Note from the Editors

Ana Arjona and Wendy Pearlman

Political science has developed concepts, theories, and measurements to document and understand perhaps the gravest threat to democracy in the twenty-first century: leaders who are elected through democratic means but then undermine or even dismantle democracy. Research on democratic backsliding, autocratization, and illiberalism reveals common patterns across cases such as Turkey, Hungary, and El Salvador. Leaders achieve wins at the ballot box, often thanks to populist appeals, deep societal polarization, and widespread distrust of politics as usual. Once in office, they centralize decision-making power and use electoral laws to create an uneven playing field in their favor. They hollow out the political institutions that might offer a check on the executive, including courts, media, universities, and even parliaments. And they use demonization, legal punishments, and other threats to silence critics, rendering too many afraid to speak out.

By the measures that our discipline provides, this is what is occurring in the United States now and has been for more than a decade. Scholars and analysts have long drawn attention to the anti-democratic character of foundational institutions such as the Electoral College or practices such as the filibuster, to say nothing of the denial of suffrage to Black Americans in the South before the 1960s. As part of a trend of global democratic decline, however, the erosion of democracy in the United States has taken on new forms in this century. Indeed, Freedom House's measure of the health of democracy in the United States fell 10 points from 2006 to 2024 on a 100-point index (Freedom House 2025). The Varieties of Democracy project (V-Dem) registered an equivalent 10-point decline in its liberal democracy index between 2015 and 2024 (Coppedge et al. 2025; Pemstein et al. 2025). In 2021, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2021) judged the decline in checks and balances, as well as freedoms of expression, association, and assembly, to be sufficiently severe to classify the United States as a "backsliding" democracy. As they assess these changes, political scientists have analyzed the accelerating politicization and manipulation of elections, from gerrymandering to the erecting of barriers to voting, harassment of poll workers, attempts to impede vote counting, and even the use of violence to stop the certification of electoral results. They have documented the executive's aggrandizement and its undermining of the independence and impartiality of both the judiciary and the civil service. They have also detailed how a polarized and gridlocked Congress has done little to uphold checks and balances.

These trends escalated during President Trump's first term in office. His second term, however, marks a completely new stage. An increasing consensus among political scientists has been sounding the alarm bells. V-Dem recently described the current situation in the United States as "what seems to be the fastest evolving episode of autocratization the USA has been through in modern history" (Nord et al. 2025, 46). Echoing these concerns, Bright Line Watch's April 2025 survey of 760 political scientists found that at least 75% of respondents considered several federal actions to constitute serious or extraordinary threats to democracy. Their judgment of several future actions discussed by the administration is even more dire: about 9 in 10 respondents believe that some potential actions, such as the partisan impeachment of judges or the transfer of US citizens to Salvadoran detention facilities, would pose a threat to democracy (Bright Line Watch 2025). In these and other reports, political scientists highlight a sharp expansion of executive power and a series of actions that undermine democratic norms, such as efforts to weaken congressional control over public spending, defiance of court orders and delegitimization of judges, attacks on independent oversight bodies and the press, deportations and arrests without due process, intimidation of media outlets, and attempts to purge the state bureaucracy. Driven by concerns about retribution, a growing atmosphere of fear and silence among critics is already evident. As many experts note, these strategies are characteristic of systems undergoing autocratization, if not hallmarks of an autocrat's "playbook." They are processes that, if not stopped and reversed, could result in consolidation of some form of authoritarianism.

Political science offers tools and concepts to help us appreciate the gravity and urgency of this moment. Among other topics, scholarship on democracy and authoritarianism can help us anticipate where these trends might lead. Scholarship on populism, polarization, political parties, and political communications can help us appreciate the societal processes that are intertwined with these outcomes.

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Studies of institutions, including legislatures, judiciaries, and bureaucracies, can help us understand the conditions under which these bodies serve as mechanisms of horizontal accountability safeguarding democratic rights, transparency, and rule of law, or alternatively are captured and co-opted as tools of autocratization. Research on social movements and resistance might indicate how individuals and social forces can come together to protect democracy before it is too late.

As political scientists, and as instructors with responsibility for educating the next generation of citizens and leaders, we have a special role to play today. We can draw upon our work not only to understand what is happening in the United States but also to identify lessons learned in other contexts about how to combat authoritarianism. We can translate our research into accessible insights for policymakers, journalists, and citizens navigating these challenges. Furthermore, the Trump administration's attacks on higher education are attacks against us, our colleagues, and our institutional homes. That political scientists are at once experts on democratic processes and targets of authoritarian policies puts us at the heart of the battle for democracy in this country.

