

requires the childless to pay for others' personal satisfaction. Instead, she crafts an intermediate position that places the primary responsibility for children on their families, with a secondary role for the state as cop (enforcing a floor for adequate care) and cheerleader (mandating, for example, paid family leave as a way to encourage caretaking).

Progressives will find Eichner to be most provocative in arguing that the state can and should privilege two-parent families, but she almost immediately eschews any measures that disadvantage other families. If that leaves the reader wondering what "privilege" entails, as a practical matter, it means continuing to recognize marriage and adopting policies such as job-training programs that foster the likelihood of multiparent families, but not marriage-dependent tax or welfare benefits that would further skew existing inequality.

Eichner's analysis is almost always reasonable, indeed maddeningly so, as she systematically favors nudges toward the right outcomes rather than coercive or punitive state policies, without asking what happens when the nudges fail to produce the desired results. Lurking just below the surface, however, are potentially radical conclusions. If the liberal state has an obligation to promote caretaking, what happens when the policies favored by Eichner fail? The elephant in the room on the issue of family health is growing societal inequality. Greater inequality, particularly greater male income inequality, skews family form. At the top, as Eichner acknowledges, the gendered income gap remains and the traditional two-parent family is alive and well. Farther down the socioeconomic ladder, the two-parent family is under siege, in large part because of the disappearance of the stable blue-collar jobs she discusses. Further aggravating the class gap are reproductive practices she does not mention. The middle class channels greater investment into children through careful control of timing and number. Yet the United States as a whole has a larger percentage of unplanned births than other developed nations. That is so because of the combination of the debilitating effects of greater inequality (a promising future is the best contraceptive) and the political refusal to systematize access to contraception and abortion. The debate between Fineman and Case was not just about state subsidization of child care; it was also about the state interest in the trade-off between the quality and quantity of children who would be born. In a privatized world, it is hard to support caretaking without promoting the birth of more children into marginal circumstances.

The Supportive State carefully argues that the liberal order must respect family autonomy, but the observation that state policies influence family form has profound implications. Eichner makes a persuasive case that the liberal state has an obligation to support caretaking. The converse of the argument is that family health serves not just as one of many goods the state should promote but as a critical barometer of societal justice. This suggests that a

theory of the state that makes caretaking a first-order good also makes it fundamental in the evaluation of the acceptable trade-offs that underlie public policy more generally. If we assume, for example, as a growing body of evidence indicates, that greater inequality itself harms family stability, would liberal theory compel adoption of more egalitarian policies even at the expense of greater economic "inefficiency"? Does the state have an obligation to address class-based differences in fertility in order to compel greater equality? Must it champion stronger families even if higher taxes or greater regulation limit the autonomy of the wealthy? If greater inequality is inevitably a threat to the family, does that make it intrinsically incompatible with justice for that reason alone?

Making the family not just a visible component of justice but central to it requires a fundamental reconception of political theory. The very idea of dependence—that is, the inevitable dependence of the young, the elderly, and the infirm—is a challenge to liberal notions of autonomy. The liberal state rests on principles of equal respect for all citizens and the identification of minimum conditions necessary to realize that respect. The emergence of the two-parent family as a marker of class—while it continues to function as an important correlate of children's well-being—operates as a fundamental indictment of the possibility of either true autonomy or justice in such a society. Eichner's book thus throws down a gauntlet for those who would integrate the changing modern family into principles for the good society.

Welfare and Capitalism in Postwar Japan: Party, Bureaucracy, and Business.

By Margarita Estevez-Abe.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 360p. \$94.00 cloth, \$31.99 paper.

The Rise and Fall of Japan's LDP: Political Party Organizations as Historical Institutions.

By Ellis S. Krauss and Robert J. Pekkanen. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010. 320p. \$69.95 cloth, \$26.95 paper.
doi:10.1017/S1537592712003003

— Leonard J. Schoppa, *University of Virginia*

It is now widely accepted that Japan's political institutions have been the critical force shaping what is distinctive about politics and policy in that nation, with most recent studies arguing that institutions have been a more important factor than cultural or socioeconomic forces. Exactly how institutions shape the nation's politics, however, remains a hotly debated question. The books under review represent two of the best products of that debate, representing, respectively, the leading schools of thought within the broader literature in comparative politics: rational choice institutionalism and historical institutionalism.

