

Notes from the Editor

IN THIS ISSUE¹

The cover graphic for this issue symbolizes the process of mourning, in recognition, as per our standard practice, of the theme of the issue's lead article. By unhappy coincidence, that theme is doubly appropriate, for it also marks the recent passing of Nelson W. Polsby, the editor of the *Review* from 1970 to 1976. A larger-than-life figure, innovative scholar, sage political commentator, indefatigable conversationalist, and beloved mentor, Nelson Polsby was truly one of a kind – sometimes cantankerous but unfailingly gregarious and never quite able, despite what sometimes seemed to be his best efforts, to disguise his essential kindness. He will be – already is – missed.

In “Pericles at Gettysburg and Ground Zero: Tragedy, Patriotism, and Public Mourning,” the article that opens this issue, Simon Stow operates in the long-standing tradition of using political theory to enrich our understanding of important contemporary events. Stow draws upon an expanse of theoretical material and an array of occurrences, taking us back to Thucydides, then Plato, jumping forward to Lincoln, and finally making a poignant connection to contemporary America, referencing and synthesizing an impressive range of recent scholarship along the way. Both theoretically rich and politically pertinent, Stow's examination of the political implications of public mourning is essential reading for specialists and non-specialists alike.

Also operating at the intersection of political theory and contemporary political commentary is Benjamin A. Kleinerman's “Can the Prince Really Be Tamed? Executive Prerogative, Popular Apathy, and the Constitutional Frame in Locke's *Second Treatise*.” The propensity of the masses to acquiesce in the executive's exercise of discretionary powers is not only an abstract theoretical problem within the *Second Treatise*, but is also, and perhaps more importantly, a major political problem today. The result is an eye-opening and fertile new perspective on Lockean constitutionalism. Kleinerman's provocative analysis should be of serious interest to a broad range of political scientists.

For theorists committed to the cause of rationalism, is the way forward found by looking back to the ancients? In “Reopening the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns: Leo Strauss's Critique of Hobbes's ‘New Political Science,’” Devin Stauffer answers that question in the affirmative. Examining how Strauss began to develop his view of modern versus ancient political philosophy, Stauffer teases out deficiencies of modern political thought that Strauss identified and which illuminate the path back to the ancients. Given the continuing controversy surrounding

Straussian analysis, this article is likely to be widely read by those with even a tangential interest in political philosophy.

The growing presence of Muslims in non-Muslim liberal democracies raises urgent questions about the extent to which multicultural societies can accommodate diverse identities and interests and about whether cultural, ethnic, and religious minority groups can perceive the majority-oriented political and social order in liberal democracies as legitimate. Displaying deep understanding of Islamic legal thought, Andrew March argues in “Islamic Foundations for a Social Contract in non-Muslim Liberal Democracies” that it is indeed possible—on Islamic grounds—for Muslims to affirm political obligation and loyalty to a non-Muslim state. March's analysis contributes significantly to the literature on multiculturalism and provides an invaluable starting point for thinking about the potential for culturally plural communities to develop harmoniously in liberal democracies.

In “What's at Stake in the American Empire Debate” Daniel H. Nexon and Thomas Wright do more than answer a question that consumes academic and popular debate. Through a unique combination of social network theory, international relations theory, and the historiography of empires, they develop an ideal type of the structural characteristics of empires. The foundation of the article in highly original argument, analysis, and evidence leads to an intriguing, if controversial, answer to the question of whether or not there exists a modern American empire.

From the outer reaches of American power we turn to the inner workings of American politics. In “When Do Elections Encourage Ideological Rigidity?,” Brandice Canes-Wrone and Kenneth W. Shotts contend that elections provide perverse incentives to representatives. In the best of worlds, we would expect elected officials to use the sum of their information to make policy decisions. Yet the need to commit to more rigid positions in order to get elected in the first place can lead representatives to forgo their better judgment in favor of policy consistency and their public image. This article contributes importantly to our understanding of the extent to which and the manner in which voter preferences affect democratic outcomes.

When members of the U.S. House of Representatives stand for re-election, they rarely are defeated. In “Candidate Quality, the Personal Vote, and the Incumbency Advantage in Congress,” Jamie L. Carson, Erik J. Engstrom, and Jason M. Roberts use data on late nineteenth-century elections to try to account for the growth and persistence of the incumbency advantage. They isolate unique features of the period, in particular party control of ballot access, to account for the advantage to incumbents. However, because this measure of institutional control is unlikely to recur today, Carson and his colleagues suggest that researchers should look to the substance of incumbent candidates rather than

¹ Editorial Assistant Elizabeth Franker assisted in the preparation of these notes.

to institutional features in trying to account for the incumbency advantage.

Continuing on the incumbency theme, Sanford C. Gordon, Gregory A. Huber, and Dimitri Landa view incumbency effects through the lens of the relationship between voters and challengers. In “Challenger Entry and Voter Learning,” Gordon and his colleagues posit that challengers are more likely to enter a race when incumbents appear to be failing in office, at which point voters become politically informed to forestall entry by an inferior challenger. This in turn changes the opportunity structure for challengers of different levels of competence. This model opens up new avenues for formal and empirical explorations of the nature and structure of electoral competition.

To whom or what are Supreme Court justices responsive? In “Party, Policy, Or Duty: Why Does the Supreme Court Invalidate Federal Statutes?,” Thomas M. Keck interrelates the competing pressures that justices face as policy proponents, partisan appointees, and defenders of their institution. The result is a plea for scholars to pursue more broadly integrative lines of research aimed at clarifying how these factors interact rather than pitting particular motivations against one another to determine which one wins the race that the researcher has devised.

To what extent are positions on issues that are ostensibly non-racial nonetheless shaped by racial cues? In “When Race Matters and When it Doesn’t: Racial Group Differences in Response to Racial Cues,” Ismail K. White gauges the effects of explicitly racial, implicitly racial, and non-racial verbal cues on position-taking on a non-racial issue. White’s analyses reveal distinctive differences between blacks and whites in their responses to racial priming cues, suggesting that the process and dynamics of attitude activation may differ substantially between these two groups. These findings further reflect the promise of experimental data to add to our understanding of racial and political attitudes and behavior.

Finally, the scene shifts to a very different setting, halfway around the world from the U.S. Here the question is whether, in the absence of formal democratic procedures and safeguards, the public or portions thereof hold local officials accountable. In “Solidary Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China,” Lily L. Tsai argues that the answer is a qualified yes – qualified because not just any group of people will do; the solidary group must be both embedded and encompassing in order to exert normative pressure on local officials effectively. Tsai’s analysis speaks to the key question of political accountability in the absence of democratic institutions and provides not only a novel theoretical approach, but also an incisive and thought-provoking answer.

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

Dr. Robert J-P. Hauck, Editor, *PS*
E-mail: rhauck@apsanet.org

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