

in local branches of national organizations from his calculations so as to capture the propensity of people to form and participate in initiatives and aggregate common interests without direction from above. Cleary and Stokes, by contrast, use self-reported membership in organizations of all kinds, including trade unions and national parties, as the basis for their assertions, and their results are therefore not directly comparable to those of Putnam. In a telling aside (p. 137), the authors note that “the only kind of association that Mar del Plata residents participated in more than people from other regions was sports clubs,” a type of association that in fact figured significantly in Putnam’s data set.

While these points of convergence (and divergence) with Putnam are intriguing and call for further examination, they also raise doubts about the appropriateness of Mexico and Argentina as the basis for generalizations about democratic performance and culture. For while Italy had certainly been marked by over two decades of fascist rule, it was, by the late 1970s, a relatively stable, consolidated democracy of over 30 years’ standing. By contrast, Mexico was just emerging from authoritarian rule in 2001–02, when Cleary and Stokes carried out their surveys. Indeed, the authors themselves admit that in 14 of Mexico’s 31 states (including one of their cases, Puebla), “it is hard to say whether the state PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party] is committed to democratic procedures” (p. 26). While Argentina had been democratic for 18 years in 2001, the surveys were conducted there during and immediately after the worst economic crisis in the country’s recent history, in an atmosphere of widespread disgust with all politicians.

Despite these shortcomings, this volume represents a significant contribution to the comparative politics and political sociology literature thanks to its attempt to test the civic culture paradigm using sophisticated quantitative methods within a Latin American context. It has also generated suggestive hypotheses concerning the relationship among economic development, the decline of clientelism, and the growth of institutional trust that deserve further exploration.

*Preferences and Situations: Points of Intersection Between Historical and Rational Choice Institutionalism.* Edited by Ira Katznelson and Barry R. Weingast. New York: Russell Sage, 2005. Pp. 345. \$45.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

Ivan Ermakoff  
*University of Wisconsin–Madison*

Edited volumes are assemblages of different kinds. As such they call for justifications and rationales. Three tightly meshed claims provide the rationale for *Preferences and Situations*, edited by Ira Katznelson and Barry R. Weingast. The first claim states that the rational choice and

historical institutionalism frameworks have been undergoing a rapprochement as a result of expanding “points of intersection” (p. 6). Rational choice pundits have turned away from the analytical practice of imputing a priori preferences to actors. Historical institutionalists for their part have started to grant greater pride of place to preferences beyond issues of constraints and structures. The volume’s second claim provides a diagnosis. These expanding points of intersection have been made possible by a renewed focus on institutions. The turn to institutional analysis has led the proponents of each approach to go beyond the confines of their initial premises. The third claim is evaluative. The move has been beneficial. “The study and understanding of preferences has been advanced by the turn to the analysis of institutions” (p. 4). The programmatic aim of the volume is therefore to focus on “the processes by which institutions in their wider historical settings induce preferences” (p. 16).

Surprisingly, this broad frame offers no detailed exposition of “rational choice institutionalism” and “historical institutionalism” (duly reified as “RCI” and “HI”). We have to assume that their axiomatic premises, core propositions, and methodological programs are obvious enough to elude the request for systematic presentation. Nor does this justifying frame provide an explicit definition of “institution.” The omission is peculiar since a well-established and well-honed definition is readily available in the literature—one that conceptualizes institutions as sets of enduring and collectively shared rules. James Johnson makes explicit mention of this definition in the chapter on the politics of enfranchisement that he wrote for this volume (p. 279). Even more intriguing, this frame at times conflates “institutions” with “actors” (p. 8: “Preferences are now treated as those of persons in interaction with other actors, in particular institutions”) and with situations (p. 12: “the analysis works best when the particularities of situations—that is, the institutions within which interactions and choice take place—are very well specified”).

The definitional issue is less trivial than it may seem at first sight, for it conditions the relevance of the claim about the significance of the “institutional turn.” Under the sweep of a broad or unspecified definition, anything goes. That is, when we equate institutions with actors, situations, or contexts writ large, then any contextual analysis can be deemed to be “institutional” and any preference can be deemed to be endogenous to the institutional context provided that this context has been sketched in terms broad enough. If so, the value added by an institutional analysis remains unclear. The reference to institutions as such has little discretionary power.

If to parry this drawback we adopt the narrower and more standard definition of institutions as enduring sets of rules and if we heed to the call for greater specificity (see the quote above), two observations about the volume stand out. First, the individual chapters provide very little institutional analysis in the sense of detailed descriptions of resilient arrangements and procedures over time. Second, with the exception of Katznelson’s account of Edward I’s decision to expel the Jews (1290)—which

Katznelson analyzes as a *quid pro quo* with the great magnates in an institutional context marked by the latter's greater political capacity (pp. 112–21)—the causal pattern documented by these case studies is not the one postulated in the introductory chapter. The flow of causal influence does not go from institutions to preferences. Rather, it goes from events to preferences and from preferences to institutions.

