

Notes from the Editor

IN THIS ISSUE¹

This is an election year. I make that statement with certainty without so much as a glance at the calendar. It is *always* an election year, and all the more so as campaigns have stretched out into multi-year affairs and as voting has broken out in parts of the world where until recently it was but a distant dream. Reflecting these real-world developments and our own professional interests, it also is always an election year in political science. Hardly an issue of a major political science journal goes by without some consideration—and often several considerations—of elections and voting.

What is true in general is true in this particular instance as well, for this issue of the *Review* opens with four articles on various aspects of elections and voting—hence, in recognition thereof, our cover graphic.

The lead article in this issue is an exceptional piece of scholarship. Not only do the authors, Thomas Cusack, Torben Iversen, and David Soskice, pioneer a new way of thinking about an old problem, but they do so by bringing together two literatures that have much to say to one another but had not until now been on speaking terms. In “Economic Interests and the Origins of Electoral Systems,” Cusack, Iversen, and Soskice examine the selection of electoral institutions, specifically proportional representation versus majoritarian systems. The starting point of their analysis is familiar: prior work that links the development of political parties to electoral laws and social cleavages. But the analysis takes an unconventional turn by bringing a previously unrelated literature into play—political economy-based work on comparative market economies. The creative integration of these two research streams promises great benefits for each, for Cusack, Iversen, and Soskice demonstrate how the two research traditions can supplement and enlighten one another and thereby significantly advance political science scholarship.

The next three articles in this issue sustain the focus on electoral politics. In “Vote Choice in Suburban Elections,” J. Eric Oliver and Shang E. Ha home in on the thousands of elections that occur each year in the municipalities, townships, and cities that compose suburban America. Oliver and Ha contend that standard models are deficient when applied to suburban elections in particular, and their contention is borne out by the finding that the notoriously low turnout characteristic of these micro-elections produces a unique set of results—specifically the disproportionate influence of homeowners and the more highly educated.

Whether the context is a presidential election, a referendum on membership in the EU, or a conference

among the justices of the Supreme Court, voting often occurs sequentially. In “Efficiency, Equity, and Timing of Voting Mechanisms,” Marco Battaglini, Rebecca Morton and Thomas Palfrey ask whether this matters. Finding much conventional wisdom supporting this notion but little scholarly evidence, Battaglini, Morton, and Palfrey begin with a formal analysis of both sequential and simultaneous voting procedures and then turn to experiments designed to test model-based predictions. These predictions are generally borne out but produce mixed support concerning the benefits of one type of system over the other.

As the number of Latinos occupying elective office in the U.S. has increased substantially in recent decades, our understanding of the underlying dynamics has not kept pace. In “*¡Sí Se Puede!* Latino Candidates and the Mobilization of Latino Voters,” Matt A. Barreto sets aside the explicit or implicit assumption that the competing candidates are Anglos. What happens to voter turnout, Barreto asks, when a Latino candidate is on the ballot? Barreto’s results indicate that the race and ethnicity of candidates are more significant determinants of voter turnout than past research has suggested—a worthy new demonstration of the impact of electoral context on political preferences and behavior.

“Without theory, practice is but routine born of habit. Theory alone can bring forth and develop the spirit of inventions,” said Louis Pasteur. In “Democratic Theory and Political Science: A Pragmatic Method of Constructive Engagement,” Archon Fung explores what he takes to be the disconnect between democratic theory and assessments of democratic institutions. Fung not only argues that empirical observation should be integrated into normative theory but provides a useful method with which to accomplish this goal. This article should appeal to students of democratic politics of various theoretical and methodological stripes, and to scholars of political philosophy more generally.

Also addressing problems of integrating the theoretical ideal and the world as it is, Jacob T. Levy criticizes normative theories of federalism for their inapplicability to actual cases of federalism. In “Federalism, Liberalism, and the Separation of Loyalties,” Levy synthesizes ideas from normative theory, comparative politics, and the history of political thought to establish a new standard for the evaluation of theories of federalism. Scholars of federalism would do well to take notice of this multi-faceted contribution to the literature.

A very different theoretical approach—this one drawing on the ancients but also speaking to current issues, as represented in modern justice theory—is represented in Paul W. Ludwig’s “A Portrait of the Artist in Politics: Justice and Self-Interest in Aristophanes’ *Acharnians*.” Ludwig uses Aristophanes’ play as a testing ground for the hypothesis that justice is

¹ Drafted by Editorial Assistant Elizabeth Franker.

self-interest—an exercise that should be of particular interest to political theorists of various stripes as well as students of the politics-literature connection.

