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In This Issue

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In This Issue

This issue has one startling innovation, one important announcement, and one ending. The startling innovation is that this year's annual review articles issue is devoted to books all or most of which you will not be able to read. Although the articles are in English, they discuss only books written in other languages, specifically in French, Spanish, Italian, Polish, Czech, Portuguese, Japanese and Korean, and not (yet) translated into English. Each article tells quite a bit about the books chosen, enough that readers will actually learn what is important about their content. The emphasis is thus somewhat more on information and somewhat less on evaluation than in ordinary review articles, but there is careful criticism as well.

Some authors cover many books, some very few. Some have an organizing theme, some do not. More than a few report on books offering in depth coverage of topics commonly covered much more superficially in English language publications, or not at all. In combination they offer a rich and exotic feast of new perspectives, new discoveries, and new insights.

Fernando Filgueira and Juan Pablo Luna cover five books written in Spanish on Latin America, focusing on two topics: first, societal transformation and social policy and second, party systems and political representation. Their goal is an ambitious one: not only to bring to our attention books that treat these topics differently from mainstream analyses found in English (and sometimes in Spanish) and to help us understand those differences, but also to persuade us of the importance of incorporating this regional literature into mainstream debate. It is remarkable how well they succeed in so limited a space.

Jean Leca treats six books in French (and French only) that have intrigued and stimulated his famously wide-ranging interests in comparative studies. We are reminded, as we read, that French political scientists take up subjects others care deeply about – such as, here, democracy, authoritarianism, political history, institutions, and the progress of Europe – and often find the same truths. But they inevitably combine those truths differently. This essay is a masterful example. Turn sideways, stand taller, reach out generously, reject the simplistic and the illogical without mercy – and see the world of politics as do the French. It won't hurt to try.

In the competent hands of Karel A. Muller and Marek Skovajsa, the five books in Polish and Czech that they cover are used to enhance our understanding of East European post-Communism. Their judicious review elucidates the tensions between

the struggle to develop civil society and to confront the impact of globalization; between seeking to build a more participatory democracy and simultaneously strengthen the rule of law, and how all these efforts are shaped – for better or for worse – by the Communist past and the European present.

In her look at “Egyptian Views on the Politics of Egypt Today” Manar Shorbagy confines her article to one nation, but covers five books that cover four major trends in Egyptian political life: the nationalist, Islamist, leftist and liberal. In doing so she reveals seldom considered complexities in the challenge facing those struggling – from without as well as from within – to foster democratization in Egypt. She also shows an impressive capacity to combine fairness to all sides with unblinking determination to name the truths she and the authors she presents have discovered, however unwelcome some of them may be to some of us.

Elisa P. Reis and Fernando Lima Neto have chosen to discuss the current agenda of Brazilian political scientists by giving truly in-depth coverage only two books in Portuguese, both of which illustrate how Brazilians now “look at the political dilemmas confronting the country as part and parcel of democratic challenges that are global and not peculiar to developing nations.”

Danielle Piana goes in the opposite direction and covers 11 books briefly in her effort to show us how well Italian political science has expanded its scope in recent years to cover most of the topics of international political science. Her examples include books on institutions, foreign affairs, Europeanization, regionalism, flexibility/precarity, identity, parties, electoral systems, and the judicial system.

Cheol Hee Park keeps a more restricted focus and discusses five books written in Korean on democratic governance in South Korea, choosing two that treat the topic in general terms, and three that variously stress the role of parties, presidents, and the parliamentary system. He is particularly interested in the question of whether South Korean parties will develop in ways to enhance democratic consolidation.

Finally, Yusaku Horiuchi presents an elegantly restricted yet instructive essay on the importance of local politics in Japan, his own area of specialization. He offers in depth coverage of three books that explain the importance of recent municipal mergers, how subnational politics affect the making and implementation of public policy, and how local political actors have responded to recent electoral system reform. He believes further study in this subfield will uncover evidence of the importance of local politics in producing the dramatic national change produced by the elections of 2009.

Now for the important announcement: I am delighted to tell you that Professor Mark Kesselman, recently retired from Columbia University in New York, has agreed to join Professor Yvonne Galligan as Co-Editor for the *International Political Science Review*. Even as I write this, he is busily putting together the June 2010 issue, and will take responsibility for the September 2010 issue as well. His numerous scholarly publications on the political economy of Western Europe, comparative theory, French politics, American politics, labor unions, and socialist movements are no doubt well known to many IPSR readers. His ability to combine accessible writing with scholarly rigor shines through in all his work and we confidently expect him to demand no less of our contributors.

And that brings us to the ending. This is the last issue I will edit for the journal. I leave the job feeling it is time (nine years) and appreciating what a great job it has been. As someone who specialized in political parties to the exclusion of all

else for the first five-sixths of her career, I have found it grand to stretch out in all the ways this journal demands: to find a range of articles that are eclectic in subject matter, global in outreach (to different nations, young scholars, women), and that offer informed debate, not to mention well documented, interesting, important, approved for publication by at least two and usually three of our very able reviewers, and, above all, likely to interest our readers. What a chance to grow and prosper at the conclusion (well, maybe) of a career. How grateful I am for having had the chance.

Kay Lawson