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Book review

***Lotteries in Public Life: A Reader*, by Peter Stone (ed.), Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2011. 262pp., £14.95, ISBN 9 781845 402082**

Nenad Stojanovic, University of Zurich

In recent years political theorists have become increasingly interested in lotteries as a tool for decision making or the selection of public officials. Ultimately, however, this topic remains rather marginal in the political science literature, as well as in real-world institutions (with the possible exception of the accounts of deliberative democracy and citizens' juries). Against this background, the collection of essays under review represents a helpful effort to provide theoretical underpinnings for future research. Its editor, Peter Stone, claims that his anthology includes 'every significant theoretical paper on lotteries published in English between 1959 and 1998' (p. 2).

The essays can be divided into three main categories. The first set of authors tackle the question of 'what is lottery?' (in chronological order: Sher, Kornhauser and Sager, and Wasserman). The second group is interested in the assignment of political office by lot (Mueller *et al.*, Mulgan, Engelstad and Knag). Finally, a number of authors focus upon the random allocation of goods (Wofle, Greely, Goodwin, Eckhoff, Hofstee and Broome). These papers are preceded by a thoughtful and extremely useful road map (the editor's introduction), as well as by an article published in 1959 by Swedish sociologist Vilhelm Aubert (ch. 1). According to Stone, Aubert was the first author to tackle the topic from a theoretical perspective since Thomas Gataker's *Of the Nature and Use of Lots* (1619).

Any scholar interested in random selection in public life should have this reader in their library. Apart from the theoretical insights, especially with regard to the relationship between lotteries and theories of justice, it contains insightful examples from the use of lotteries in the past (in places such as ancient Greece, medieval Italian republics and Swiss cantons) and references to key authors (e.g. Aristotle, Montesquieu, Rousseau and Dahl).

The main limitation of the book is inherent in its declared focus upon papers published in English only. The risk is that significant theoretical insights in other languages are ignored.<sup>1</sup> Finally, it is a pity that this volume, especially with respect to its declared scope as 'a reader', does not provide an index of authors and key concepts, or a handy overview of the cited literature at the end of the book.

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Note

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., H. Buchstein, *Demokratie und Lotterie*, 2009 ; F. Cordano and C. Grottanelli (eds), *Sorteggio pubblico e cleromanzia dall'antichità all'età moderna*, 2001 ; and Y. Sintomer, *Petite histoire de l'expérimentation démocratique: Tirage au sort et politique d'Athènes à nos jours*, 2011.