Both books focus on the natural experiment that has preoccupied those of us who study Japanese politics for a generation. In 1994, Japan adopted a completely different

set of electoral rules to govern how it converts votes into seats in the more important Lower House of the Diet. Critics had blamed many of the ills in Japanese politics—the factionalism of the dominant Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), corruption, personalistic campaigns, and public policy designed to please special interests—on the old electoral system, which had forced large parties like the LDP to run multiple candidates against each other in medium-sized districts. The new electoral system, first used in 1996, was mixed-member majoritarian, with over 60% of the seats allocated under single-member district plurality (SMDP) rules. Because SMDP rules are associated with stronger party leadership, less corruption, campaigns organized around party manifestos, and policy focused on public goods, some observers at the time predicted that the reforms would cure many of the ills of the old system.

Both books explore this natural experiment by comparing politics and policymaking before the reforms (the years of LDP dominance, running from 1955 to 1993) with politics and policymaking in the years after 1996. Margarita Estevez-Abe, consistent with the focus on institution-induced equilibria in rational choice institutionalism, sees an abrupt change after the reforms. In *Welfare and Capitalism in Postwar Japan*, she focuses specifically on how the change in institutions affected Japan's social welfare policy. She finds a sharp move after 1996 away from a system that gave Japan a welfare state that was organized to an unusual extent around “functional equivalents” of the welfare programs found in other nations: agricultural and job protections, for example, instead of a broad guarantee of unemployment insurance.

Before the reforms, she argues, Japan's combination of the multimember district system described previously with single-party rule created a structural logic that encouraged a *particularistic* social policy quite distinct from the welfare states in Europe. The Japanese system created incentives for LDP politicians running against each other in multimember districts to cater to special-interest groups in order to win the personal votes they needed to defeat their rivals. Organized farm votes were especially appealing, and so rather than protecting *everyone* through a universal unemployment insurance system, individual LDP members won the loyalty of these voters by delivering targeted social protection in the form of rural public works and rice price supports. Similarly, during the 1950s when most European nations were adopting generous pension programs to cover the entire workforce, Japan adopted targeted pensions—equivalent to those given to civil servants—for relatives of those who died in the war, another well-organized group.

Estevez-Abe argues that the pattern changed abruptly once Japan moved away from the combination of multimember districts and single-party rule. The first change came in 1989, when the LDP lost its single-party control of government after a defeat in the Upper House. Between

that date and 1996, when the new electoral system took effect, Japan had a system resembling those in European nations with multimember districts and coalition governments. It was during this period that Japan saw the adoption of the most generous universal social programs, including a new system of long-term care insurance and more generous child allowances.

For the purposes of this review, however, the critical portion of Estevez-Abe's argument is the one where she links policy after 1996 to the new electoral rules first used in that year. The new system with its large tier of seats allocated by SMDP rules gave Japan what was essentially a Westminster system, with strong incentives to craft social policies that appeal to the median voter: universal, but not too generous. She links this change to Japan's decisions to cut spending on public works projects and move away from using agriculture policy as a form of social policy.

Estevez-Abe's argument is clearly stated and provocative, but it suffers from what I see as a selective presentation of the evidence and neglect of alternative explanations. In the late 1990s, Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi presided over an *increase* in spending on particularistic social policies—public works and government loans targeted at small businesses—designed to bring Japan out of its deflationary slump. This period is largely ignored in the book. Instead, the author focuses on the prime ministership of Junichiro Koizumi, who indeed did cut public works spending and trim loan programs. But the retrenchment in part simply undid what Obuchi had done a few years earlier. Meanwhile, Japan continues to build bullet train lines and expressways in the most rural areas of the country, in part because these projects offer jobs to underemployed rural workers who remain a powerful political constituency.

I should add that Estevez-Abe's argument is not based exclusively on the natural experiment in Japan. Chapters 1 and 2 are broadly comparative, developing a typology of welfare states that adds a “fourth world” (Japan's system based heavily on functional equivalents) to the familiar three worlds of Gøsta Esping-Andersen. The author then links the four worlds to four electoral-institutional combinations. (I have used these two chapters to good effect in classes on comparative public policy as an illustration of arguments linking cross-national policy variation to electoral systems.)

In contrast to Estevez-Abe, who sees electoral reform in Japan quickly and consistently driving policy toward a new equilibrium, Ellis Krauss and Robert Pekkanen find that the effects of Japan's electoral reform were more contingent and uneven. In line with other scholars in the “historical institutionalism” school, they argue that the effects of a change in institutions depend on the path that the political system had traveled up to that point. They find that organizational structures that evolved around previous institutional incentives by and large survived Japan's big electoral reform, with some modifications and

repurposing. You cannot understand Japanese politics today without taking into account the new electoral incentives, but neither can you ignore the incentives of the *old* system, which have left an enduring legacy.

