

Editorial Note

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As this issue marks the completion of the first year of our editorship, we are taking this opportunity to highlight two key components of our editorial team. First, we welcome Shmuel Nili, Associate Professor at Northwestern University, as Associate Editor specializing in political theory. With Shmuel's expertise, we are excited to make *Perspectives* an even better home for outstanding work across all areas of political theory.

Second, we would like to highlight the critical contribution of graduate students to academic journals in general and to *Perspectives on Politics*, in particular. This issue is dedicated to recognizing an essential part of our editorial team and process: our four editorial assistants.

Northwestern University doctoral students Jinxue Chen, Elizabeth Good, and Jack McGovern, as well as postdoctoral fellow and Lead Editorial Assistant Sarah Moore, play vital roles in every facet of the work of *Perspectives*. This includes participating in the evaluation of new submissions, helping to find suitable reviewers, keeping track of late reviewers, selecting images for issue covers, systematizing internal workflow processes, and so much more.

In appreciation of our editorial assistants' invaluable contributions, the co-editors-in-chief invited the four of them to coauthor this editorial note. The article summaries that follow are the product of that collaboration.

Migrant Acceptance and Inclusion

With an estimated 281 million international migrants around the globe, nearly 120 million of whom are forcibly displaced, migration is one of the most important issues in the world today (McAuliffe and Oucho 2024). From Venezuela to Syria and from Myanmar to Sudan, the outflow of migrants and refugees remakes countries and entire regions. As demonstrated in recent elections around the world, the inflow of migrants also critically shapes political competition and debates. While campaign rhetoric about migration is often a key strategy for mobilizing votes, it also reflects deeper understandings about the boundaries of the nation, the proper role of migration in the public interest, and ultimately how open or closed countries should be to those seeking to make new lives or livelihoods on their soil.

The four articles in this section offer varied perspectives on these pressing questions related to admitting, accepting, and including migrants and refugees. The first two works provide innovative reconsiderations of the political theory of migration policy ethics. In "Morality in the Refugee Regime? Arguing for More (Political) Realism in Admitting Refugees," Felix Bender notes that prevailing arguments for admitting refugees emphasize moral grounds such as the duty to rescue. Proposing that moral reasons fail because they misrepresent the political world, Bender contends that political realism offers a stronger case. He demonstrates that states admit refugees to serve ends such as reinforcing the structures of liberal democracy, building trust among allies, or destabilizing rival regimes. If states take the disruptive political force of refugee admittance seriously, the author concludes, then they should widen the conception of refugeehood to include all who are politically oppressed; they should admit more refugees to gain international power; and, viewing refugees as allies in a political struggle rather than passive recipients of aid, they should provide refugees with political resources to support their efforts opposing and changing their home states. The analysis advocates for political realism as a new lens through which to approach migration debates, and also uses migration as a case with which to evaluate new forms of political normativity derived from political realities.

"From Openness to Inclusion: Toward a Democratic Approach to Migration Policy" shifts focus from why states should admit migrants to how they can approach migrants' positioning within the polity. Nathan Pippenger posits that many conversations in migration studies center on the openness of borders. Taking up an alternative democracy-centered approach, he argues that the guiding principle of migration should instead be inclusion, given that full membership for all residents in a state is central to democratic self-rule. Pippenger notes that democratic legitimacy does not require decisions made by a collective with common traits, but is an outcome of collective processes in which compatriots who identify with each other as long-term partners exchange perspectives on their shared future. Inclusion in this sense does not require a static, shared identity among members, but rather can

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(1) the number of unregistered individuals engaged in the advocacy of regulatory policies is much greater than the number of registered lobbyists working on the law, and (2) these individuals are systematically different from registered lobbyists. Revealing a more accurate picture of influence seeking, the study underscores the costs of outdated concepts of lobbying and generates a new explanation for classic questions about the sources of inequality in American politics.

Moving from the sources of law and public policy to how they endure over time, “Litigating Policy Drift: Frozen Categories and Thresholds in Court” investigates why inflexible and outdated policies are so resilient in the United States. Ursula Hackett argues that policy drift can come from two distinct forms of policy rigidity: interval freezing and categorical freezing. Whereas the former refers to the inability to easily change numerical thresholds, the latter accounts for the inability to adjust category boundaries. With changing political, economic, or social circumstances, both types tend to provoke legal disputes, but each possesses several sources of legal resilience. Hackett attributes this resilience to factors such as institutional predispositions toward restraint among judges, low-salience injuries and slow-moving change, textualist forms of originalism, and plausible deniability from legislators and executive agencies. She generates her theory from a wide range of recent and historical cases pertaining to voting rights, racial discrimination, religious conscience protections, and other hot-button issues. Providing new tools to better understand why a variety of policies have become less effective over time yet stayed in place, this reflection essay illuminates that drift is not an automatic or inevitable process but the outcome of political and legal contestation.

