

Notes from the Editor

For more than a century and a half, *Democracy in America* has been an indispensable starting point for understanding American politics. After the second volume of *Democracy* was published in 1840, Tocqueville continued to monitor political developments in this country and committed many of his thoughts to paper, in letters to friends in America. Unfortunately, his epistolary ruminations have never been translated into English, and their very existence seems to have largely been ignored until now. In “The Third *Democracy*: Tocqueville’s Views of America after 1840,” Aurelian Craiutu and Jeremy Jennings use the post-1840 letters to tell the rest of the story—or, as they put it, to “reconstruct what Volume Three of *Democracy* might have looked like if it had ever been written.” (The portrayal of party canvassing on the cover of this issue commemorates that period in American politics.) Craiutu and Jennings’s creative reconstruction reveals a significant change in Tocqueville’s perspective, and more specifically a growing disenchantment with America occasioned by his sense that such problems as corruption, slavery, imperialism, and the encroachment of the economic sphere upon the political would jeopardize freedom and stability in America. Thus, rather than the relatively sunny picture that emerged from the first two volumes of *Democracy*, Craiutu and Jennings argue that the excesses of democracy in America would have been the central focus of the final volume of Tocqueville’s seminal work.

In “Madison vs. Hamilton: The Battle Over Republicanism,” Colleen Sheehan takes another fresh look at the early period of the American republic, this time to shed light on a feud that “left a lasting impression on the American political landscape.” Sheehan’s focus is on the philosophical differences that led Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, erstwhile allies in co-authoring the Federalist Papers, to become politically estranged during the 1790s. Their dispute was not one of personal animosity or, as is often claimed, the result of Madison giving in to his affection for Thomas Jefferson. Rather, Sheehan argues that the conflict between Hamilton and Madison was propelled by their fundamental disagreement over the nature and role of public opinion in a republican government—an issue that has been played out, in America and elsewhere, over the succeeding two centuries.

Echoes of that conflict can be heard in David J. Samuels’s “Presidentialism and Accountability for the Economy in Comparative Perspective.” Democratic principles require that public officials be accountable to the voters for their actions. This is most easily realized when voters are able to attribute policy success and failures to specific political decision makers. Samuels’s contribution is to investigate the impact of institutional, electoral, and political rules and forces on accountability in 23 presidential democracies. Although the virtues and vices of presidential and parliamentary systems are often disputed, Samuels

finds that accountability is achievable in either type of system. The crucial factor, he concludes, is not a presidential versus a parliamentary structure as such, but rather the concurrence or non-concurrence of elections; in short, the timing is what matters—a new perspective on a long-running debate.

In many newly industrializing states, the key to success is often seen as the liberalization of the state-led economy. In most, if not all, instances, liberalization has been based on an invariant set of assumptions about how individuals make economic choices. However, a body of cultural and psychological research indicates that people in different societies make choices according to different criteria. In “It’s Not Whether You Win or Lose, But How You Play the Game: Self-Interest, Social Justice, and Mass Attitudes toward Market Transition,” Raymond M. Duch and Harvey D. Palmer use a combination of survey and experimental data collected in the West African nation of Benin to address the micro-foundations of market-based solutions to economic transition and development. Benin provides an ideal research locale for their purposes, Duch and Palmer argue, because the behavioral assumptions of classical micro-economics are least likely to hold in such a setting. It is thus striking that Duch and Palmer find that, although there are indeed variations in Benin in the way that “social capital” is employed, these differences do not extend to basic economic reasoning. This evidence, drawn from a most-likely case for the importance of cultural differences, offers a more nuanced view of economic decision making and in doing so suggests ways that tailoring incentive programs to local social conditions could enhance their effectiveness and economic growth.

In “Credible Commitment and Property Rights: Evidence from Russia,” Timothy M. Frye also delves in the micro-foundations of economic growth. Drawing on surveys of company managers in Russia, Frye considers the ideas that property rights are threatened by private agents and secured by state institutions or, alternatively, attenuated by the arbitrary exercise of state power. Frye’s results suggest the need to reconsider such sharply contrasting perspectives, for the pattern that emerges is more subtly nuanced and has wide-ranging implication for policy reform in the Russian case and, by extension, elsewhere as well.

From government regulation in Russia, this issue executes a half-turn to consider government regulation in the United States. Scholars of bureaucratic and legislative politics have long wrestled with the challenge of how to test theoretical models asserting congressional influence. Charles R. Shipan, in “Regulatory Regimes, Agency Actions, and the Conditional Nature of Congressional Influence,” rises to the challenge and in so doing provides intriguing evidence that the real question is not whether Congress can regulate its bureaucratic agents, but rather when it is best positioned to do so. Shipan presents a model that integrates

the role of both the executive and legislative branches, particularly the congressional committee system, to constrain bureaucratic actors and, in an especially nice example of the complementarity of formal and empirical approaches, tests that model against the monitoring activities of the Food and Drug Administration.

When bureaucrats are too smart or too capable for their principals' good, the would-be principals face a dilemma that has served as a source of much theoretical and empirical work. But what if the opposite were true? That is, what would happen if bureaucrats were unable to do what was expected of them? In "Bureaucratic Capacity, Delegation, and Political Reform," John Huber and Nolan McCarty show that when agents are unable to fulfill their assigned tasks, the effects are not simple or straightforward. Their exposition promises to open up a whole new discussion on why agents will not—or cannot—fulfill their principals' goals.

Another modeling exercise was inspired by the "doctrinal paradox" of law and economics, in which majority concurrence on decision premises does not necessarily produce majority concurrence on a resolution. Christian List's "Model of Path-Dependence in Decisions over Multiple Propositions" focuses on path-dependent decisions. For a system of law and policy to remain coherent, future rulings, amendments, and the like must accept earlier decisions as necessary foundations. In essence, the order in which propositions are considered may affect a decision's outcome. This type of constraint occurs when individuals are boundedly rational and when decisions are collective. Such path-dependence allows strategic agenda-setters to manipulate outcomes by altering the order in which propositions are considered. More subtly, the existence of alternative decision-paths provides a rationale for actors to lie about the virtues of alternatives.

Finally, the concluding article in this issue steps away from the abstract and highly formalized approach represented in the Huber-McCarty and List analyses to consider some concrete and very familiar manifestations of American politics. Are "soccer moms" and "NASCAR dads" real and significant groups in the American political landscape? Or are they journalistic hyperboles? According to Janet Box-Steffensmeier, Suzanna De Boef, and Tse-min Lin in "The Dynamics of the Partisan Gender Gap", there are indeed enduring and important differences in the ways American men and women think and vote. By analyzing survey data over a two-decade span, these authors show that underlying demographic and cultural changes in the populace have made the differences between the genders as pervasive as those between "red states" and "blue states."

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