In this context, *Perspectives on Politics*' October 2024 call for papers for a special issue titled "Political Science and the University" is especially timely.[1] We look forward to publishing research that brings our discipline's conceptual, theoretical, and empirical tools to illuminate important questions about universities as means of political control and global diplomacy, the role of higher education in society, the dynamics of internal governance in educational institutions, and other questions vital to understanding the politics of higher education and higher education as politics.

The sections in this issue of *Perspectives* examine a range of challenges to democracy, the building blocks of civic attitudes and behavior, the inner workings and influence of political parties and corporations as key political players, and the relationship between technology and governance. Together, they offer novel concepts, theoretical insights, and methodological innovations that advance our understanding of democracy—one of political science's most significant contributions to both knowledge and praxis.

Challenges to Democracy

This section brings together diverse perspectives on the challenges facing liberal democracy. What values justify it? How can democratic regimes represent the people when large segments of the population do not vote? How does structural inequality shape support for democracy? And what drives support for democracy among critics of authoritarianism? The four articles in this section offer new insights into these questions by reflecting on the foundations of democracy, proposing institutional innovations to strengthen it, and examining the social and political drivers of support for democratic regimes and democratic rights.

In "Liberal Democracy Reexamined: Leo Strauss on Alexis de Tocqueville," Raúl Rodríguez discusses Leo Strauss's interpretation and critique of Alexis de Tocqueville's political philosophy, as primarily revealed in Strauss's previously unpublished 1954 "Natural Right" course transcript. The article highlights Strauss's view of Tocqueville as an important observer of liberal democracy while also pointing out what Strauss saw as limitations in Tocqueville's thought when compared to that of figures like Aristotle and Nietzsche. The author challenges Strauss's "overly intellectualized conception of social and political change" (p. 807), arguing that Tocqueville's approach, though modern, does not fully abandon the concepts of natural right and human nature. The piece ultimately suggests that juxtaposing Strauss and Tocqueville offers valuable insights into the complexities and challenges facing liberal democracy, including its foundation and its relationship to history, justice, and human nature. By providing an alternative interpretation of Tocqueville that is attuned to the complex interplay between theory and praxis, Rodríguez offers a moderate approach to theoretical diagnoses and encourages further reflection on fundamental questions at the heart of the liberal democratic tradition.

Whereas the first article revisits foundational questions in political theory, the second turns to a neglected normative issue in democratic practice: how electoral systems should respond to widespread non-voting. In "Proportional Non-Voter Sortition: Legislative Inclusion for Non-Voting Citizens," Marcus Carlsen Häggrot and Chiara Destri propose a model that allocates legislative seats proportional to the non-voting rate and fills them by randomly selecting non-voters. Unlike the common "count-and-report" approach, which registers abstentions without institutional consequence, this model links non-voting to representation and aims to enhance legislative inclusivity. Grounded in three core democratic values—political equality, popular control, and epistemic capacity—the proposal offers incentives for parties to consider the preferences of non-voters. The authors clarify that their argument is *pro tanto*—favored in the absence of weighty countervailing considerations—and empirically conditional on non-voters holding distinct views. Although not proposed as a replacement for electoral democracy, the model is designed as a supplement adaptable to various systems. The authors respond to likely objections and present their proposal at a "medium level of specification," noting that implementation would require further context-specific decisions. Contributing to normative democratic theories of non-voting, the article ultimately aims to foster public deliberation about how democracies should respond to citizen non-participation—a problem that, they argue, has received insufficient attention.

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Shifting from normative theory to empirical analysis, Jana Morgan and Nathan J. Kelly examine how social hierarchies influence public support for democracy. In "Ethnoracial Hierarchies and Democratic Commitments," the authors develop a theory grounded in existing scholarship and more than 100 interviews with Indigenous and Afro-descendant activists, policy makers, and experts in Peru. Within that framework, they hypothesize that entrenched ethnoracial hierarchies weaken support for democracy and democratic rights across society, including among privileged groups. They also posit that recognizing systemic sources of ethnoracial disparities strengthens individuals' support for democracy and democratic rights. Testing these arguments with cross-national public opinion data from Latin America and a longitudinal study in Bolivia, they find that deeper ethnoracial hierarchies are associated with weaker support for democracy across society. However, minoritized group members who attribute ethnoracial disparities to systemic causes show increased support for democracy. In addition, minoritized groups—regardless of group consciousness—show stronger support for democratic rights, potentially because they view them as protections against oppression. The article has important theoretical and empirical implications for understanding democratic support, the political relevance of race and ethnicity, and the role of group consciousness in political behavior.

