

THE VIEW FROM SOUTH LAWN

The Helvidius Group has come a long way from its inception as the publisher of the *Journal of Law and Public Policy*. While the subject matter has changed, our goal has not. After two and a half decades, Helvidius continues to give undergraduates a chance to expose a wider audience to their research.

The Spring 2016 journal's papers cover international affairs, U.S. domestic politics, current events, and history, and make up of the most diverse collections of essays published by Helvidius.

This issue's Guest Essay, written by Columbia Professor M. Victoria Murillo, argues that voting in Latin America is heavily determined by economic conditions. She notes that most administrations have a plebiscitarian style that leads to concentration of power by leaders. Left-wing dominance during a commodity boom at the start of the twenty-first century came to a sudden end in 2015 when commodity prices fell; right-wing parties then won elections in Argentina and Venezuela and quickly made policy changes. While seemingly responsive to voters, plebiscitarian tendencies weaken the rule of law in the region's democracies.

This issue's Tomassi Essay, written by Pranav Jain, is a truly original piece of social science scholarship. While most papers examine recent, or even current, events, Jain's piece delves into the life of John Sadler and the history of English common law. An associate of Oliver Cromwell, Sadler supported the Commonwealth but was critical of the violent means of its establishment. Studying Sadler provides insight into the religious influence on early modern legal culture.

For the first time, Helvidius has partnered with the Institute of Latin American Studies at Columbia to name one Institute of Latin American Studies Essay per year. In this semester's paper, Andrea Hale examines multiculturalism in Ecuador by focusing on artists in Esmeraldas City. Hale describes a rich Afro-Ecuadorian culture and the interdependence of music, culture, and politics.

The next papers showcase the international scope of the *Journal*. Michael Davis examines the Soviet Jewry movement, which advocated for the emigration rights of Soviet Jews. Davis argues that the movement was bifurcated between the

establishment, who utilized money and political influence, and grassroots organizers, who preferred demonstrations and civil disobedience. This division made the movement more effective and ultimately successful. Rachel Brown, in her paper, examines the development of the New Silk Road, an economic program undertaken by China to expedite trade with Central Asia. Brown claims that development in the Xinjiang region may exacerbate local grievances and complicate the success of the New Silk Road.

Samuel Watters' essay examines the creation of a religiocultural identity among Turkey's large Alevi minority. An Alevi revival movement has surfaced, creating a form of Alevi identity that challenges Turkey to reject a Sunni Muslim identity and live up to the secular principles embodied by its founder, Mustafa Kemal. Watters examines this Alevi identity through a close analysis of its symbols. In the final paper, Zihao Liu compares and contrasts China's dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands and Argentina's occupation of the Falkland Islands in 1982. Liu argues that both regimes have used military action to divert the public's attention from economic and political failures at home.

To bring us in line with our peers, the *Journal's* editions have undergone a change in numbering; issues will be named for the season they are published, not the season in which they are produced. Consequently, this edition is named Spring 2016, though it follows the Spring 2015 journal.

Aside from publishing exceptionally strong undergraduate articles, this semester's Executive Board hosted an alumni reunion in New York, and we were glad that many Helvidius alumni attended.

Lastly, I would like to thank every member of the Editorial Board for your hard work, which allowed us to publish the Spring 2016 edition of the *Journal of Politics & Society*. I have truly enjoyed working with you, and I am very proud of the high quality of the *Journal*.

Nicholas Hallock
Editor in Chief

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