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In This Issue

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In This Issue

In this issue we begin with theory, move on to policies in the international arena, touch down in legislatures, shift into the study of parties, and examine several electorates. The authors (one woman and six men) come from six different nations, write about three different regions, and mention 40 different countries. This is close to the breadth and balance we seek, although we would definitely like to see more submissions by women, and more articles from and about the global south. Balance and breadth aside, these five articles are also the articles most widely and enthusiastically (and promptly) approved over the past few months by our remarkable panel of reviewers, now well over 1,500 strong. The seriousness and thoroughness of their efforts and their willingness not only to review but often to re-review contributes mightily to the quality and pertinence of the articles eventually published in this journal. This is, of course, especially true when authors respond as carefully and thoroughly to recommendations as have the seven authors whose work appears here. Political science is a *social* science in more ways than one: it is a hardworking social network that produces, judges, improves and polishes every article that makes it to the printed page.

The first article is by Theo Papaioannou whose subject is “Nozick Revisited: The Formation of the Right-Based Dimension of his Political Theory.” Papaioannou re-examines the formation of the moral dimension in Nozick’s work, arguing that it is seriously flawed because the two main premises of his argument that inviolable individual rights forbid assigning the state the role of providing social justice are themselves “abstracted from” any epistemological principle of self-realization. The significance for contemporary libertarian arguments is obvious.

Piki Ish-Shalom takes a very different approach to the study of theory. In “The Rhetorical Capital of Theories: The Democratic Peace and the Road to the Roadmap” he considers not so much the truth or untruth of a particular theory but rather the social uses to which the mere existence of a well known but nonetheless not easily comprehensible theory can be put. Such a theory may have, he argues, “rhetorical capital” that can be mobilized on behalf of a cause, even when the actual fit to the case at hand (e.g. peace in the Middle East) is poor or nonexistent, thereby securing support for policy results that are, as secretly expected and desired, close to the very opposite of those that have been promised.

Dagmar Radin is interested in another way policy results can surprise and dismay. In “World Bank Funding and Health Care Sector Performance in Central and Eastern Europe” she asks whether and how much World Bank funding actually helps the Central and East European nations to which it goes. This complex and

nanced study finds answers moving in the expected direction, but also some that do not. Among the latter is her discovery that when funding is withheld until institutions have been developed that reduce corruption, the result can be not more but less successful health care performance. Bribing one's way to health worked better for more patients than post-reform dealings with honest bureaucrats.

Sabri Ciftci, Walter Forrest, and Yusuf Tekin take us further into the study of institutions, in this case, the role of legislative committees in parliamentary democracies, in "Committee Assignments in a Nascent Party System: The Case of the Turkish Grand National Assembly." Three common interpretations developed in the United States – the distributive, informational, and partisan theories – are shown to vary sharply according to contextual variables in their explanatory capacities. Wider comparative study is clearly needed before deciding which (if any) approach is best, and this article takes an important step in that direction.

Daniel Oesch also moves us out into the electorate, seeking answers to why Western European workers are giving ever-growing support to right-wing populist parties, using data from Austria, Belgium, France, Norway, and Switzerland. Cultural protectionism, he finds, is the most important motivation for a right-wing vote in all five nations; the Belgians, French, and Norwegian workers are also provoked by deep discontent with the way their countries' democracy works, and in all five nations economic grievances have the very least explanatory power.

Our authors this time are bold: theories are debunked, institutions are faulted, and the weaknesses of time-honored variables are exposed. Over and over again, comparison reveals the mighty power of context. If we are moving toward one world, we are not doing so overnight. For the foreseeable future, intellectual imperialism is a losing game.

Kay Lawson