



BRILL

Editorial Statement

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In this introduction to the first issue, the editors would like to say a word to readers and potential authors about what they mean by comparative political theory (CPT) and the remit of the journal.

Political theory has arguably always involved comparisons between political regimes, ideas, traditions, authors, books, habits, and so forth. The academic discipline of political theory, however, still bears the imprint of its origin in Europe and the United States. Many academic political theorists have read Plato, Machiavelli, and John Locke; fewer have read Zhuangzi, Ibn Khaldun, and Fujita Shōzō. One aim of this journal is to expand the range of perspectives within academic political theory.

In this issue, for instance, Vasileios Syros analyzes the leadership style of the Safavid emperor Shāh ‘Abbās I, as described by the court historian Iskandar Beg Munshī. Syros discusses why it may make sense to call Iskandar Beg the Safavid Machiavelli. Ayesha Omar explains how the South African political thinker Sam C. Nolutshungu contributes to thinking about Black consciousness. By explaining the political theories of ‘Abbās and Nolutshungu, Syros and Omar are teaching many political theorists about figures who are not as globally famous as Machiavelli and, say, Martin Luther King, Jr. For instructors and writers looking to decolonize or deparochialize their syllabi and research, this kind of work serves a valuable function.

To be clear, however, the journal does not want to recreate its own kind of parochialism by excluding political theorists who are not area specialists. The purpose of the journal is to enhance our vision of the political and to

facilitate conversations between political thinkers across the globe. In this issue, Ryūsaku Yamada invites us to consider how the Japanese political theorists Tetsuki Tamura and Mikiko Eto think about the problem of essentialism in feminism in conversation with Western feminists such as Chantal Mouffe and Carole Pateman. Gergana Dimova explores how political theorists around the world may think more systematically about the criteria of democracy. The book symposium on Shaun O'Dwyer's *Confucianism's Prospects* is an occasion for Sungmoon Kim, Sam Crane, Sarah Mattice, Dongxian Jiang, and O'Dwyer to discuss whether Confucianism can and should become just another option in a pluralistic civil society.

We are excited to read submissions that (1) introduce an unfamiliar author, book, concept, or tradition to many English-speaking academic political theorists and (2) stage conversations across time and place to address problems such as the meaning of freedom, the legacy of martyred truth-seekers, and climate change.

Michael Freeden's opening article, we think, nicely balances how the journal would like to support the two kinds of comparative political theory:

Knowing more about the diverse ways in which those properties manifest themselves is not just a matter of recalibrating the balance among cultures by giving voice to underrepresented ones. It is the alternative challenge of accumulating an array of case studies that illuminate the diversity of the political, through which one can test, appreciate, and refine its core contours.

It is important for a journal of comparative political theory to publish articles that bring new voices into the conversation. But the purpose of comparative political theory is not simply to teach us names that we did not know before; it is to expand the range of resources we have to think about politics and the political beyond the Western/non-Western dichotomy.