

## Notes from the Editor

### IN THIS ISSUE

Our cover photo of Hannah Arendt offers respect not only to Arendt in the year of the one-hundredth anniversary of her birth, but also to the first of the trio of political theory articles that lead this issue of the *APSR*, Patchen Markell's "The Rule of the People: Arendt, *Arché*, and Democracy." Markell uses the writings of Arendt, arguably one of the foremost political theorists of the twentieth century, as a window on the debate about what the people "do" to exert power either as rule or against rule in a democracy. Markell proposes a new definition of democratic rule, not as something people "do" but as "an ongoing process of responsiveness to events." His essay moves beyond providing a fresh interpretation of Arendt's thought to undertake the broader task of presenting a new conceptualization of democratic rule that warrants the attention of anyone interested in the nature and operation of democracy.

In "Reforming Reformed Religion: J. S. Mill's Critique of the Enlightenment's Natural Religion," the second contribution to this issue by a political theorist, Robert Devigne challenges the notion that liberalism has little to say about the "good life." Devigne argues that Mill places special emphasis on the role of religion in the development of an individual's life. In support of this interpretation, Devigne presents an impressive integration of Mill's vast and diverse writings, thereby greatly improving our understanding both of Mill and of liberal philosophy more broadly.

Notwithstanding widespread celebrations of the virtues of capitalism, concern remains that, as Shirley Chisholm once said, "When morality comes up against profit, it is seldom that profit loses." In "Ethics and Incentives: A Political Approach," Ruth W. Grant unmasks power relations implicit in voluntary transactions and develops criteria for distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate incentives. By breaking down power and legitimacy into their various forms, Grant provides a framework for analyzing the relationship between ethics and incentives. Her interpretation should be of special interest to scholars of international relations concerned with cooperation and just war, comparativists concerned with issues of political economy, and Americanists concerned with questions involving social welfare and judicial politics.

Grant's analysis of ethical issues bridges directly into the first of four articles in this issue that focus on the operation of interest groups. Prior analyses of political corruption claim (whether cynically or realistically) that the rewards created by bribery tend to lure individuals of higher ability to public office. However, in "*Plata o Plomo?*: Bribe and Punishment in a Theory of Political Influence," Ernesto Dal Bó, Pedro Dal Bó, and Rafael Di Tella contend that the ability of pressure groups to bribe politicians tends to decrease the quality of individuals drawn to politics. When interest groups have the option of offering either bribes or

punishments, the average value of bribes falls, rendering political office less attractive to more able individuals and diminishing the quality of public policy and services. This analysis has some otherwise-nonobvious implications for why countries where private violence is prevalent also experience higher levels of corruption and poor governance.

Do interest groups get what they pay for in election campaigns and does their involvement enhance voter welfare? Voters use the information that is presented in campaign ads – ads whose content is determined by the groups that sponsor them – to help make up their minds about for whom to vote. The potential for manipulation is obvious. So would partial public financing of campaign ads increase the ability of voters to make appropriate vote choices? In "Campaign Finance and Voter Welfare with Entrenched Incumbents," Scott Ashworth constructs a formal model to assess the impact of public financing or contribution limits on voter welfare and to see how the incumbency advantage affects the tradeoffs that are involved in public financing and contribution limits. Ashworth's analytic results shed new light on how interest groups shape election outcomes and how potential campaign finance reforms could improve voter welfare.

Why do interest group representatives devote so much time and effort to dealing with legislators who already agree with them? This is just one of the anomalies that Richard L. Hall and Alan V. Deardorff address in "Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy." Examining lobbying in light of the opportunity costs for legislators, Hall and Deardorff posit that interest groups attempt to distribute legislators' resources more favorably, contrary to standard treatments of exchange and persuasion. This emphasis on the group mobilization of legislators shifts the focus of research away from tallies of roll call votes and toward the content of legislative activity.

How does the separation of powers among branches of government affect the strategies that interest groups pursue and their success in pursuing them? In "Judicial Lobbying: The Politics of Labor Law Constitutional Interpretation," Matias Iaryczower, Pablo T. Spiller, and Mariano Tommasi probe these questions through a combination of formal modeling and statistical analysis of judicial decisions in Argentina. A crucial consideration, Iaryczower and associates argue, is the extent of judicial independence from elective bodies. It follows that prior considerations of the effects of lobbying have sometimes been misdirected because they were focused on legislators rather than judges. At the same time, legislatures can impose constraints on courts. This argument underlines the importance of embedding analyses of lobbying in the larger institutional context rather than treating that context as a given.

This issue of the *APSR* closes with an article that is likely to attract considerable interest beyond its home field of judicial politics, and with two different analyses in the comparative political economy tradition.

Much of what governments do consists of talk of one sort or another: legislators debate, executives declaim, judges opine. Words, words, words... but to what effect? In "The Influence of Oral Arguments on the U.S. Supreme Court," Timothy R. Johnson, Paul J. Wahlbeck, and James F. Spriggs II bring to bear on that question a recently unearthed and highly provocative data source, the grades that a member of the Court, Associate Justice Harry Blackmun, assigned to the attorneys who made oral arguments before the Court. Does the quality of the attorneys' presentations hold any sway over justices' votes on the merits of the cases under consideration? The answer should be of interest not only to those eager for an unusually up-close look at how factors other than the characteristics of a case per se can affect the decisions of the Court, but more broadly to those interested in the ways in which information affects the choices of political decision makers.

Why do some governments implement policies intended to stifle economic development? In "Economic Backwardness in Political Perspective," Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson argue that political elites may oppose innovation if it threatens to erode their own political power. Acemoglu and Robinson's novel insight is that this is a curvilinear relationship. That is, those in power are more likely to block organizational or technological innovations when their position is neither secure nor seriously challenged. By contrast, when the rulers either are securely entrenched or are subject to strong political competition, they are more likely to promote economic development. Rather than depicting political elites as either champions or suppressors of economic change, then, Acemoglu and Robinson identify a basic contextual factor as the key to understanding the political response to economic backwardness.

It is commonplace to observe that voters care about the economy, but are they more influenced by the performance of the economy in general, or by their own pocketbooks? Kaspar Richter provides new perspective on this issue in "Wage Arrears and Economic Voting in Russia." Using an innovative matching estimation method to analyze data from the Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey, Richter finds that wage arrears had a strong impact on the willingness of workers to vote for the incumbent in the 1996 Russian presidential election, significantly lessening Boris Yeltsin's vote share in the second round polling. Consequently, the outcome of the election should be understood, not as a choice between communism and democracy, as it has often been portrayed, but as a reflection of individual economic interests. Richter's focus on wage arrears enables him simultaneously to explore the effects of an important economic and political phenomenon in Russia and to make an original contribution to the vast research literature on economic voting.

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Information, including news and notes, for *PS*:

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E-mail: [rhauck@apsanet.org](mailto:rhauck@apsanet.org)

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## ERRATA

In the last issue of *APSR* (99:4, 543) there was a small error in Figure 2 of "Military Coercion in Interstate Crises" by Branislav L. Slantchev. Please visit the author's website <<<<http://polisci.ucsd.edu/slantchev/published/pdf/bs003x020.pdf>>>> for a corrected version of the figure.