Crisis and Belief Formation

In an era of global disruptions, rampant misinformation, and escalating polarization, understanding the formation and evolution of political beliefs is increasingly crucial. Our third section explores how threats, crises, and social pressures influence a broad spectrum of political beliefs and behaviors, including support for democracy, populist sentiments, conspiracy theories, and gun buying. Drawing on innovative concepts and empirical evidence from wartime Ukraine, pandemic-era United States, Polish social media, and Central European classrooms, these articles collectively enhance our understanding of the origins, influencing factors, and persistence of political beliefs.

Opening this section, “Geosocietal Support for Democracy: Survey Evidence from Ukraine” develops a novel theoretical framework to explain widespread support for democracy in the wake of interstate war. Mikhail A. Alexseev and Serhii Dembitskyi introduce the concept of geosocietal legitimation of democracy, where wartime support for democracy is driven by external threats and

the ability of society to mobilize around a shared civic national identity. Based on multiyear survey data from three settings in wartime Ukraine, the authors find that pride in Ukrainian citizenship and identifying authoritarian Russia as the primary aggressor in the ongoing Ukrainian–Russian war were the strongest predictors of support for democracy. This scholarship has implications for our understanding of how war and violence affect polity preferences and how mobilization around civic identity can induce support for political systems, including democracy. The study also revisits and contributes to the literature on second-image-reversed theory—which highlights how the international context can reshape internal politics—suggesting that societal mobilization may be crucial for democracy support.

Taking on the effects of a different type of crisis, Matthew J. Lacombe, Matthew D. Simonson, Jon Green, and James N. Druckman document links between feelings of threat and the purchase of firearms in “Social Disruption, Gun Buying, and Anti-System Beliefs.” Seeking to explain the spike in gun buying that took place in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors begin from the premise that gun ownership is a meaningful political behavior. They hypothesize that the tendency to buy guns is related to beliefs about the inadequacy of state-provided security, especially during threatening times. Using a survey with 24,448 respondents, the authors find that gun ownership is associated with experiences of economic hardship during the pandemic and household COVID-19 diagnoses. They also find that new gun buyers at the height of the pandemic were more likely than preexisting gun owners to hold conspiracy beliefs, were less likely to trust institutions, and were more likely to have purchased a gun due to feelings of threat as opposed to hobbyist interest. With data from mid-2021, the authors propose a new theory of gun ownership and the pandemic gun-buying spike, while also gaining broader insight about political attitudes within the gun-owning community. Contrary to predictions that the pandemic gun-buying spike could moderate the population, they expect it to continue moving gun owners in a conspiratorial, mistrustful direction.

Further developing our understanding of political beliefs, Courtney Blackington and Frances Cayton investigate the conditions under which conspiracy theories prevail. In “How to Stay Popular: Threat, Framing, and Conspiracy Theory Longevity,” the authors argue that the credible threat invoked by a conspiracy theory explains its persistence and popularity. Drawing on social movement scholarship, the study posits three factors determining the extent to which conspiracy theory entrepreneurs stir online engagement with a conspiracy theory: whether the theory references an established out-group threat, elite endorsement, and “focusing events” that reactivate the

conspiracy theory's relevance. To test their hypotheses, the authors quantitatively analyze more than five thousand hand-coded tweets related to the 2010 Smolensk plane crash—a major event resulting in the death of Poland's president and 95 other officials, spurring various conspiracy theories—and monthly commemorations of the crash. The authors find that conspiracy theories referencing existing domestic and foreign threats receive more retweets and likes than those that do not reference these divisions, and this relationship is accentuated during focusing events. While elite endorsements of conspiracies do not regularly appear to have a meaningful effect on the popularity of a conspiracy theory, tweets from elites endorsing conspiracy theories attract greater attention in the wake of focusing events. This work contributes new theoretical and empirical insights to scholarship on political disinformation and on how focusing events and historical narratives contribute to people's engagement with disinformation. It also encourages research on how these patterns might extend across different political contexts and regime types.

Closing this section, “Populist Attitudes among Teenagers: How Negative Relationships with Socialization Agents Are Linked to Populist Attitudes” breaks new ground by focusing on the emergence of populist ideas during adolescence—a time when environmental factors are particularly consequential for belief formation. Sebastian Jungkunz and Julia Weiss examine how negative relationships with parents, teachers, and peers influence the development of populist attitudes among youths aged 12 to 18. Based on an original, representative sample of adolescents in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, their findings reveal that, while the influence of peers and parents is limited, perceived unjust interactions with teachers positively correlate with populist attitudes among the surveyed youth. Panel survey data from the UK further corroborate the impact of perceived negative relationships with teachers. This study has implications for theories of political attitude formation in adolescents and highlights the normative importance of fostering political trust among children. By shedding light on the early roots of populist attitudes, the study opens up new avenues for research on the timing of attitude development, strategies for mitigating populist beliefs, the role of gender in populist attitude formation, and how young populations understand “populism.”

