



**Review: [Untitled]**

Reviewed Work(s):

*Contemporary Democracies: Participation, Stability and Violence* by G. Bingham Powell, Jr.  
Mark Lichbach

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Problem" by Herbert I. Goodman, describes Japan's efforts to diversify sources and types of its energy supplies and concludes that despite such efforts, Japan's and other countries' dependence on the Middle East oil will continue for quite some time. Goodman does not make clear how Japan should or can generate the necessary political influence in creating a stable international environment and controlling energy supply disturbances. Limitations of purely economic analysis also become apparent in chapter 3, "Internationalizing Japan's Financial System" by Eric W. Hayden. Hayden, an economist, describes the trends since the 1970s toward liberalization of Japan's domestic financial system and internationalization of the yen. He sees in those trends Tokyo's potential as a major international financial center. But does Japan have the will and ability to carry the political burdens usually associated with a major international financial power? The question remains unanswered.

Chapters 4 through 7, titled respectively "Cyclical and Macrostructural Issues in U.S.-Japan Economic Relations" (by Gary R. Saxonhouse); "The Economic Dimensions of the U.S.-Japan Alliance: An Overview" (by Hugh T. Patrick); "The U.S.-Japan Trade Conflict: An Economist's View from Japan" (by Ryutaro Komiya); and "The Economics of National Defense" (by Okimoto), focus on U.S.-Japanese relations and explain the economic sources of recent and current bilateral frictions.

Saxonhouse and Komiya warn that the commonly held assumption that synchronization of U.S. and Japanese economic policies will serve their mutual interests ignores the fact that such "coordination," even if possible, may destabilize other parts of the international economic system. Patrick and Komiya share the view that U.S. preoccupation with bilateral trade disequilibria is not only ineffective in managing the long-term bilateral economic relations, but also harmful because what matters are not merchandise trade imbalances but current account deficits that result from multilateral trade and monetary transactions and which are to a large extent beyond the control of the two governments involved. The three economists agree that greater political tolerance must be cultivated toward short-term trade imbalances and fiscal and monetary policy differences between the two governments. Clearly more dialogue is urgently needed between political science and economics.

This need is clearly demonstrated in the last substantive chapter in the present book. Citing the results of a simulation by Hugh Patrick and Henry Rosovsky ("Japan's Economic Performance," in Patrick and Rosovsky (eds.), *Asia's*

*New Giant*, Brookings Institution, 1976) and reporting his own simulation results, Okimoto points out that a major transfer of capital from private and public investments to defense programs in Japan, constituting an increase of defense spending from less than 1% to 2% of GNP, would result in only temporary, short-term declines in economic performance indicators and produce substantial improvements thereafter, surpassing levels achievable without such capital transfer. Okimoto concludes from this that while in the earlier decades the "free-rider" criticism against Japan may have been accurate, such no longer appears to be the case. Okimoto does recognize the political costs involved in substantial increases in defense spending.

In short, despite the limitations of the economic analyses reviewed here, *Japan's Economy* poses a serious challenge to political scientists who are concerned about the management of future political problems caused by economic developments in Japan and elsewhere.

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**Contemporary Democracies: Participation, Stability and Violence.** By G. Bingham Powell, Jr. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982. Pp. 279. \$25.00.)

"Why does the political process work more successfully in some democracies than in others?" (p. 1). Analysts of the public choice tradition assume that democracy is an abstract mechanism of social choice. They achieve theoretical elegance by conducting a micro-level examination of alternative voting schemes on such well-defined desirable traits as transitivity of group preferences. The narrow questions, however, often beget acontextual and ahistorical analyses. Analysts of the aggregate data tradition, on the other hand, assume that democracy is a concrete system of governing. They achieve contextual richness by conducting a macro-level examination of such broad desired traits as institutional performance. The broad concerns, however, often beget empirical eclecticism.