Extending the exploration of democratic attitudes to authoritarian contexts, Haemin Jee and Tongtong Zhang investigate attitudes toward democracy among critics of authoritarian regimes. In "Oppose Autocracy without Support for Democracy: A Study of Non-Democratic Critics in China," the authors challenge the assumption that opposition to authoritarianism implies support for democracy. They introduce the concept of non-democratic critics (NDCs)—individuals who reject an authoritarian regime but do not embrace democratic alternatives—and propose a theory to explain why authoritarian critics can be reluctant to support democracy. The authors argue that NDCs have distinct political and socioeconomic demands and exhibit higher uncertainty about democracy's ability to meet these demands. This ambivalence, they contend, contributes to the resilience of authoritarian regimes by fragmenting opposition. Based on interviews and a nationwide survey in China, the authors find that 40% of regime opponents fall into this category. Compared to democracy supporters, NDCs place greater importance on economic growth and show less concern for individual freedoms. Despite similar exposure to foreign media, they also express greater doubt about whether multiparty systems can meet their demands. At the same time, their relative economic advantage makes them more sensitive to a lack of institutional protections and more concerned about wealth security, which fuels their demand for greater transparency and oversight in government decision making. The study sheds light on internal divisions among regime critics and emphasizes the importance of understanding how diverse citizen demands shape attitudes toward political systems.

Parties in Competition and Government

Political parties are dynamic institutions that both reflect and reshape society. They compete for power, structure political debate, and shape policy outcomes. The four articles in this section examine how parties function as organizations, how internal disagreements take different forms, how parties mobilize public support, and how they affect policy outcomes in the critical domain of inequality. Together, these contributions shed light on both the internal dynamics of parties and their societal impacts.

"The Study of Intraparty Frictions: Conceptual Reflections on Preference Heterogeneity, Disagreement, and Conflict" opens the section with a reminder that political parties are not unitary actors but rather complex organizations characterized by a plurality of internal preferences. Nicole Bolleyer and Ann-Kristin Kölln note that scholarship on intraparty friction has traditionally viewed it negatively, associating conflict with disunity that weakens parties' coherence, electoral prospects, and goal attainment. Recent literature, however, offers a more positive interpretation of how preference heterogeneity and disagreement can increase parties' mobilization, representational capacity, and strategic advantage in the context of coalition governments. A thorough review of existing literature reveals how these contradictory accounts can be attributed to different conceptualizations of intraparty friction, even across studies aiming to explain the same phenomenon. Bridging typically disconnected subfields, the authors distinguish between structural and behavioral approaches. On that basis, they develop a minimal definition of intraparty friction and a hierarchical concept structure that differentiates between intraparty disagreement and intraparty conflict. This Reflection essay offers a unified framework to support conceptual clarity and knowledge accumulation on political parties, with potentially broader applications for the study of friction in other governmental bodies.

Dan Mercea and Felipe G. Santos shift from disputes within parties to examine sources of popular support in movement parties: political parties that grow out of social movements and apply movement-style organizational strategies. In "Policy over Protest: Experimental Evidence on the Drivers of Support for Movement Parties" the authors draw on observational and country-specific studies to develop hypotheses about the preferences of movement party voters. They test these propositions using a conjoint survey experiment included in a nationally representative survey in six European countries. They find that movement party supporters are not necessarily driven by candidates' previous institutional or extrainstitutional experience. Supporters are not anti-system but instead favor candidates who are anti-elitist and pro-systemic and, relative to conventional party

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supporters, have stronger preferences for candidates based on policy stances. This research helps us understand a form of political organization that is increasingly important amid growing levels of distrust in traditional parties and political institutions. It also invites further exploration of the broader applicability of these findings—for example, by studying which policies might be important for voters with anti-elitist yet pro-systemic preferences, as well as the conditions under which party characteristics shape voter preferences more than candidates.