Like Estevez-Abe, Krauss and Pekkanen devote about half of *The Rise and Fall of Japan's LDP* to documenting how politics worked before the electoral reforms of the 1990s. They look in particular at how the old system, with its incentives for LDP candidates to cultivate personal votes, created an incentive for candidates to invest time and money in building elaborate personal support organizations (*koenkai*). Leading LDP politicians enrolled as many as 100,000 voters. They took large groups on visits to hot springs resorts and spent many days attending weddings and funerals of *koenkai* members. Similarly, the system encouraged LDP Diet members to join together in factions in order to secure the funds they needed to compete in this way against district rivals—while at the same time providing the votes needed for party bosses to secure leadership posts. Finally, the old system encouraged the LDP to organize a powerful Policy Affairs Research Council, with decentralized power in each of its subcommittees that gave “tribes” of Diet members (*zoku giin*) the ability to push for policies favoring special-interest groups.

Krauss and Pekkanen then devote alternating chapters to an examination of what happened to each of these structures after electoral reform. None of these features has entirely disappeared, and some are alive and well, despite the fact that the new electoral rules in place since 1994 made this way of organizing the party much less rational. Having invested in creating *koenkai*, most veteran LDP members continue to build membership lists and organize activities for these organizations. They do so despite the fact that as the only candidates from a party in a single-member district, they now have the option of campaigning for office on the basis of party label and manifesto.

Particularly fascinating are the case studies offered by the authors in Chapter 3 that report what they learned about the nature of *koenkai* activities in a mix of urban and rural districts. Even in the urban district, the LDP legislator they examine attends six to seven funerals a week, and he has organized 50 subgroups of his *koenkai*, organized around trade-specific identities as well as hobbies. Fearful that the party label is not reliable enough to guarantee reelection, LDP politicians have retained and even created from scratch the personal support organizations that they count on for the few thousand votes that might make the difference between a win and a loss.

Krauss and Pekkanen find more change in the LDP's factional structure as a result of electoral reform. LDP members have been less loyal to faction bosses, so that the factions can no longer broker an election to the party presidency in a back room, but the factions continue to exist and have become the mechanism through which the party communicates with Diet members and allocates

second-tier cabinet posts. Candidates no longer need to sign up with a faction in order to secure a party nomination, but they find it useful to be part of one of these organizations once they are elected.

With their colorful detail and examples in this book—evoking, in my mind, the pioneering work of Gerald Curtis, who first wrote about *Election Campaigning, Japanese Style* (1971)—Krauss and Pekkanen have given us the definitive examination of the ways in which politics has changed since the seminal electoral reforms of the 1990s. They find evidence of change but report enough evidence of continuity and repurposing, in my view, to make a convincing case that one must take into account historical legacy in order to understand how institutions shape political behavior.

The two books together, however, will allow graduate students and scholars who are interested in how institutions shape politics to draw their own conclusions from this fascinating natural experiment.

The Litigation State: Public Regulation and Private Lawsuits in the U.S. By Sean Farhang. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010. 302p. \$78.50 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy. By Suzanne Mettler. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011. 176p. \$48.00 cloth, \$15.00 paper.
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— Colin D. Moore, *University of Hawaii*

Is the United States a “weak state”? For decades, most scholars would have responded to this question with an emphatic “yes.” Although this particular characterization of the American state has become something of a cliché in political science, it is not an unreasonable conclusion. Judged according to the traditional Weberian criteria, the US national state does indeed appear small, decentralized, and underdeveloped. Nevertheless, in recent years scholars have located pockets of state strength and autonomy in a variety of policy areas, from the Postal Service to the Department of Agriculture (e.g., see Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*, 2001), while others have suggested that US social policy, in various periods and for particular populations, has been far more comprehensive than the conventional wisdom acknowledges (e.g., see Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 1995). Yet the influence of this scholarship stems, in part, from the challenges it presents to the still-dominant narrative of the United States as a weak state and a laggard in welfare policy.

How can we reconcile these competing images of American state power? The two excellent books under review join work by Jacob Hacker (*The Divided Welfare State*, 2002) and Christopher Howard (*The Welfare State Nobody Knows*, 2007), among others, in arguing that we have been