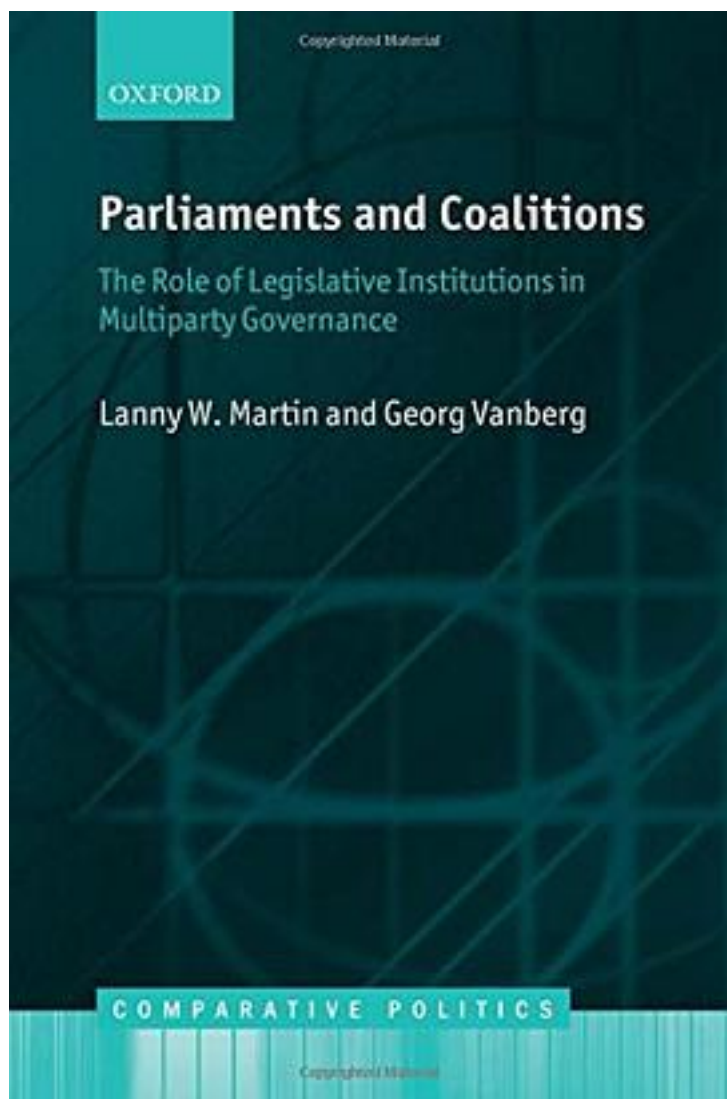


Parliaments and Coalitions



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出版者:OUP Oxford

出版时间:2011-9-1

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780199607884

Coalition governments are the norm in most of the world's parliamentary democracies. Because these governments are comprised of multiple political parties, they are subject to tensions that are largely absent under single-party government. The pressures of electoral competition and the necessity of delegating substantial authority to ministers affiliated with specific parties threaten the compromise agreements that are at the heart of coalition governance. The central argument of this book is that strong legislative institutions play a critical role in allowing parties to deal with these tensions and to enforce coalition bargains. Based on an analysis of roughly 1,300 government bills across five democracies (Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, and the Netherlands), the book paints a detailed picture of the treatment of government legislation in contemporary parliaments. Two central contributions emerge. First, the book forces a reconsideration of the common perception that legislatures are largely irrelevant institutions in European democracies. The data presented here make a compelling case that parliaments that feature strong committee systems play an influential role in shaping policy. Second, the book contributes to the field of coalition governance. While scholars have developed detailed accounts of the birth and death of coalitions, much less is known about the manner in which coalitions govern between these bookend events. *Parliaments and Coalitions* contributes to a richer understanding of how multiparty governments make policy. *Comparative Politics* is a series for students, teachers, and researchers of political science that deals with contemporary government and politics. Global in scope, books in the series are characterised by a stress on comparative analysis and strong methodological rigour. The series is published in association with the European Consortium for Political Research. For more information visit: www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr

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