

# Abstracts

*Peter Holdt-Olesen*

## **Political Institutions and Structural Reforms in Latin America: Argentina and Brazil in Comparative Perspective**

The structural economic reforms which have been carried out in Latin America since the second half of the 1980's have varied considerably in speed and scope from one country to another. To a great extent, this variation can be explained as a result of the different political institutions found in the Latin American countries. A comparative analysis of the reform processes in Argentina and Brazil thus shows that their highly different speed and scope are mainly due to differences in the degree of party fragmentation and party discipline, which in turn are a result of different electoral systems in the two countries. A broader test confirms the importance of political institutions for the reform processes in Latin America.

*Peter Sinding Poulsen og  
Mads Christian Mikkelsen*

## **Electoral Systems and Strategic Behaviour – Three Scandinavian Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective**

One of the most wideranging conclusions to be drawn on behalf of the insights of Social Choice is that collective choices are not necessarily a unique reflection of the participants' individual preferences. The institutional setting and individual strategic behaviour can influence the content of the final and authoritative choice. We show that the same ordering of preferences in a population of voters can produce totally different election results depending on the procedures used for preference aggregation, and end up concluding that the making of a working government partly depends on the mathematical methods that guides the composition of parliament.

*Kristoffer Schantz*

## **Partisan Politics and the Size of the Public Sector in the Global Economy**

The globalisation of the economy is today a widely used concept. The conventional wisdom inspired by neoliberal theory is that the globalisation has undermined the possibilities for maintaining a large welfare state, and that politics today is fiercely constrained by the forces of the global economy. In accordance with neoliberal theory, the results in this article show that partisan politics play no direct role and that the globalisation of the economy has a negative effect on the size of the welfare state. However, the results also show that the extent of the negative globalisation effect on welfare state expenditures should not be overstated. This suggests that a more multifaceted view of the public sector is needed, and especially the need for a better understanding of the interplay between partisan politics, the organisation of the labour market and the public sector. In some cases, a large public sector and an organized labor market might be a comparative advantage and it might therefore be possible to sustain a large welfare state and an organised labour market even in the global economy.

*Vibeke Schou Pedersen*

## **The „American Sound“ – National Identity and Security in the USA**

The United States' strategy on international leadership in the twentieth century entails a historical-ideological paradox: The liberal vision they claim to defend has lead to a „realist“ securitizing policy. Why has America taken on the part as „the world's policeman“ with the liberal-realist paradox that goes with it? The answer is to be found in a national identity that evolves around the idea of America's Godgiven destiny to lead humanity towards the liberal heaven. For a nation defined by this universal mission, the constant affirmation of this uncompleted mission, is a precondition for identity.

*Lise Togeby*

### **Talk about Spirit of Scholarship!**

Peter Nannestad's book *The Price of Solidarity* discusses the Danes' attitudes towards refugees and immigrants from 1987-93 from a rational choice perspective, and lends itself to some critical comments. First, it is questionable whether the measure of hostility against refugees and immigrants is valid, as it measures concern about the refugee and immigrant issue, not hostility against these groups. This undermines the entire basis of the other analyses in the book. At the same time, the relations between unemployment and concern, which were especially strong between 1990-93, dissolve at a certain point in 1996. Finally, the macro-relations documented in the book are not matched by parallel individual relations. There are significant, but entirely trivial, relations between concern and housing situation, and between concern and perceived change in income. Thus, rational choice is hardly suited as a theoretical frame for understanding attitudes towards refugees and immigrants. Probably because it does not make sense to talk about the price elasticity of tolerance or solidarity.

*Peter Nannestad*

### **Disagreement and Proper Scholarship: An Impossible Symbiosis?**

This rejoinder to a series of strongly worded criticisms by Lise Togeby against the recent book *Solidaritetsens pris* (The price of solidarity) demonstrates that her arguments do not withstand empirical scrutiny. They are shown to be based on faulty generalizations, selective use of evidence and methodologically highly questionable interpretations. Since she demonstrably fails in dislodging any of the book's empirical findings, her criticism of the underlying theory for not being able to produce useful hypotheses in the field of majority-minority relations turns out to be equally off the mark. Her frequently repeated *ad hominem*-arguments are outside the realm of scientific discourse and do not merit any comments.