars interested in researching the past. Over the last thirty years, a dedicated field has even emerged, namely historical political economy, presented by Alexandra Cirone in Chapter 20. Historical political economy of parliaments, as she shows, is a domain particularly on the rise, with a number of innovative researches published in recent years.

In Chapter 21, Valeria Palanza and Gisela Sin consider a more classical topic in political economy, of which many aspects are nonetheless yet to be explored: executive-legislative relations through the lens of executive vetoes, namely the veto prerogative that chief executives wield over the legislative process. Palanza and Sin notably demonstrate the

relevance of vetoes for our understanding of bargaining over policy and, more broadly, of executive–legislative relationships.

In Part V, five chapters outline various sociological and anthropological approaches to parliaments. First, in Chapter 22, Emma Crewe discusses ethnographic research on parliament, contrasting political science and anthropological approaches. Drawing on an abundance of primary and secondary empirical materials, she finds in this research fertile ground for interdisciplinary studies that could better take account of symbolic, cultural and relational aspects of parliamentary activities.

Contemporary sociological theories and research methods could also greatly improve political scientists' or political economists' methods for analysing parliaments, as argued in Chapter 23. Jenni Brichzin, Damien Krichewsky, Leopold Ringel and Jan Schank identify four main areas of sociological inquiry on parliament, with obvious resonance for historical and political research: the place parliaments hold in particular societies and their (civilising and mediating) role; the way social orders are established in parliament, at the normative-symbolic level; social practices in parliament; and external parliamentary relationships. Gender and women's studies, perhaps one of the fields of inquiry where anthropologists and sociologists have contributed most, is covered by Catherine Achin and Delphine Gardey in Chapter 24. Gender inside and outside parliament is marked by persistent questions and tensions around inclusion and exclusion, raising issues of representation and democracy. It is thus both a crucial subject matter for its own sake, and also a vehicle to address a significant, broader class of issues.

Adopting a more sociological approach to the study of the legislative process might also illuminate a number of crucial dimensions of policy-making through and by parliaments, as illustrated by Marc Milet in Chapter 25. Combining insights from policy analysis and sociology of law proves particularly fruitful, with an attempt to conceptualise bills as a sociological set of situated interactions, beyond their legal dimension.

In Chapter 26, Marion Deville and Christopher Lord offer an additional way of envisioning parliaments, namely as a place of discourses. Reviewing a range of quantitative and qualitative studies of parliamentary discourses, they show how an emphasis on issues of deliberation and justification can further enhance our understanding of topics as important as political competition, contestation and cooperation in parliaments.

1.3 LEGISLATURES AND ENCYCLOPAEDIAS

Offering a clear and readable presentation of each of the main scientific approaches on parliament in an age of disciplinary specialisation, assessing the reality and the extent of a certain 'comeback' of legislatures in social and legal sciences, identifying shared questionings and results: the reasons for undertaking this project were numerous. One may wonder whether there is not an additional underlying motivation namely the close affinity between encyclopaedism and parliamentarianism. Encyclopaedism dates back to Antiquity but experienced its golden age with the advent of printing. Key volumes are symbols of this era, like Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopaedia* in 1728 or the French *Encyclopédie* edited by Diderot and d'Alembert (1751–1777), to name but two. To a great extent, and as perceptively noted by Giovanni Rizzoni (forthcoming), parliamentary institutions, which gained ground in Europe a few decades after, followed in the field of

politics the humanist principles and traditions that Enlightenment scholars sought to disseminate in wider society. Just like dictionaries, legislatures can indeed be understood as instruments aimed at collecting information on the course of society in real time by gathering representatives from all over the country. These agents are here to reflect – or to *represent*, in modern parlance – all human agents that have a voice in a particular society. Larger countries need to be represented by populated assemblies just as the different areas of human thinking need several volumes (and several thinkers to speak in their names) to be comprehensively covered by thinkers and academics. Any topic may be considered by legislators, no issue can be a priori compelled from their interest – a universalistic feature that, again, is an explicit reminiscence of the encyclopaedist utopia.

The parallel can be drawn further between both elements. Drafting a notice and representing people both require respect for some rules, and both constitute, partly for that reason, an act of authority. There is a coup, a ‘symbolic act of force’ (Bourdieu 1987) both in asserting the current state of science and the desires of representatives. Such a coup is necessary in both a legislature and a dictionary. Indeed, both are utopian in their willingness to offer a comprehensive representation of society. Whatever the number of MPs or of volumes, a book or an institution cannot express the totality of reality, but necessarily betrays it.

There are in fact reasons to believe that a sovereign assembly and an encyclopaedia share the same unifying and representative ambition. Past decisions taken within legislatures have, by the way, been progressively compiled in long written collections that have played a key role in the empowerment of these institutions (see Lupo and Thiers in Chapter 10). In Britain, a clerk of Westminster, Erskine May, published in 1844 *A Treatise upon the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament* that has been constantly updated since and shaped the constitutional foundation of the kingdom (Evans 2017, May 1844). In France, two of May’s counterparts, Pierre and Poudra, developed a similar editorial enterprise thirty years later, which contributed to the legal establishment of the Third Republic (Pierre 1989, Poudra and Pierre 1879). Arguably, these old treaties differ from modern scientific handbooks. Yet they strove to encompass all aspects of parliamentary politics, including, in the case of Pierre, electoral caselaw.

In drawing a parallel between legislatures and encyclopaedias, our point is not to suggest that the book you have in your hands is, in itself, a sort of pocket parliament. Clarifying the proximity between both apparatuses invites us to consider their current situation. Rizzoni judges the future of legislatures severely, writing: ‘If parliaments continued to be founded on the “closed” model of the encyclopaedia they run the risk of ending up like the great encyclopaedias of our fathers. At best, they are left on the family bookshelves for purely decorative purposes. At worst, they are simply moved up into the attic’ (Rizzoni 2001). Some changes in the legislatures may indeed be required to adapt to the contemporary world. The representation of society through parliaments could certainly be less vertical. In practice, as shown by diverse contributions to this volume, MPs are already embedded in various types of social networks rather than holding a kind of monopoly over expressing their constituents’ interests. Direct participation of the people is also increasingly more conceivable, whether through digital tools or random selection of law-makers (Gastil and Wright 2019). These amendments to the classical parliamentary script, seen worldwide, are certainly welcome. This book, through its very existence, constitutes yet another attempt to demonstrate that, despite these changes, the core of the

parliamentary matrix is still worth pursuing. In an age of extreme specialisation in social science, the gathering of a great diversity of contributions constitutes a leap of faith in the universality of knowledge that is intimately connected with a special consideration for legislatures. Encyclopaedism and parliamentarianism share the same destiny – and we strongly believe that both deserve, perhaps more than ever, very special and careful attention.

NOTES

1. In this introduction, we use the terms ‘legislatures’ and ‘parliaments’ interchangeably. See Rozenberg, Chapter 2 in this volume for a discussion of these terms.
2. These are respectively Chapters 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25 and 26.
3. See the recent historical synthesis by Selinger (2019).

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