The remaining two articles shift from parties in competition to parties in governance, with a focus on their impact on one of the most important issue areas in any polity: inequality. Both articles note shortcomings and contradictions in existing scholarship but use different approaches to advance knowledge in this field. In "Left Governmental Power and the Reduction of Inequalities in Western Europe (1871–2020)," Vincenzo Emanuele and Federico Trastulli undertake to establish whether the Left in government reduces inequalities. In addition to their broad temporal and geographical scope—a comparative time-series analysis across 600 legislative terms within 20 Western European countries spanning 150 years—the authors use a sophisticated, fine-grained measure of the strength of leftist parties in government and a multidimensional approach to inequality that includes political, social, and economic indicators. They find that leftist parties have been able to reduce inequality, although with more success in some domains. Specifically, they have been able to equalize the distribution of political power among distinct socioeconomic and social groups, increase the share of the population receiving high-quality education and healthcare, and expand welfare state universalism. However, they have been less effective in equalizing income inequality and securing equal access to political power for men and women. The Left's reduction of inequality has decreased over time and has not been significant since the 1980s, leaving its impact on inequality reduction indistinguishable from that of the center-right over the last 40 years. This empirical analysis suggests that leftist parties no longer uphold their original mission of achieving equality through governmental action and encourages research on the implications for the future of the Left and the evolution of its foundational identity.

Martin Haselmayer and Alexander Horn likewise note that existing literature offers inconclusive findings on how the political composition of government influences economic inequality. Seeking to resolve this puzzle, they conducted a study of studies spanning three decades. In "(When) Do Parties Affect Economic Inequality? A Systematic Analysis of 30 Years of Research," the authors carry out a meta-analysis of 43 papers from political science, sociology, and economics and identify three dimensions that might explain inconclusive findings: the period under study, the type of inequality examined, and the measurement and modeling choices related to partisanship and the role of policy channels. Past studies are less likely to observe positive effects of governmental composition on economic inequality when their regression analyses omit the position of the most affluent, focus on annual effects rather than medium- or long-term effects, and include various potential policies influenced by partisanship. In contrast, analyses are more likely to demonstrate the significance of governmental composition on inequality when they limit policy controls, consider inequality at the top, and analyze the medium- or long-term effects of partisanship. These findings direct future research on partisan effects on inequality to reflect seriously on methodological choices such as conceptualization, operationalization, and included variables, as well as to probe what we can learn when we approach the study of parties, policies, and inequality in interactive and sequential terms.

Corporations as Political Actors

Parties are not the only actor in struggles for political power. Increasingly, private companies have entered the political arena. As corporations wield more and more influence, especially in digital markets, political science offers essential tools to analyze their behavior and their impact on society. The two articles in this section examine how corporate decisions influence political outcomes, what motivates those decisions, and whether corporations bear moral responsibility when those outcomes prove harmful.

In "Attributing Responsibility to Big Tech for Mass Atrocity: Social Media and Transitional Justice," Juan Espíndola examines how to conceptualize the responsibility of social media companies—specifically Meta—for the spread of toxic speech in contexts of mass violence, such as in Myanmar and Ethiopia. Challenging the "neutrality view," which sees platforms as passive hosts of user-generated content, the author advances the "manipulative view"—arguing that Meta's algorithm-driven business model actively shapes user behavior and contributes to the production and spread of harmful content. By creating an environment where manipulation thrives, Meta becomes a cocreator of toxic speech and bears both causal and moral responsibility for its dissemination. Drawing on transitional justice theory, the article contends that this level of responsibility justifies Meta's inclusion in transitional justice efforts focused on truth-seeking, institutional reform, and guarantees of nonrepetition. The analysis suggests that addressing Big Tech's role in mass violence requires scrutinizing platform design and business models and not merely moderating individual content.

Turning to a different dimension of corporate influence, Guillaume Beaumier and Abraham Newman explore why companies engage in public interest regulation such as privacy protection and when such actions reshape market

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dynamics. In "When Serving the Public Interest Generates Private Gains: Private Actor Governance and Two-Sided Digital Markets," they argue that common explanations like regulatory preemption or efficiency gains are insufficient in digital markets. Instead, they argue that digital platforms use private governance to consolidate business power. Through a case study of Apple's 2021 App Tracking Transparency (ATT) policy, the analysis shows how Apple simultaneously advanced user privacy and strengthened its market position by increasing advertisers' dependence and weakening competitors. The article contributes to the growing scholarship on business power in the digital economy by linking two-sided market structures with private governance and highlighting how platform infrastructure can entrench corporate advantage. It also calls for greater attention to firm-level decisions in regulating digital spaces, noting that key market dynamics are shaped not only by laws but also by strategic interactions between public and private actors.

