

Abstracts

Mads Qvortrup

Introduction: Draft For a Theory About Constitutional Changes

Political science has rediscovered constitutions. However, there are still very few theoretical models of constitutions. This introductory article outlines a preliminary model of constitutional changes and amendments. It is proposed that constitutional changes are a function of political incentives among the "relevant parties" and of constitutional inertia. It is concluded that the Danish constitution, *Grundloven*, is unlikely to be changed.

Ditlev Tamm

Why the Constitution Should be Revised

That a revision of Denmark's constitution, *Grundloven*, is overdue is not debatable. Yet a revolutionary revision would be unprecedented. Previous revisions of the Constitution have respected the tradition. Moreover, a revision change must be tailored to suit the political balance and must be brought about through piecemeal changes. A debate about a new constitution is not about a radical overhaul. The debate is about an update of the present constitutional document.

Jørgen Elklit

Should the Parliamentary Election Law be Changed?

It is highly recommendable that the functionings of democratic institutions are analyzed from time to time, not only in other, far-away countries, but also in one's own country. A good starting point for such analysis is the eight criteria for choosing electoral systems that have been suggested by Reynolds and Reilly (1997). The paper briefly considers the functioning of the Danish parliamentary election law, which has not really been changed since its implementation in 1920. The conclusion of this provisional "democratic audit" is that the system for electing the Danish parliament, the *Folketing*, functions reasonably well. Suggestions for further improvement are presented, to be considered by the *Folketing*.

Jan-Erik Lane

Constitutional Politics - Utility and Costs

Constitutions are rarely changed as they are the cornerstones in democratic systems. The article shows that proposed constitutional changes must balance

costs and utilities involved in proposed changes and amendments. It is concluded that constitutional changes only occur when the marginal utility of a constitutional amendment is higher than the marginal utility of status quo.

Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard

The Constitution of Prosperity: Division of Power, Rights and Rent Seeking

A public choice model is constructed for the analysis of the economic consequences of alternative constitutional arrangements, including decision procedures, checks and balances, rights, etc. The conclusion is that rent-seeking behavior by special interest groups and the consequent welfare losses will be particularly dominant under a constitution with little division of power and absence of economic liberties, but with extensive "positive" social rights. An alternative is to increase the checks and balances through more veto players and constitutional limitations of government power. A statistical analysis of data from more than 100 countries confirms a connection between constitutional institutions and prosperity, specifically a significant positive relation between, on the one hand, a short, restrictive constitution with economic liberties, checks and balances, and democracy, and, on the other hand, prosperity. In contrast, the presence of social rights in constitutions has no relation with a society's prosperity, alone or together.

Mogens Storgaard Jakobsen, Regin Reinert and Søren Rishbjerg Thomsen

The Danish Referendum on the Common Currency – Social Background and Attitudes

For the second time in eight years, the Danes said "no" to the European integration process by turning down the proposal that Denmark should join the third phase of the EMU and thus substitute the Danish *krone* with the Euro. A secondary analysis of a large Gallup database with opinion poll interviews conducted prior to each of the four referendums since 1992, reveals a change in the relation between vote and social background. This change can perhaps be explained by the changing role of the EU in a time of globalization and internationalization. While the integration process used to be supported mostly by non-socialist groups in the pursuit of economic interests, this picture may be changing. At this point, relative support has increased among younger, well-educated centrist voters, while it has declined among right-wing, socially marginalized voters fearing globalization and loss of national identity. Yet, attitude surveys suggest that the actual outcome of the Euro referendum was determined not only by broader antagonisms towards the EU but also, and perhaps to an even larger extent, by temporary, non-structural issues.