Three chapters view the impact and interpretation of events as causally decisive. In these accounts, events elude the grip of institutions. Peter A. Hall describes speculative pressures, U.S. policy decisions, and the collapse of the Communist regime in Eastern Europe as key to French and German officials' decision to commit themselves to monetary union at the turn of the 1990s (pp. 143–47). Richard Bensele argues that at the 1896 Democratic national convention William Jennings Bryan moved from the status of an underdog to that of a formidable candidate thanks to his oratory skills in a context marked by polarization and intense strategizing (pp. 43–44). Barry Weingast analyzes colonial American moderates' switching sides and supporting the revolution in response to several British policies (the Declaratory Act of 1766, the decision to maintain a huge army in the colony, and the Coercion Acts of 1774), giving credence to the idea of Britain's malevolence (pp. 176–77).

Beyond events and their contingency, the brunt of the explanation rests on the shoulders of preferences taking shape outside the realm of specific institutional settings. Sifting through different possible mechanisms of preference change, David Brady, John Ferejohn, and Jeremy Pope relate the support for civil rights legislation among congressional representatives to extrainstitutional political developments. Charles M. Cameron models the allocation of judicial authority between Congress and the Supreme Court by reference to shifting structural costs and ideological preferences, for instance relating to slavery (pp. 195–206). Contrasting the International Longshore and Warehouse Union under Harry Bridges with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters under James R. Hoffa, Margaret Levi portrays unions' organizational cultures as bearing the mark of their leaders' managerial styles (pp. 226–38). Jon Elster lists three categories of preferences at work in the implementation of transitional justice (pp. 250–65). James Johnson addresses the issue of franchise extensions in the United States by construing them as the unintended by-product of partisan conflicts (pp. 288–93). James Mahoney relates the adoption of radical versus reform policy options among Central America liberal presidents to the "utilities" and "subjective assessments of outcomes" (p. 320, p. 329).

Indirectly, this volume shows how arduous and challenging the task of identifying contextual parameters and conditional factors is, if the goal is to provide accounts that are specific enough to lend themselves to, and inform, sound theoretical claims. As the editors rightly underscore, we need greater specificity both with regard to the evidence we gather and the claims we elaborate. In this regard, the chapter that concludes the volume is very peculiar: falling back on ad hoc assumptions, imputed

preferences presented as if they were empirically documented, and vague theoretical assertions that, because of their vagueness and at times circular character, can never be properly pinned down, this last chapter is strikingly at odds with the programmatic recommendations laid out by the editors of this volume.

*The Making of a Human Bomb: Ethnography of Palestinian Resistance.* By Nasser Abufarha. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2009. Pp. 239. \$84.95 (cloth); \$23.95 (paper).

Albert J. Bergesen  
*University of Arizona*

*The Making of a Human Bomb* by Nasser Abufarha is required reading, for it links the 21st century's leading sociological perspective (culture) with the new century's quintessential form of political violence (suicide bombers, or SBs). Present explanations of bombing focus more on strategy, rational choice, and instrumentalism (SBs kill more per attack than other forms of aggression, making theirs a rational strategy; suicide bombing is a weapon of the weak, etc.), organizations (recruitment dynamics), network analysis (friendship cliques), and so forth. When cultural or constructionist frames are employed they are more about "terrorism," the label applied to the action by the powers that be, but not the habitus-related outlook of human bombers themselves. While sociology regularly plunges into the habitus-related outlooks of all sorts of resisting or reacting political actors, there remains a void when it comes to the study of the worldview of those who sacrifice themselves as human bombs. Hence the importance of grappling with the arguments put forward by Abufarha, a Palestinian anthropologist who collected data on 213 Palestinian operations during the 2001–2004 period, of which 80 were "Martyrdom Operations," where "mission carriers exploded themselves along with their targets" and the other 133 were "self-sacrifice operations. . . . armed attacks where the chances of surviving were close to zero . . . or with the express purpose of fighting until death" (p. 18).

In thinking about these distinctions I am reminded of Noam Chomsky on B. F. Skinner. As a linguist, Chomsky knew the intricate complexity of linguistic structure and exposed Skinner's coarse characterization. So too with Abufarha and what we call *suicide terrorism*. He suggests it is not a single phenomenon. There is the "no-escape operation . . . a military operation from which participants have virtually no chance of returning alive," and includes early Palestinian "cross-border no-escape operations launched from Jordan," assassins of the 12th century, and "Jewish Zealots of the first century, who carried out no-escape operations against Romans in Jerusalem" (p. 188). Here you die at the hands of your enemy. Next is an operation with self-sacrifice, dying by your own hand, but in order to