

religion, but his insistence on bringing religion into the picture also enables us to put the idea of a nation divided by religion into better focus.

The Faith Factor at all times sticks close to its tables. It does not offer sweeping generalizations. Its writing style falls short of scintillating. But it is an extremely valuable book for anyone trying to figure out where the United States is headed.

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Why Welfare States Persist: The Importance of Public Opinion in Democracies by Clem Brooks and Jeff Manza. *Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press, 2007. 204 pp. \$18.00.*

Why do welfare states persist? Because they are popular, argue Clem Brooks and Jeff Manza in their new book, a statistical study of the connections between public opinion and policies in 16 rich countries in Europe and elsewhere.

Rich capitalist democracies around the world differ widely in their welfare states—their systems of government-provided social support—despite having comparable income levels. Brooks and Manza report that welfare state spending constituted 27 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in “social democratic countries” such as Sweden and 26 percent of GDP in “Christian democratic countries” such as Germany, but only 17 percent in “liberal democracies” such as the United States and Japan. These differences are correlated with differences in income inequality and poverty rates among countries.

In their book, Brooks and Manza study how countries with different sizes of welfare states differ in their average policy preferences, as measured by a cross-national survey that asks whether respondents think the government should provide a job to everyone who wants one and whether they think that the government should reduce income differences between rich and poor. Brooks and Manza find that countries in which government jobs policies and redistribution are more popular are the places where the welfare state is larger, and this pattern remains after controlling for time trends, per-capita GDP of the country, immigration, women’s labor force participation, political institutions, and whether the ruling party is religious or on the left. The analysis is based on the following countries, listed in approximate order of increasing welfare state sizes: the United States, Japan, Ireland, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, Holland, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, Austria, France, and Sweden.

Brooks and Manza make a convincing case that attitudes are indeed correlated with policies, which implies that the voters in these countries are generally getting what they want, at least when considering comparative levels of social welfare spending. Chapter 2 of the book attempts to go further and make a claim of causality, to say that variation in countries’ attitudes is not just

associated with policy variation but is actually a contributing cause of these policies. As a substantive matter, the causal claim undoubtedly has truth: in a democracy, with all other things equal, we would expect a change in attitude to generally push toward the corresponding policy. (One can imagine exceptions—for example, if an issue is “owned” by a faction or a minor party in a multiparty system, such that an increase in its vote actually harms the coalition that might advance the policy. But on average over 16 countries, we would expect a positive causal effect.) That said, I do not see that the statistical methods used by Brooks and Manza establish causality in the way that they claim. Using a statistical “test for endogeneity” cannot get around the fundamental issue that this is a cross-national comparison based on observational data: some countries have bigger welfare states than others, and these tend to have higher support for welfare states, even after (approximately) adjusting for some country-level factors.

As the authors note, the connections between attitudes and policies are complex. On one hand, governments are constrained by the general popularity of programs that give to the majority of voters; on the other, fiscal constraints make it difficult for governments to provide the sort of “Santa Claus” programs that citizens might want. Complexity arises because voters are aware of these constraints and typically do not want to support political parties that do not have a chance of winning or economic policies that are judged to be unsustainable.

Turning to surveys from individual countries—Sweden, Norway, Holland, and the United States—Brooks and Manza find that attitudes toward government-provided social services vary by country but changed little from 1975 to 2000. Cross-national differences in attitudes, as well as in policies, seem stable and not tied to trends or to short-term factors such as the business cycle or changes in the party in power. Meanwhile, the size of the welfare state in rich countries has been stable since 1980, although with variation in individual countries (for example, a sharp decline in benefits in Switzerland and an increase in Italy).

These findings of stability in opinions and, in general, in spending appear to contradict the conventional wisdom that welfare state policies have become repudiated in recent decades because of various factors, including: the fall of communism and the corresponding discrediting of socialism as an economic policy; various economic crises since 1973 that have brought into question the ability of governments to pay for generous welfare benefits; and the growing presence of immigrants from poor countries, which has reduced the social consensus for income redistribution. One possible reconciliation of Brooks and Manza’s story and the general “decline of the welfare state” narrative is that since 1980 or so, we have seen a conflation of welfare state expansion and reduction that happens to have averaged to a pattern of stability. In the wake of an aging population and lower employment rates, health care spending has increased while job security programs have declined. Perhaps Brooks, Manza,

and others who know more about this topic can let us know if this attempted synthesis makes sense.

Brooks and Manza have made a useful contribution by combining information from several sources to link public opinion and public policy on welfare provision. Various pieces of the story are well known, but I, for one, have not seen it all put together in this way. The book makes a compelling case for how policy differences among countries can persist, even in our modern, globalized, and post-socialist economy.

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The Summer of 1787: The Men Who Invented the Constitution by David O. Stewart. New York, Simon & Schuster, 2007. 368 pp. \$27.00.

There is a long tradition of amateurs turning their hands to the history of the Constitution, going back as far as John Marshall's *Life of George Washington*. You can learn a lot from this body of work, especially if you are interested in what educated lay people are thinking about the Constitution these days. And should your lay friends ask you what they ought to be reading on these subjects, it is always useful to have a few titles of this sort on hand to recommend. And now another one of those amateurs, David O. Stewart, comes to the rarified world of constitutional history from the even more-rarified one of high-level Washington law practice, including clerkships with Judges David Bazelon and Wright and Justice Lewis Powell. But as readers of Chief Justice William Rehnquist's extensive output in the field will realize, circulation in the corridors of judicial power is no guarantee that the product will be original or authoritative or more than pedestrian.

In recent decades, no one working in the popular genre has managed to surpass Catherine Dinker Bowen's *Miracle at Philadelphia* (1966). Like Bowen's work, the present volume is heavy on personality as the key to understanding the creation of the Constitution. Well-worn anecdotes about such characters as Gouverneur Morris are trotted out, and the author prides himself on making sure we know what John Rutledge's often-undervalued role at the Convention was. But unlike Bowen, Stewart thinks the key to what was going on was slavery, and he wants his readers to come away with the notion that the Constitution was a pro-slavery document. That is hardly news, of course, but like a number of recent students, Stewart also wants us to understand just how profound the impact of the three-fifths clause was.

Professionals will surely be surprised by the absence of those themes that have come to mean a good deal to them in recent decades—ideology, republicanism, and the like. As I have already noted, Stewart is extremely concerned about the role of slavery in shaping the outcome of the convention, and he has a good old-fashioned sense that the Framers were worried about the state of