Although the phrase “separation of church and state” never appears in the U.S. Constitution, the practice of such separation remains one of the most contentious issues in American politics. What were the intentions of the founding fathers vis-à-vis religious freedom? In “The Struggle between ‘Religion and Nonreligion’: Jefferson, Backus, and the Dissonance of America’s Founding Principles,” J. Judd Owen argues that the founders’ motivations were themselves divergent. By focusing on the views of Thomas Jefferson and Isaac Backus, Owen situates the concept of religious freedom in liberal theory, revealing the role of religious freedom not just in protecting religious practices, but also in advancing religious goals.

Marx famously referred to religion as the “the opium of the people,” but far from always pacifying the masses, religion also can be used to incite them to action—even violent action. In “Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion,” Daniel Philpott isolates two key features of religion: differentiation (the degree of autonomy between religious actors and the state) and political theology (the basic worldview as applied to politics). These two characteristics appear to determine whether religion promotes stable, democratic politics or anti-democratic action, including terrorism and violence. Philpott’s analysis serves as a guide for political scientists seeking to grapple in more sophisticated ways with the very timely topic of the political impact of religious belief and involvement, and more broadly with the impact of belief systems and values on political outcomes.

What is a state to do when it confronts terrorist groups, such as those inspired by religious ideals? In “Defending Against Terrorist Attacks with Limited Resources,” Robert Powell probes the logic of governmental resource allocation in the face of an uncertain threat. Using the tools of formal modeling, Powell shows that resource allocation decisions can alter terrorists’ preferences and behavior, but not always in ways that officials would have intended. By increasing security at one site, officials may inadvertently encourage the targeting of another. These results should evoke widespread interest, not only among scholars of international relations and foreign policy, but also among members of the broader policy community.

During international crises, such as terrorist attacks, how do leaders decide whether to negotiate in secret or to fight it out in public? Shuhei Kurizaki answers this question in “Efficient Secrecy: Public versus Private Threats in Crisis Diplomacy.” Kurizaki problematizes the assumption of a “public” that has pervaded prior analyses of audience costs and bargaining. In another novel turn, he examines the consequences for both adversaries of one leader to make the conflict public; in going public, leaders bring in not only their own public, but the opponent’s as well. Kurizaki’s analysis seems likely to inspire much new thinking about responses to conflict, especially by formal theorists studying international relations.

“War,” as General Sherman said, “is Hell.” But as any reader of Dante’s *Inferno* will understand, Hell is not anarchic. It has a structure and rules of its own, and so, therefore, does war. In trying to answer the question, “Why Do States Follow the Laws of War?,” James D. Morrow laments the current absence of systemic evidence on compliance with the laws of war and with international legal norms in general. Deftly dealing with an array of serious research design and methodological problems, Morrow produces an impressive collection of data. His analyses demonstrate that reciprocity plays a key role in compliance and that reciprocity is strengthened by joint ratification of treaties, especially among democracies. This agenda-setting article seems sure to spur both theoretical and policy discussions among international relations specialists and practitioners alike.

Do values or material concerns dominate state decision-making? In “Who Keeps International Commitments and Why? The International Criminal Court and Bilateral Non-Surrender Agreements,” Judith Kelley’s careful attention to alternative explanations and skillful use of empirical materials produce an important new contribution in this often-heated debate—a contribution with both scholarly and practical implications.

Moving from an international court to domestic ones, Jeffrey R. Lax’s “Constructing Legal Rules on Appellate Courts” assesses the decision rules applied by judges on collegial court. Lax develops a “case-space” model that begins to bridge the gap between a legal perspective, which emphasizes rules and case facts, and a political perspective, which underlines the importance of judges’ preferences. In so doing, Lax demonstrates how past work focusing on a single judge as *the* pivotal voter on a collegial court may miss the true dynamic of collegial decisions, in which various judges at some point play the pivotal role in different sets of cases.

Finally, we turn to the problems of bureaucratic drift and slack, as analyzed by Ethan Bueno de Mesquita and Matthew C. Stephenson in “Regulatory Quality Under Imperfect Oversight.” In such cases, external oversight is often viewed as a remedy. In Bueno de Mesquita and Stephenson’s model, such oversight can lead to higher-quality proposals and to a reduction in the frequency of regulation, and can drive agencies to put more effort into activities directly observable by the overseer—which may or may not be a desirable outcome. Scholars of bureaucratic politics and organizational behavior will find much useful material in this important analysis.

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