

PSQ

POLITICAL
SCIENCE
QUARTERLY

The Journal of Public and International Affairs
Published since 1886 by the **ACADEMY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

Volume 128 - Number 2 - Summer 2013

www.psqonline.org

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while the latter already sees evidence of progress and successful civic engagement, especially in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Instructively, both approaches explain important aspects of Kyrgyzstan's comparatively volatile politics. For McGlinchey, Kyrgyz politics draws on a narrow circle of elites, forcing Kyrgyz power-brokers to invest more heavily in keeping their coalition partners happy, but from a limited pot of money. During the 1990s, Askar Akayevich Akayev extracted sufficient revenues to spread among these circles from foreign donors who were eager to support the Kyrgyz President's rhetorical commitment to liberalization. But as international aid dried up these external revenues, after the events of September 11th, they were replaced by payments from the United States for the operation and service contracts of its air base at Manas airport. Unlike foreign aid, these security-related revenues narrowly benefitted the President, his family, and inner circle, eventually generating the dissatisfaction among the extended network of elites that led to Akayev's removal in the Tulip Revolution of 2005.

Buxton implicitly acknowledges McGlinchey's insight when he notes, "Akayev's attempt to please all and sundry failed. There were too many stakeholders to soothe, too many promises to keep" (p. 75). But he notes that the state proved more brittle than assumed and citizens' movements far more active in regular politics. CSOs campaigned for political rights and media freedom and against institutionalized corruption, forging pragmatic coalitions with thinly institutionalized parties and helping to mobilize protests. Both of these perspectives also capture important elements of Kyrgyzstan's "second revolution" that ousted the increasingly autocratic and kleptocratic Kurmanbek Bakiyev from office in April 2010, ushering in Bishkek's latest political experiment in parliamentary democracy.

As these books suggest, the study of both elite politics and social movements is indispensable for understanding Central Asia's emerging political development, though the patrimonial character of the region's political machines and its rapidly changing external context lend it a distinct flavor. These works are important representatives of the explanatory power of each approach.

ALEX COOLEY
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The Middle Class Fights Back: How Progressive Movements Can Restore Democracy in America by Brian D'Agostino. Westport, CT, Praeger Publishers, 2012. 203 pp. \$48.00.

It is always refreshing to read a book that makes a passionate argument about the political-economic problems facing the nation. *The Middle Class Fights Back* is such a book. Brian D'Agostino presents a lucid progressive critique of

American government and the economy. He asserts that the middle class is experiencing declining job opportunities, wage stagnation, debt, and an unfair tax system. The degeneration of the middle class is due to state capitalism that works for the richest 1 percent of the population at the expense of the 99 percent, the rest of America. Accordingly, he fully supports the Occupy Wall Street Movement and fundamental changes in the economy. He traces the nation's financial problems, in part, to the high cost of the national security state, which he refers to as a "National Security Scam." For him, military leaders and their supporters exaggerate the threat to national security and waste taxpayer money. However, he does not embrace a neo-isolationist view of foreign policy but rather supports a more-selective use of the military. D'Agostino's second chapter, titled "The Attack on Wages and Benefits," takes on neo-liberalism and American corporate leaders. These leaders have moved jobs abroad in search of cheap labor, and in the process, have accelerated the deindustrialization of America. In chapter 3, he opposes a public school reform movement that advocates high stakes testing, anti-unionism, and teacher evaluations based on student test scores. Chapter 4, titled "The Attack on Government," refutes claims by conservative pundits and politicians that debt is solely related to profligate government spending. There is also the problem of inadequate tax revenues. These same conservatives who are against income redistribution support a tax system that favors the rich. In the remaining chapters, 5-8, he advocates a set of policy prescriptions that range from what he calls a "green New Deal" to worker-managed enterprises based on Spain's Mondragon Cooperative Corporation. He also proposes a national referendum on progressive policy proposals. "I support an exercise of national direct democracy that would put the policy and institutional reform agenda in this book to a vote of all eligible citizens in a national referendum" (pp. 163-164).

In sum, this book is a sweeping indictment of the national economy and its leadership. For D'Agostino, the current situation is so grim that it requires a middle-class revolution to reverse the economic trends. In the Preface, he states that his purpose is to provide a "tool kit for leaders and ordinary people who want to participate in that revolution" (p. xviii). Obviously, many of D'Agostino's fellow progressives will applaud his characterization of the national crisis. However, the shortcoming of this very passionate narrative is its failure to fully engage the politics of national policymaking. As I read the chapters, I kept asking myself how these proposals could navigate the maze of Congress. Could they escape amendments, loopholes, add-ons, and waivers? On reflection, it is clear that D'Agostino underestimates both the skills of those who disagree with him and their commitment to maintaining the status quo. Even if his national referendum idea could be legislated, mobilizing the middle class would require a civic engagement campaign unprecedented in American

history. D'Agostino assumes that the middle class would vote its self-interest. However, voting behavior research suggests that this is not always the case. That said, this is a readable book that explains the broad outlines of the progressives' critique and solutions for the national economic crisis. Hence, it is recommended for an undergraduate class in the politics of social movements.

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No Citizen Left Behind by Meira Levinson. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2012. 400 pp. \$29.95.

Civic engagement and democratic practices in the United States are shaped by socioeconomic disparity. Low-income voters are less likely than their middle-class neighbors to cast their votes in national, state, and local elections. Minorities are disproportionately under-represented in school boards, city councils, and other decision-making bodies. The knowledge gap on civics remains wide between students who attend inner-city schools and their peers in middle-class schools. These civic gaps tend to threaten the long-term wellbeing of a functioning democracy. As U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan expressed a sense of urgency at a White House forum on democracy in January 2012: "And it is absolutely the case that much needs to be done to reinvigorate and elevate the quality of civic learning in America."

In *No Citizen Left Behind*, Harvard education professor Meira Levinson offers a thoughtful perspective on how public schools can play a key role in addressing the civic gap. While the book is not exactly an action guide to reverse our civic decline, it provides a sound normative, analytical foundation with which school leaders and policy reformers can advance a road map to address these challenges. A central argument is that students should not only learn about citizenship, they should acquire citizenship through guided experiential learning.

From Levinson's perspective, action civics is the "gold standard." In pursuing action civics, students "do civics and behave as citizens by engaging in a cycle of research, action, and reflection about problems" that they connect to "principles of effective civic and especially political action" (p. 224). Among the examples that the book cites are the Mikva Challenge, Hyde Square Task Force, Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), and Civics in Action. Levinson also shares her eight years of teaching social studies in Atlanta and Boston to illuminate how action civics enriched student learning in the middle school. As a teaching and learning approach, guided experiential civic education involves a dynamic, virtuous feedback loop. Drawing on their reflections on civic knowledge and project learning, students are motivated to exercise their