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participation in the informal economy and the macro-context of the formal political and economic spheres--offer the more comparative theoretical analysis necessary for explanatory rather than merely descriptive research. *Middle Eastern Women and the Invisible Economy* is thus an interesting introductory text to a complex issue; suitable for classroom use and for providing scholars with a new and more accurate perspective on Middle Eastern women's economic roles and activities.

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The Populist Paradox: Interest Group Influence and The Promise of Direct Legislation (1999), by Elisabeth R. Gerber. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, xii, 171 pp.

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Elisabeth Gerber introduces her fine essay by summarizing a classic political dilemma:

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democracies want both freedom and order, and these may conflict. Democracies expand participation to promote liberty. They limit participation to promote stability and efficiency. They continually debate how to achieve a proper balance between these competing pressures for freedom and order. In the United States the balance has taken a representative form of government working through checks and balances. This has served to limit the power of the majority, but at times allowed minority interests, such as industry-based and narrow economic interests, to achieve too much control over the political process by influencing elected representatives.

Gerber explains that since the late 19th century Americans have promoted direct legislation as a way to counter such minority control, mobilizing in populist, progressive and other movements to do so. Direct legislation is of two basic types: initiatives, that is legislation initiated by citizens and put to popular vote, and referendums, that is legislation initiated by legislatures and then ratified or rejected by voters. Since the 1970s in some states (California is cited as a major example) the participants in direct action campaigns have spent enormous amounts of money to influence both legislators and voters. Since what Gerber terms economic interests have the most money, the concern now is that the direct legislative process has been taken over by these interests. According to this critique, efforts to escape the dilemma of freedom and order has created the paradox that populist policy making at the ballot box has become a tool of narrow economic interests rather than a tool of the broad public interest.

Gerber questions this critique. She says it is based on speculation and anecdote, not on systematic analysis and evidence. Gerber offers such systematic analysis in the form of her theory of interest group choice and influence. She builds her theory upon five basic concepts or premises that she explores through the first four chapters of her book. Her central premise is that interest groups behave much as do the profit-maximizing firm as understood through the lens of microeconomics. Thus, groups pursue forms of influence and political strategies that involve low costs given their group characteristics and resources, and relative to the benefits they expect from these pursuits. These costs are a function of the institutional and behavioral hurdles occasioned by each strategy and the resources groups are able to mobilize. Because economic and citizen interest groups vary in the comparative advantages they experience in mobilizing these resources they will use the direct legislation process in different ways. Through this analysis Gerber presents a set of hypotheses about how economic and citizen groups will act, and about some likely consequences.

She tests the hypotheses by answering a set of questions using data obtained from two sources. One source is a survey of interest groups randomly selected in four states that allow direct legislation. Data from this source enabled her to answer questions about how groups describe their motivations for using direct legislation and their strategies for conducting their campaigns. Her second source of data is the campaign finance records from these four states and four others that require reporting of contributions to statewide direct legislation campaigns. She explains that she chose these states as samples not randomly but because they represent a wide range of different experiences with direct legislation. Data from these records allowed her to answer questions about what interest groups actually do.

Just as firms try to maximize their profits by choosing among alternative modes of production, so do interest groups seek to maximize their political influence by choosing among alternative strategies. Both evaluate expected costs and benefits of such alternatives, and both are constrained by uncertainty and limited resources. Just as firms act based upon their understanding of their comparative advantages, so do interest groups. Economic-based interest groups (including industrial, businesses and professional groups) should and do have a comparative advantage in using strategies which are relatively cash intensive rather than personnel intensive. These interests will use their financial resources to pressure the legislature and block legislation rather than to pass new initiatives. Using strategies that are more labor intensive rather than cash intensive places citizen interest groups (and occupational groups and autonomous individuals) at an advantage. They can mobilize people to act. They will use these resources to pass new initiatives that make change, or, as she puts it, to pursue direct modifying influence.

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Gerber concludes that contrary to popular opinion and some scholarly critique, economic groups generally do not possess the resources to use direct legislation to achieve direct influence over policy, especially influence to make change. They are not able to buy policy outcomes through the direct legislative process. On the other hand such groups are able to influence policy by contributing to the policy debate, as are other interests. Further, they do find in such direct legislative process additional means to influence policy subtly, especially to conserve the status quo and protect their legislative advances. Therefore Gerber does indeed find paradox in direct legislation because the influence of economic groups, no matter how indirect, is contrary to the intentions of the Populist and Progressive reformers.

Gerber contributes much with this book. She contributes to our understanding of direct legislation and differences in the motivations, strategies and influences of citizen and economic interests. She therefore contributes to our understanding of the problems and prospects of increasing participation in the political process.

Gerber also contributes to the building of theory in the study of interest groups by clearly stating and consistently using a specific analytical approach. As noted, she roots her study in the premise that interest groups behave like firms and that the actions of both can best be explained by their efforts to assess their resources (chiefly money and labor) and apply these to maximize their gains and cut their losses. This premise informs her focus on the internal characteristics of groups rather than on the external forces acting on them. (In this, her approach is somewhat like that which students of social movements often refer to as "resource mobilization," distinguishing this from approaches focusing on the strains in society that generate movements, or the changes in political conditions, which enable movements.) Gerber does mention that external factors are important, but her way of dealing with them without becoming entangled in their assessment is to treat them as hurdles that groups meet through their internal strategies. Her data provide information about the groups and how they understand their external contexts, rather than about these external conditions.

Gerber contributes to method, theory and clear writing by presenting her arguments in a way which can stand as a model of how to present the findings of research conducted as social science rather than as post-modernist critique and a type of literary criticism. She explains how she builds theory through a set of premises, and how she deduces hypotheses from these, which she then tests. She explains how she tests these hypotheses through surveys and the study of records, and how she chose these sources. Gerber analyzes these data by performing appropriate statistical tests. She presents her findings in both narrative and tabular form and includes copies of her research instruments in appendices. While I find her research techniques admirable, I did find missing that technique which most anthropologists prize, namely field observation and interview. I would have liked to learn more about the groups as entities by reading the results of such field study. However, such information is not essential to her project, as she has so presented it.

Gerber carefully defines her categories of analysis. For example she distinguishes among types of influence in shaping legislation: modifying, preserving, direct, and indirect, and four sets of these in two-fold combination. These distinctions are vital to her analysis and conclusions. For instance, through this she distinguishes between influence that is direct and modifying, and influence that is indirect and preserving. Thus, she can conclude that while economic interests do not exert the former type of influence, they do exert the latter. According to her precisely crafted definitions of types of influence, she finds that the paradox exists.

Gerber's book should contribute to policy debating and making. Certainly the subject of direct legislation is a significant one. Pressures to use direct legislation and debates about its positive and negative aspects will probably increase as people promote online voting. Perhaps by now Professor Gerber will have received feedback from various publics regarding the use of her book in informing policy deliberations about direct legislation. She can then test my guess. My guess is that many people actively criticizing or promoting direct legislation will find that her conclusions are modest and ambiguous. Many will find it not surprising that citizen groups are more effective than economic groups in using direct legislation to alter the status quo, while