

The Academy of Political Science

475 Riverside Drive · Suite 1274 · New York, New York 10115-1274
(212) 870-2500 · FAX: (212) 870-2202 · aps@psqonline.org · <http://www.psqonline.org>

POLITICAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY

Volume 122 · Number 2 · Summer 2007

No part of this article may be copied, downloaded, stored, further transmitted, transferred, distributed, altered, or otherwise used, in any form or by any means, except:

- one stored electronic and one paper copy of any article solely for your personal, non-commercial use, or
- with prior written permission of The Academy of Political Science.

Political Science Quarterly is published by The Academy of Political Science. Contact the Academy for further permission regarding the use of this work.

Political Science Quarterly
Copyright © 2007 by The Academy of Political Science. All rights reserved.

Nicaraguan waters. However, this critique should not be confused for the subject's complete neglect. The author does address "Anti-American Sentiment" in chapter 2, but this is mostly in the context of its feeding into Washington's anticommunist hysteria. He also peppers the book with some of the calls for redress. The post-Cold War chapter (chapter 5) focuses on the growth of economic interdependence, with attention to the neoliberal policy, also known as the Washington Consensus. However, the second half of the chapter offers greater originality and interest, with a description of the transnational nature of current relations. The fusion of Latino culture via immigration into the American mainstream, and its real and potential impact, was appetizing and drove me to desire more.

The major disappointment of the book was that the author did not carry on his argument sufficiently past the introduction. He proposes a theory that U.S.-Latin American foreign policy develops from unfavorable U.S. beliefs regarding the peoples and governments of Latin America, which in turn produce unfair attitudes. From this cultural-psychological perspective, the United States treated and treats countries of the western hemisphere's south differently from other countries. This is a very interesting approach, since many books on the subject tend to focus on asymmetric power relations. However, in the introduction, he demonstrates that even in the early days, when the United States and many Latin American countries were in a parity situation, the same attitudes that influence modern policies prevailed. He drives home this argument in regard to all the events of the pre-1945 era. This is not to say that he completely ignores the argument in the subsequent chapters. For example, the account of Harry Truman's views about whether to extend a Marshall Plan to Latin America addresses Truman's attitude that money spent in Europe would produce strong economies, whereas that spent in Latin America would be squandered. It is disappointing that more on this subject was not presented in the main chapters of the book.

Overall, this book is highly recommended for individuals who have an incomplete background in U.S.-Latin American relations. It is accessible to non-specialists and would be a very good text for an upper-division course, given the ample facts described. It would also be a good text for graduate students who need a quick background read on the subject before tackling its complexity.

GASPARE M. GENNA
University of Texas

Deliberative Environmental Politics: Democracy and Ecological Rationality by *Walter F. Baber and Robert V. Bartlett*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2005. 288 pp. \$24.00.

The basic intuition at the heart of this intelligent book is as important as it is obvious, although few have recognized it or recognized it as clearly as the

authors: in modern mass democracies, ecological sustainability does not have a prayer unless citizens care about ecological sustainability. Environmentalists cannot avoid engaging democratic theory. Not just any democratic theory will do, however. Theories of interest group democracy, because they take public opinion and entrenched interests as givens, cannot offer a viable framework for thinking through a transformation of public opinion and a convergence of interests. Citizens need to be convinced that the environment needs their full attention, and they need to come to a consensus on shared environmental goals. Only deliberative democratic theory, with its emphasis on public opinion formation (indeed *transformation*) and the construction of agreement through dialogue, offers a promising model.

In fleshing out the relationship between deliberative democracy and environmental politics, the authors introduce three approaches to public discourse: the public-reason approach, exemplified by John Rawls; the ideal-discourse approach, exemplified by Jürgen Habermas; and the full-liberalism approach, articulated by James Bohman, Amy Gutmann, and Dennis Thompson. Although the authors lean slightly toward Bohman, they draw from all three in developing their positive picture. The view of politics and public discourse that emerges is rich and interesting, although sometimes the textual analysis of the selected authors is weak. Read this book to get an innovative, thoughtful, and persuasive vision of a deliberatively inspired environmental politics (or perhaps an ecologically inspired deliberative politics). Do not read this book to get the most nuanced or precise interpretation of Rawls, Habermas, or Gutmann and Thompson. Habermas and Rawls are depicted as erring on the side of impartiality in seeking a type of deliberation that transcends all differences. But the authors make the serious error of equating Rawls's idea of public reason with the original position. While Rawls clearly thinks that being reasonable means seeking reasons that all citizens could find persuasive, he does not think that we need to step behind a veil of ignorance in public discourse. Despite getting some of the details wrong, the authors nevertheless nicely set out the general divide in deliberative theory between an idealized and abstract picture of citizen deliberation that ends in consensus (Habermas and Rawls) versus a concrete and embedded picture of deliberation that ends in negotiated settlement (Bohman, Gutmann, and Thompson). In contrast, the authors want a concrete and embedded view of deliberation that ends in consensus.

By far the most interesting conclusion the authors come to with respect to deliberative theory is their opposition to the trend toward weakening the role of consensus and strengthening the place of cultural differences. They worry that such a move will exclude the possibility that citizens can come to a "unitary concept of ecological sustainability" (p. 117). Furthermore, they are suspicious that the trend toward placing greater value on cultural recognition might make culturally based practices off-limits for criticism. This, in turn, might hinder the "environmentalist hope of developing a new pattern of

personal preferences . . . based on ecological awareness” (p. 117). The authors appear to think that multiculturalism is bad for the environment, at least to the extent that it makes us suspicious of consensus and convergence. Ecological sustainability requires that citizens in some sense rise above their cultural differences in recognizing a generalizable interest in ecological sustainability.

The book contains many interesting suggestions for identifying potential deliberative sites where citizens and experts can come together to forge the political will to put the rational solution into practice. But the bottom line of this book is that environmentalists need to get political, not in the sense of intensifying their lobbying in Washington, but rather, in the sense of forging a deliberative alliance with the people.

SIMONE CHAMBERS
University of Toronto

Democracy and Elections in Africa by Staffan I. Lindberg. Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. 248 pp. Cloth, \$55.00; paper, \$24.95.

There are myriad reasons to be pessimistic about the current state of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria’s recent federal elections have been roundly criticized, both domestically and internationally, as particularly violent and fraudulent, even in comparison to the country’s pitiful past exercises. In Senegal, long considered one of the continent’s brightest success stories, major opposition groups announced that they would not participate in the June 2007 legislative balloting, citing their displeasure over the results of the February presidential election and perceived institutional biases against them. And, despite an increase in political agitation against his autocratic rule, Robert Mugabe’s age may be the only hindrance to his remaining in power in Zimbabwe in perpetuity. In sum, the outlook for democratic governance in Africa can appear quite bleak.

Democracy and Elections in Africa comes as a welcome palliative to prevailing Afro-pessimism. Positioning himself as what he would call a “demo-optimist,” Staffan Lindberg presents a number of important empirical findings that contradict the gloom-and-doom studies produced in the late 1990s on the declining quality of democratic processes in Africa and the re-entrenchment of often predatory rulers there. While there is certainly no reason to be exceedingly sanguine about the state of politics in the region, Lindberg finds that the quality of democracy in Africa is not only quite stable, but that it is also improving in a number of areas.

Broadly, Lindberg contributes two particularly significant findings, one relating to the quality of elections in Africa and the other to the causal effects of these institutions. First, in the period between the launching of the “Third Wave” in Africa—which many scholars date to Namibia’s elections in