

volume 40 part 4 October 2010

British Journal of Political Science

40
Years
1971–2010



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

ISSN: 0007-1234

British Journal of Political Science

Editors: SARAH BIRCH, KRISTIAN S. GLEDITSCH AND HUGH WARD, University of Essex

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During the Putney Debates, held during October and November 1647, officers and other ranks from Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army deliberated over constitutional issues. Radicals questioned whether the franchise should be limited to property owners. They argued for fixed parliamentary terms, the predominance of the House of Commons, and freedom of conscience. Cromwell's representatives advocated less radical constitutional changes. The woodcut on the front cover of this issue is said to represent these debates. The deliberative turn in democratic theory could learn much from the ways in which the ferment of popular debate in the Civil War period in England still resonates in modern Britain.

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British Journal of Political Science (ISSN 0007-1234) is published four times a year in January, April, July and October. The 2010 subscription price (excluding VAT) of a volume, which includes print and electronic access, is £257.00 (US \$449.00 in USA, Canada and Mexico); £32.00 (US \$50.00) for individuals, which includes print only, ordering direct from the publishers and certifying that the journal is for their personal use. The electronic-only price available to institutional subscribers is £224.00 (US \$399.00 in USA, Canada and Mexico). Single parts are £70.00 net (US \$115.00 in USA, Canada and Mexico) plus postage. EU subscribers (outside the UK) who are not registered for VAT should add VAT at their country's rate. VAT registered members should provide their VAT registration number. Japanese prices for institutions (including ASP delivery) are available from Kinokuniya Company Ltd, P.O. Box 55, Chitose, Tokyo 156, Japan.

Periodicals postage is paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: send address changes in USA, Canada and Mexico to *British Journal of Political Science*, Cambridge University Press, 100 Brook Hill Drive, West Nyack, New York 10994-2133.

Claims for missing issues will be considered only if made immediately upon receipt of the subsequent issue.

INTERNET ACCESS

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