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This issue continues to reflect *IPSR*'s commitment to publishing excellent articles on diverse topics within our broad discipline that are written from a variety of methodological and theoretical perspectives by political scientists throughout the world. The issue leads off with Lingling Qi and Doh Chull Shin's 'How Mass Political Attitudes Affect Democratization.' They propose a simple, yet profoundly important, distinction regarding attitudes toward democracy, and demonstrate how doing so improves our understanding of democratic development. A frequently made – albeit contested – claim in the literature is that democratic stability requires mass support for democracy. Qi and Shin distinguish between two variants of this support. The prevalent approach conflates support for democracy and support for existing democratic institutions. However, Qi and Shin claim that in imperfect democracies (that is, all actually existing democracies!) dissatisfaction with a country's political institutions may well reflect not rejection of democracy but a demand to improve democratic institutions. They further claim that this critical orientation may promote democratic development more fully than does more passive support. One might suggest that, by analogy, their critique of the typical approach to understanding the relationship of attitudes and democratic stability aims to strengthen democratic theory and practice.

Timothy Ka-Ying Wong, Po-San Wan, and Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao participate in the current debate in political science about the relative importance of institutional versus cultural factors. 'The Bases of Political Trust in Six Asian Societies' seeks to determine which factor is more influential in shaping popular support for the regime in six East Asian societies. They find that institutional factors, operationalized as the people's evaluation of the government's economic and political performance, wins the horse race against cultural factors, in this instance, political values. However, like the Tour de France, or five-day cricket test matches, one day's results do not constitute a final victory: recall that other studies have demonstrated the greater weight of cultural factors. Moreover, some might claim that people's evaluations of regime performance are themselves influenced by political-cultural values. So, let the conversation flourish!

Jürgen Maier's 'The Impact of Political Scandals on Political Support' also attempts to identify what affects the bases of regime support. He seeks to determine whether the media's increased coverage of political corruption and scandals contributes to the steady erosion of popular support for Western democracies in recent decades. He also plausibly speculates that publicizing scandals may have just the opposite effect than erosion of support. Consistent with Qui and Shin's argument about critical democrats, might publicizing scandals not contribute to the vibrancy of democracy? To assess which tendency predominates, Maier designed an experiment based on an actual scandal that occurred in Bavaria in 2004, when a prominent politician was found to have manipulated the results of an intra-party election. He divided subjects into two groups. The experimental group was provided with abundant information about the scandal; the control group received no information beyond what was reported in the media. Maier assessed the impact of being better informed about the scandal. What is the takeaway? The answer: read the article!

Cigdem V. Sirin's 'Is it Cohesion or Diversion?' explores the domestic factors that motivate leaders to resort to external force. In particular, which is more influential: the regime's poor economic and political performance or mass political violence? Otherwise put, are leaders more likely to resort to external violence to promote cohesion in face of mass domestic political violence or to unleash force externally to divert attention from the regime's poor domestic performance? For an answer, she analyses the use of force by leaders of 139 countries, including both democratic and authoritarian regimes. Sirin identifies interesting differences in the propensities of democratic and authoritarian regimes to initiate external force, and also finds a significant difference in the influence of poor institutional performance (diversion) as opposed to mass political violence (cohesion). Again, rather than providing the punch line(s), we invite you to read Sirin's article.

In 'Assessing the Impact of NGOs on Intergovernmental Organizations,' Robert Kelly questions the extent to which NGOs have influenced two of the most influential international organizations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB). He situates the study within the traditional IR triad and concludes that the realist approach provides little purchase on understanding the issue, since powerful national states do not influence the policies of the IMF and WB staffs regarding NGO access and influence. Kelly suggests that organizational theory can shed light on the relationship of NGOs to the IMF and WB. His theoretical contribution lies in suggesting that institutionalist and constructivist approaches within IR can be strengthened by integrating elements of organizational theory in their research.

Romana Careja's 'Paths to Policy Coherence in Creating Market Economies in Central and Eastern Europe' analyses a recent addition to the competing explanations of economic transformation in post-communist societies. Her focus is on the cause(s) not impact of economic policy coherence. On the basis of qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) of the 10 post-communist countries that have joined the EU, Careja seeks to identify the combination of relationships – what she terms pathways – to policy coherence. She finds not one but three optimum pathways. To learn which ones, read on!

In our last issue, we announced two significant developments. First, *IPSR* has revamped its Editorial Board. The new 33-person board is composed of distinguished political scientists from all regions of the world. Their *foci* of regional and thematic expertise reflect the incredibly diverse and vibrant character of our discipline. Members of the EB are listed on the inside front cover of *IPSR* and a link to them is provided on the journal's homepage (<http://ips.sagepub.com/>).

The Editorial Board is presently helping the editors of *IPSR* choose the recipient(s) of the newly created Meisel-Laponce Award. The prize honours John Meisel and Jean Laponce, the first two editors of *IPSR*. It is jointly sponsored by the International Political Science Association and SAGE Publications. Guided by the Editorial Board, the editors of *IPSR* will select the best article published in *IPSR* since the 2009 IPSA World Congress. *IPSR*'s homepage (<http://ips.sagepub.com/>) provides a link the articles nominated for the Award and SAGE has provided open access to the articles. The recipient(s) of the Award will be announced in a future issue of *IPSR*.

We are pleased to announce another new feature that has recently been introduced. The journal now provides links to significant articles published in the journal since 2000 on noteworthy themes in political science. Several times a year we will identify a different theme on the journal's homepage and provide a link to articles published in *IPSR* on the theme. SAGE provides open access to PDF versions of the articles. The first theme is **Regimes and Regime Change**. Click on the link on the *IPSR* homepage (<http://ips.sagepub.com/>) to access a collection of fine articles on this important issue.

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