Being Civic

The question of challenges to democracy points us not only to scholarly research on elite strategies and political institutions but also to the role of ordinary people and what it means to be civic, in the sense of engagement in one's community and work to improve it. Civic responsibility and participation require individuals who think, act, and interact in civic ways. What can political science teach us about these most basic building blocks of politics and political change? The four articles in this section offer insight into varied processes, ranging from what individuals know and think they know to how they form and voice opinions and act in the public sphere. These articles thereby offer tools to understand the microfoundations of political behavior that sustains democratic societies.

One building block is civic knowledge. In "Calibrating Confidence: Civic Education and the Relationship between Objective Political Knowledge and Political Knowledge Confidence," Joshua M. Jansa, Eve M. Ringsmuth, and Alex P. Smith distinguish between one's objective political knowledge and one's confidence in political knowledge and seek to assess how civic education affects both. To that end, the authors administer a two-wave survey to students at the beginning and the end of a one-semester, college-level "Introduction to American Politics" course. They find that students gain both objective knowledge and knowledge confidence, and these gains help bring objective knowledge and knowledge confidence into closer alignment, rather than widening the gap between them. A particularly important finding is that students who began the semester with low levels of objective knowledge show the greatest improvement in objective knowledge compared to knowledge confidence. They thereby reduce the "Dunning-Kruger effect," or the phenomenon by which low-objective-knowledge individuals are highly confident in their knowledge. These findings contribute to scholarship on the psychology of political knowledge and highlight the role of civic education courses in the cultivation of an informed and active electorate. Through teaching, the academic discipline of political science itself has a part to play in preparing young people to think and act civically.

Going beyond the question of how individuals acquire political knowledge, it is important to understand how they express their opinions and then adapt their opinions as others express theirs. Such civic exchanges occur on different scales, from national political debates and media spaces to everyday interactions at a local level, and they matter for whether and how people are represented and have political influence. But do all people have equal standing in such discussions? Elizabeth Mitchell Elder, Christopher F. Karpowitz, and Tali Mendelberg delve into small group discussions in the US context and find evidence that people of color are systematically disadvantaged. In "Race, Voice, and Authority in Discussion Groups," the authors recover data from a mock-jury experiment that randomly assigned jury-eligible citizens from Phoenix, Arizona, to hundreds of six-member "juries." After transcribing the audio recordings and matching voices to speakers, the authors apply an original systematic measure of racial inequality in voice and uptake during discussion. They find that white participants, relative to people of color, speak more, mention their preferences more frequently, and receive greater uptake when their preferences diverge from the group. This empirical contribution shows that a seat at the table is not sufficient to advance racial equality, echoing criticisms of theories of both descriptive representation and deliberative democracy for failing to deliver on civic ideals of equality and inclusion in practice. Greater efforts are needed so that the most basic forms of civic engagement like small group discussions avoid the pitfalls of reproducing racial inequality.

Related to the prospects for persuading and being persuaded by others in a civic public sphere is the ability to imagine oneself in another's situation. Mackenzie Israel-Trummel probes the possibilities and limits of perspective-taking and the conditions under which it can change public opinion, with a focus on white Americans' attitudes toward the carceral state. In "Changing Attitudes and Provoking Action: Perspective-Taking Mobilizes White Americans for Prisoner Release," the author designs a survey experiment in which treatments ask respondents to imagine themselves as a prisoner or the family member of a prisoner. Respondents who imagined themselves or a loved one to be incarcerated were more likely to support releasing prisoners and more likely to write a letter to the sheriff advocating release. The letters, a form of open-ended response collected and analyzed by the author, also show more concern for prisoners among respondents receiving the perspective-taking treatment. Contributing

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to understandings of the effects of perspective-taking on political behavior and to the literature on the politics of incarceration, Israel-Trummel suggests a potential strategy through which individuals can be moved to empathize with others and take action for policy change on that basis.

The concept of "civic" is related to but distinct from that of "civil," conventionally understood as politeness and public-mindedness. A long tradition in political theory has taken up the normative question of when and why people should be civil or alternatively contest the disciplinary discourse of civility for the sake of a radically democratic politics. Andrew Schaap and Lars Tønder shift this discussion from the desirability of civility as an abstract notion to be defended or resisted toward an examination of what citizens are doing when they act in civil or uncivil ways in specific circumstances. In "Situated Civility: Anna Julia Cooper and Hannah Gadsby on Politeness and Public-Mindedness," the authors reinterpret civility as an ensemble of social practices within which embodied subjects negotiate norms and moral-political principles. Drawing from Erving Goffman's theory of situation, they examine how two feminist interlocutors, Anna Julia Cooper and Hannah Gadsby, responded to the contestable notions of civility and inegalitarian citizenship regimes. Analyses of Cooper's citation of social norms and Gadsby's invocation of satire illuminate how civility is worked out in given situations, how the burdens of those situations are distributed unequally, and how those situations can be disrupted through speech and action. Approaching the concept in the context of public debates about political inclusion and social justice, this work encourages us to consider how civility is tied to the social realities within which emancipatory struggles occur.