Powell's work is one of the very best examples of the aggregate data approach. Arguments from the literature about democratic political performance are summarized and explored, with measures aggregated at the nation-state level for a cross-section of 29 contemporary democracies between 1958 and 1976. Powell's organization is a model for such studies. He first examines the impact of sets of independent variables, the social and economic environment, the constitutional set-

ting and party systems, on all performance (dependent) variables. He then proposes process models for each dependent variable: citizen electoral participation, executive and governmental stability, and political violence.

The substantive and theoretical sophistication of the data analysis makes Powell's work one of the very best exercises in the field. Powell collected much of the data himself, and his work paid off. He is sensitive to the nuances of theoretical arguments, aggregate data, and specific cases. For example, his exploration of ethnic rioting (pp. 46-47) shows great insight. His arguments about the role that political parties play in violence and regime change (p. 168) are interesting and informative. Even when cross-national data is not directly adduced to probe arguments, Powell offers fascinating insights into some of the following key issues in Western politics: abortion laws, civil liberties, registration laws, agricultural minorities, income inequality, manipulation of the economic cycle, openness of the economy to internal trade, federalism, coups, and capitalism.

There is thus one problem with the work: Many seemingly unrelated arguments are tested. Powell's models are a complex mix of positive and negative, intervening and controlling, direct and indirect, as well as cost and benefit variables. The sample consists of 29 countries, but the tables list approximately 66 different variables and 460 different correlation/regression/factor analysis coefficients. The number of other data analytic comparisons (for example, percentages, medians) is almost as great. Moreover, the number of variables discussed but not explored empirically is also great. If the advantage of comparative over case studies is to reduce the ratio of variables to cases, then such an exercise cannot be considered progress. Powell provides descriptive models, not parsimonious explanations.

The real problem is that Powell does not consistently pursue a unifying theme that integrates the analysis. There is a focus on the central role of political parties as linkages between the social and economic environment, the constitutional setting and political performance. But this is the book's broad topic rather than its central argument. At bottom, Powell tests theories of why coalitions coalesce, protesters protest, and voters vote. Thus, the concluding discussion of "leadership and political creativity" is again fascinating, but Powell's strength is really his undoing: He achieves contextual richness at the cost of some empirical eclecticism.

In summary, Powell's work is of great breadth and depth and will become the standard of a certain genre of research. It is undoubtedly the best empirical collation and test of partial, middle-range theories of macro-level performance in

democracies yet done. All students of Western-style democracies and of political performance will benefit from reading Powell's work more than once. The problems with his analysis are really limitations of the genre of research. Aggregate data studies of political performance do not have the theoretical boldness of many verbal theories of performance. Nor do such studies have the deductive elegance of the public choice theorists' analyses of democracy. Rather, such studies, when well done, offer theoretical comprehensiveness and contextual richness. In this sense, I have not criticized the artist so much as the state of the art.

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**Women and Politics.** By Vicky Randall. (New York: St. Martin's Press. Pp. 227. \$25.00.)

As an introduction to basic issues involved in a study of women and politics, this book provides a well-written survey of the growing body of literature and theories. Randall attributes the subordinate place of women in the political structure and, until recently, relative lack of involvement in politics as consequences of prior definitions (developed by men) of women's innate physical inferiority and/or submissive social roles. The combination of concern with a problem—women's lack of involvement in the political sphere—and concern with the cause—male domination—results in a "feminist perspective" seeking to both understand the cause and correction of the problem.

Indeed, in the Introduction Randall discusses "What is Feminism?" and in chapter 1, "Women's Place in Society," reviews theories documenting the fact of "male dominance and patriarchy" even while asking if such arrangements between the sexes are "inevitable." What follows is an assessment of women's participation in fundamental types of political involvement—such as participation as citizens, participation as office-holding political elites, participation as members and leaders of political and social movements—as well as the policy consequences accruing to women from each type of political activity. This scope includes a useful cross-national and comparative perspective in the context of discussions about "How Politics Affects Women" (chap. 4) and "The Politics of the Women's Movement" (chap. 5).

It is refreshing to find a treatment of such a wide range of topics from the perspective of a single author versus the more usual edited anthologies. Furthermore, Randall attentively cites contributions to what is the developing