Editor's Introduction

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As always, this issue of the Book Review features a wide variety of books spanning the entire gamut of political science topics, methods, and subfields. At the same time, a number of core themes recur through the books under review.

One is the theme of the politics of human rights, broadly understood. In contemporary political science this is a theme addressed by political theorists but also by comparativists and international relations scholars, often of a "constructivist" bent, interested in social movements and international organizations. Daniel O'Neill's *The Burke-Wollstonecraft Debate* addresses a seminal moment in the history of modern debates about "the rights of man," and Ari Kohen's *In Defense of Human Rights* addresses contemporary reiterations of these debates. And three books—Teri L. Cathaway's *Assembling Women,* Michelle D. Bonner's *Sustaining Human Rights,* and Jutta M. Joachim's *Agenda Setting, the UN, and NGOs*—address questions of gender injustice and the politicization of women's rights in a global context. While it is rare for work in the American Politics subfield on social policy to be framed in these broad comparative terms, books such as Brian Steensland's *The Failed Welfare Revolution,* Paul Starr's *Freedom's Power,* and Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol's edited volume *The Transformation of American Politics* address similar questions regarding the social and political constitution of rights.

Recent work in political science makes clear that human rights derive their force from the social movements and political institutions that promote and back them. In this sense the theme of human rights is indissolubly linked to a second prevalent theme, the theme of democratization and its limits. The issue features a number of books dealing with normative questions of democratic theory. Our "Critical Dialogue" features a constructive exchange between political theorists Melissa Schwartzberg and Corey Brettschneider, who review each others' recent books on whether well-functioning democracy requires certain substantive constraints (Brettschneider's view) or whether any such constraints ought to be trumped by the workings of democratic proceduralism (Schwartzberg's position). In debating this question, both authors raise deep questions about the relationship between democratic "openness" and the forms of "closure" imposed by legal and political institutionalization, and in particular about the role of countermajoritarian institutions, especially courts, in democratic politics.

Jodi Dean's review of two recent books by the constitutional scholar Cass Sunstein on the perils and promise of web technologies for democratic deliberation, and Dana Villa's review of two books on contemporary critical theory, both address the public culture of democratic politics. This theme is also central to the more comparative historical discussion contained in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe,* edited by Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu. Two important books on forces of change in the Communist world—Archie Brown's *Seven Years that Changed the World: Perestroika in Perspective,* and Kellee S. Tsai's *Capitalism Without Democracy: The Private Sector in Contemporary China,* also deal with some of the potential background conditions of democratization, and with the ways in which the dynamics of an emergent civil society can be contained by authoritarian regimes.

Indeed, the most striking theme present in the Comparative Politics section is the theme of the conditions, dynamics, and resilience of authoritarianism. Jason Brownlee's *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization* and Andreas Schedler's edited volume on *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition* both address the endurance of authoritarianism and the limits of electoralism as a simple means of democratization. Kevin Middlebrook's review of Kenneth F. Greene's *Why Dominant Parties Lose: Mexico's Democratization in Comparative Perspective* and Beatriz Magaloni's *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico* deals with these issues as they have played out in the Mexican context, which demonstrates both the potential vulnerability of authoritarian regimes and the difficulty of sustaining democratic transitions in authoritarian settings.

Two books—Cas Mudde's *Populist Right Parties in Europe,* and John E. Roemer, Woojin Lee, and Karine Van Der Straeten's *Racism, Xenophobia, and Distribution: Multi-Issue Politics in Advanced Democracies*—indeed make clear that not only can authoritarian regimes harness electoral processes for their own purposes, but populist mobilizations in "advanced democracies" contain their own potential for authoritarianism.

doi:10.1017/S1537592708080663

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592708080663 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The review of Roemer et al. deserves some special comment. It has long been the policy of *Perspectives* to commission *individual* book reviewers. In line with this policy, I approached Paul Sniderman—whose own new book on xenophobia in the Dutch context, *When Worlds Collide,* will be the topic of a forthcoming *Perspectives* symposium—to review *Racism, Xenophobia, and Distribution.* I was pleased when Paul, a prolific writer and mercurial scholar, quickly accepted the assignment. I was then a bit surprised when he indicated that after discussing the book with Henry Brady, they had decided that they would like to write the review *together*! Skeptical that any single book would require such a collaboration, and mindful of our policy, I tried gently to discourage this initiative. But book review editors can rarely look such "gift horses" in the mouth. By that time Brady and Sniderman had already begun their momentous collaboration. Inspired by their eagerness and by their critical acumen, I had no choice but to accept their contribution. As they will attest, this involved multiple revisions and more work than any of us imagined. It also produced a terrific review—complete with the first and hopefully last graph in the history of the Book Review. I say this to applaud their collaborative spirit—and to warn others to stick to the commission letters and our prescribed format!

There is, finally, our special Symposium on the new *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Manual.* In organizing this discussion I sought out a diverse cast of commentators. Our four contributors—Stathis Kalyvas, Wendy Brown, Stephen Biddle, and Doug Ollivant—each approach this important statement of U.S. foreign and military policy from a different angle. And yet they converge in questioning some of the basic assumptions underlying "counterinsurgency" as a model of conflict resolution, peace-building, or democratization. This is a very serious and constructive discussion, with implications for U.S. policy in Iraq (see also Eric Davis's fine review of *Can Might Make Rights? Building the Rule of Law after Military Interventions* by Jane Stromseth et al.) and Afghanistan, and for broader debates about "state-building" and "nation-building" in a world of vast displacement and vulnerability, powerful resentment, and fragile sovereignties. I must note with particular satisfaction the contribution of Doug Ollivant. Doug is not an academic (though he does have a Ph.D. in Political Science from Indiana University, where he wrote a fine dissertation on the political thought of Thomas Jefferson). He is a U.S. military officer who has served two tours of duty in Iraq and served as a major strategist of the current "surge" engineered by General David Petraeus. Doug recently returned from Baghdad, and has just taken up his new post as the U.S. Army Iraq specialist on the National Security Council. His comments on the COIN Manual are his own, and it is my pleasure to include them, along with the full disclosure that he is a former student who has done good.

On that note, I would like to thank my terrific editorial assistants—Luke Mergner, Margot Morgan, James Moskowitz, and Rebekah Tromble—for their dedication and collaboration, and even more for their wisdom and good judgment. The Book Review would not be possible without them.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592708080663 Published online by Cambridge University Press