Addressing Transnational Challenges

This section examines how international institutions and movements respond to pressing global issues such as antimicrobial resistance, climate change, perceived democratic deficits, and representation within feminist movements. By proposing new concepts, analyzing public perceptions of international governance, and investigating the role and impact of global institutions and

networks, these studies demonstrate the importance of research on effective governance and activism on a global scale.

In “Fit for Purpose? Assessing the Ecological Fit of the Social Institutions that Globally Govern Antimicrobial Resistance,” Isaac Weldon and Steven J. Hoffman analyze the evolving and complex interplay between human societies and invisible microbial worlds and conceptualize the ecological characteristics of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) as a social and political challenge. AMR is the process by which previously curable infections are transformed into untreatable and often deadly diseases. The authors argue that AMR necessitates robust institutions that can manage human–microbial interactions to minimize drug resistance and maximize effective antimicrobial use. They leverage the concept of “ecological fit,” which suggests that effective governance requires institutions tailored to the specific attributes of the ecological problem they address. The study identifies 18 ecological “misfits” between the health threat and the institutions governing AMR and proposes five institutional design principles for approaching AMR as a socioecological problem rather than a purely medical one. This approach can improve the effectiveness of global health institutions by transforming the use of antimicrobial drugs in human societies, thereby reducing AMR and improving our ability to treat and prevent infections. By advocating for an approach that considers the fit between global institutions and the biophysical features of the problems that they are meant to address, the authors call for a fundamental shift in our approach to global public health governance.

Another factor shaping global governance is the character of global institutions themselves. In this context, “Perceptions of a Global Democratic Deficit: An International Survey Experiment” examines the extent to which citizens around the world perceive there to exist a democratic deficit in global institutions and the factors that shape these views. Drawing on a large-scale survey experiment involving approximately 42,000 respondents across 17 countries, Farsan Ghassim measures perceptions of global democratic deficits in both absolute and relative terms. Contrary to common assumptions, he finds that most people do not perceive a significant global democratic deficit; in fact, global governance—particularly in international organizations—is often viewed as more democratic than governance in developing democracies. The study also finds that world politics is generally seen as less democratic than international organizations. While global governance is perceived as less democratic in terms of public participation (input aspects), it is viewed more favorably with regard to the actions and benefits provided by international organizations (output aspects). This empirical study, which brings fresh insights to a field traditionally dominated by normative arguments, shows

the importance of considering public perceptions in global governance research.

Nils Kupzok and Jonas Nahm turn to another urgent global challenge: climate change. In “The Decarbonization Bargain: How the Decarbonizable Sector Shapes Climate Politics,” the authors investigate why some countries adopt more ambitious decarbonization policies than others, arguing that shifts in industry incentives are fundamental to this green fiscal expansion. The paper introduces the concept of “decarbonizable sector,” which includes industries able to transition to low-carbon technologies, distinguishing them from the fully “green” and “fossil fuel” sectors. Traditionally aligned with fossil coalitions, these carbon-intensive industries now have incentives to decarbonize in exchange for policies that expand green markets while reducing transition costs and risks—a dynamic the authors term the “decarbonization bargain.” The authors argue that countries with larger and more politically influential decarbonizable sectors have higher green spending. Their comparative study of Germany, the U.S., and the U.K. supports this argument, revealing that fractures within fossil coalitions and new alliances between the decarbonizable sector, environmentalists, and labor groups are key to shaping climate policy. Kupzok and Nahm suggest that the success of these policies may influence whether more industries embrace decarbonization bargains, potentially expanding the coalition supporting emissions cuts.

Finally, Kaitlin Kelly-Thompson, Amber Lusvardi, Summer Forester, and S. Laurel Weldon investigate how different organizational forms of transnational feminist movements impact their ability to represent marginalized women, especially in the Global South. In “Dimensions of

Transnational Feminism: Autonomous Organizing, Multilateralism and Agenda-Setting in Global Civil Society,” they develop a conceptual framework that distinguishes between autonomous transnational feminist mobilization, which operates independently of state and male-dominated authority structures, and multilateral mobilization, which is tied to official agendas, structures, and issues. This distinction broadens our understanding of transnational feminist mobilization and highlights how autonomous campaigns may better represent marginalized women by amplifying geographically dispersed activists. Factor analysis demonstrates that, while related, transnational and domestic feminist activism represent distinct dimensions of feminist mobilization. Within the realm of transnational movements, network analysis and case-level comparisons reveal that autonomous networks are denser and more connected, while multilateral networks are influenced by intergovernmental organizations. The authors conclude that grassroots organizations from the Global South have a stronger voice in autonomous networks relative to multilateral ones. This research highlights the significance of organizational structure in feminist movements and calls for broader analyses that include more diffuse forms of activism.

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