

Introduction and Comments

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This past summer was marked by violent conflict between Georgia and Russia over what might, from a parochial American vantage point, seem obscure and insignificant territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. For political scientists this conflict raises a host of issues. Most strikingly, it raises the question of whether and how nations and states map onto one another geographically. In our lead article, Sherill Stroschein examines the case of Kosovo as a vehicle for proposals about “creative designs” for governance that might be implemented in demographically complex regions. The hope of course would be that such designs might dampen conflict in ways that are both practical and normatively attractive.

Governance structures of the sort Stroschein advocates are matters of constitutional design. Our second article, by Nathan Brown, addresses the vicissitudes that are central to drafting constitutions. In particular he argues that claims grounded in special interests and passions cannot be filtered out of constitutional debates with the result that distinctions between constitutional and normal politics, at least as these are conventionally drawn, are unpersuasive. He argues instead that any such distinction should reflect the proliferation of veto players in constitutional moments.

In our next three papers we shift to the politics of race and ethnicity in the United States. Daniel Lipson traces the trajectory of justifications for policies aiming at race-conscious inclusion from arguments based on rights to those focused on diversity. In the process he offers reasons to be skeptical of this trend precisely because, on his account, it largely has jettisoned concern for corrective justice. Christian Collet contests the notion that candidates from ethnic and racial minorities engage in an electoral strategy of “deracialization.” Focusing on the ways Asian American candidates cultivate support from voters outside their own ethnic group, he suggests that such campaigns tend not to be race neutral but to instead rely on differential communication patterns depending on the particular constituency the candidate is addressing. Finally, Jane Junn and Natalie Masouka establish that for Asian Americans, racial attachments seem considerably more variable than is the case for African Americans. They advance a structural interpretation of this phenomenon, one which focuses on the crucial importance of immigration policy.

Our final article, by two young scholars, addresses an outpouring of research on courts as political actors across contemporary Latin America. Diana Kapiszewski and Matthew Taylor address the substantive, conceptual, and methodological issues that this research raises. In particular, they identify the crucial importance of moving from more or less descriptive studies to more analytically rigorous accounts that will allow us to address enduring substantive questions concerning the relationship between judicial politics and the performance of democratic regimes.

We close out this issue with three contributions that present views from outside the discipline and, indeed, the academy. First we have a reflection from Irene Wu, a political scientist who works at the Federal Communications Commission. This perspective poses provocative challenge to the discipline, asking scholars to attend to the effects of international agreements on the emergence of powerful regulatory agencies around the globe. This, clearly is a general concern. But insofar as her specific focus is on agencies that regulate communications and their relative independence it is especially important to discussions of democratic governance.

Finally we have a further contribution to a lively controversy that was broached in our June issue. There we published a paper “Genes and Ideologies” by Evan Charney, followed by comments from John Alford, Carolyn Funk, and Jon Hibbing and by Rebecca Hannagan and Peter Hatami, with a reply by Charney. Here we publish a methodological criticism by two biologists, Jon Beckwith and Corey Morris, of recent efforts to formulate a genetic explanation of political attitudes and behavior. We follow it with a reply from Alford, Funk, and Hibbing.

This journal could not function without the hard work of our editorial assistants. This fall we are experiencing complete turnover among the graduate students who have worked for me in that capacity. Matthew Platt, Deniz Aksoy, and Matt Jacobsmeier have all moved on to faculty positions. I thank them for their diligence and good humor they lent to the journal. They have been replaced by three other members of our graduate program—Daniel Gillion, Jessica Stoll, and Patrick Kuhn.

Notes from the Managing Editor

Forthcoming

The following articles and essays have been scheduled for publication in a forthcoming issue of *Perspectives on Politics*.

Ben Berger. "Political Theory, Political Science and the End of Civic Engagement."

Marijke Breuning and John Ishiyama. "The Politics of Intercountry Adoption: Explaining Variation in the Legal Requirements of Sub-Saharan African Countries."

Rodney E. Hero and Robert R. Preuhs. "Beyond (the Scope of) Conflict: National Black and Latino Advocacy Group Relations in the Congressional and Legal Arenas."

G. John Ikenberry. "Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order."

Susan P. Liebell. "Lockean Switching: Imagination and the Production of Principles of Toleration."

Ido Oren. "The Unrealism of Contemporary Realism: The Tension between Realist Theory and Realists' Practice."

David W. Rivera and Sharon W. Rivera. "Yeltsin, Putin, and Clinton: Presidential Leadership and Russian Democratization in Comparative Perspective."

M. Stephen Weatherford. "Comparing Presidents' Economic Policy Leadership."