Technology and Governance

Governance is not only shaped by different societal actors; technology can also shape ideas about what should be governed and how, as well as the concrete practices through which power is exercised. The final section of this issue brings together three distinct perspectives on how emerging technologies—from digital surveillance to genomic editing—intersect with governance, power, and political thought.

In "Cosmos-Politanism: Transhumanist Visions of Global Order from the First World War to the Digital Age," Duncan Bell and Apolline Taillandier analyze transhumanism as a distinctive ideological constellation, rather than a unified or stand-alone doctrine. Defined by the pursuit of radical human enhancement through technoscientific means, transhumanism reformulates core political concepts such as freedom, equality, democracy, and the state. The authors argue that it constitutes an important strand of international political thought, articulating ambitious visions of global order that challenge the state-centric system. Drawing on the work of socialist and liberal transhumanists in Britain and the United States from the interwar period to the present—such as J.B.S. Haldane, Julian Huxley, and Nick Bostrom—the article identifies three common features of transhumanism: a drive to enhance human rationality, an emphasis on the authority of scientific or economic elites, and a commitment to moral and political cosmopolitanism. The analysis clarifies the political underpinnings of contemporary techno-utopian projects and highlights the need for political science to engage with the implications of emerging technologies and the networks that promote them.

Whereas Bell and Taillandier explore the ideological implications of technoscientific ambitions, "Exporting the Tools of Dictatorship: The Politics of China's Technology Transfers" turns to the consequences of technology on repression. Focusing on the multinational corporation Huawei Technologies, Erin Baggott Carter and Brett L. Carter examine whether recipient governments use Chinese digital infrastructure to expand surveillance, filter content, and repress online dissent. They argue that the effects of such transfers depend on domestic political institutions. Specifically, autocracies have stronger incentives to deploy Huawei's dual-use technologies for repression, whereas democracies have electoral incentives to use them for other purposes—namely, providing public goods and fostering economic growth. Democracies are also more likely to be constrained by institutional guardrails. Drawing on a global sample of 153 Huawei projects across 64 countries between 2000 and 2017, the authors find that transfers are primarily driven by demand: more populous countries offer attractive markets, less affluent countries are drawn to Huawei's low-cost options, and preexisting political ties to Beijing increase the likelihood of adoption. Using a generalized synthetic control method, the study shows that Huawei transfers significantly increase digital repression in autocracies. However, there is no evidence of adverse effects in democracies. The article contributes to debates on China's global influence and the role of digital technology in authoritarian survival and democratic erosion.

Shifting from state and corporate actors to civil society, the final piece considers how nongovernmental organizations engage in the governance of genomic technologies. The Reflection essay "Facing Democratic Challenges: The Role of Civil Society Organizations in the Governance of Genomic Technologies" by Federica Frazzetta and Andrea Felicetti examines which civil society organizations (CSOs) engage in the governance of new genomic technologies (NGTs) and how they frame their involvement. Using snowball sampling, the authors map 77 CSOs, mostly national-level groups in Europe and North America, and conduct frame analysis of documents from 12 organizations. They find that most CSOs focus on plant-related NGTs and critically raise concerns about uncontrolled GMO spread, patent-driven interests, and limited oversight. Although views differ, there is broad support for

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inclusive, transparent, and globally coordinated governance. The authors argue that CSOs can and should play a greater role in shaping NGT governance and propose strategies for their more effective inclusion in decision-making. The reflection contributes to political science by highlighting a previously overlooked set of actors in NGT governance, encouraging greater disciplinary engagement with genomic technologies, and articulating several promising avenues for future research, including the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in governance processes, cross-national variation in CSO engagement, and comparisons across domains of NGT application.

Note

1 The call for papers is available in the APSA's newsletter, "Political Science Now": https://politicalsciencenow.com/perspectives-on-politics-call-for-papers-political-science-and-the-university/

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