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## In this Issue

Kay Lawson

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## **In This Issue**

Review articles, in which distinguished scholars assess five or six recent works in the field of their own expertise, are especially helpful to teachers and also to other scholars working in the same areas, who often find them worth citing in their own right. This particular collection is, we believe, likely to be unusually helpful and inspiring. Here the authors have all identified studies that are not only new and important, but, in almost all cases, significantly different in key ways from older works in the field. Great changes are taking place in how we view social movements, economic development, civil society, and the politico-social development of South Asia. Another change in our scholarship, perhaps a greater one, is how we can now study, via the internet, all our subfields – the fifth article is not about books at all.

Furthermore, these are authors who are not shy about entering themselves into the paradigmatic frays that these works and others like them have brought into being. Their reviews are embedded in helpful explanations of the context in which the new approaches have emerged and their own approval is heavily and usefully nuanced. It is an exciting issue.

We begin with Cyrus Zirakzadeh's article, "Crossing Frontiers: Theoretical Innovations in the Study of Social Movements," an article which begins with a lively and entertaining first-person account of how social-movement scholars came together, in one particular meeting in 1988, in newfound certainty that profound changes must be made, and continues through the history of how that led to the development, rise, and, now, partial decline of the political-process approach to social movements. The books he reviews are well chosen to reveal how the subfield has entered a new era of challenge, producing once again the kind of seeming paradigmatic disarray that has led before to some of the finest advances in the field.

Similarly, in "Development Economics in the Wake of the Washington Consensus: From Smith to Smithereens?" Matthew Taylor points out that "the clearest consensus of the books reviewed here is that the old orthodoxy in development thinking should be quickly put behind us." It seems even economists can become Young Turks, and Young Turks do sometimes come to power. Yet here too, as Taylor shows via the books selected, "considerable confusion" is now rampant. Nonetheless, he assures us, the five books selected are "highly accessible to non-economists" and certainly the news he reports via them is of profound importance to political scientists.

The next two articles report on scholarship that gives the lie to some scholarly assumptions about developments in particular regions. In "When Area Meets Theory: Dominance, Dissent, and Democracy in India," Subrata Mitra reviews six books, all but one of which are written or edited by indigenous scholars, that open up the complications and permutations of the rise of the world's most complicated democracy, that of India. It is too simple to call that rise a great accomplishment and leave it at that, but also too simple to dismiss the claim as unworthy of a nation in which serious poverty remains so widespread as to make politics all but irrelevant to the daily chore of achieving survival. The truth is multifaceted, and incompletely before us. Mitra and his compatriots understand and explain.

In "Civil Society in Latin America and Eastern Europe: Reinvention or Imposition?" Vladimíra Dvořáková reviews five books (with strong representation of her regional compatriots among their authors and editors) that deal with how meaningful it is to speak of the rise of civil society in Eastern Europe and Latin America. One puzzle that particularly interests her and that these books help her to address is how a nascent civil society helping to inspire or preserve the growth of independent and fully democratic states can evolve into one in which so many of its representatives fall into compliance with (if not corrupt co-optation by) emerging leaders fully complicit with forces of globalization and neoconservatism that work against the very goals to which they are presumably most committed. Another is the complex way in which these nations' particular histories have shaped their lives as citizens today – as she and her authors demonstrate, the two questions are far from unrelated.

Finally, we have Mauro Calise and Rosanna De Rosa's article on "E-Research: An Introduction to On-Line Political Science Sources for Beginners (and Skeptics)". Let the reader beware: we leave this article for last in the fear its effects may be so profound that they will find it difficult to summon the energy to continue reading anything else. Simply described as "an overview ... of some of the best electronic resources currently available on-line for political science," a task it handsomely accomplishes in absolutely straightforward and lucid prose, this foray into the "deep web" raises questions unimagined by many of us. If we are to learn how to use all this still-new and evolving tool has to offer us, what changes will that make not only in how we "do" political science, but also in what political science is? With such vast knowledge available (far beyond that acquired by the simple "googling" most of us now adeptly employ) will it still make sense to continue to approach knowledge on tiptoe, hoping to capture a tiny fragment of truth via complex formulae whose instrumental precision remains forever unsure and whose possible validity only a few are able to assess or must we face up to the fact that we can "really know" a great deal more, a great deal more straightforwardly than hitherto imagined, and be therefore compelled to return to our original mission: not merely amassing knowledge, but figuring out what we believe should be done with it.

Kay Lawson

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