

Dans le chapitre 9, l'auteur présente plus en détail le projet de loi n°39 du gouvernement et y dénonce certaines zones grises. Selon lui, le mode de scrutin mixte compensatoire régional qui y est proposé serait une solution, mais le projet gouvernemental n'irait pas assez loin. Par exemple, la division du territoire en 17 régions électorales ne ferait selon l'auteur que renforcer la place des partis dominants dans les régions administratives peu peuplées.

Dans l'ensemble, l'auteur brosse dans son analyse historique un portrait rationaliste des dirigeants politiques en soutenant que « les gouvernements québécois n'ont jamais modifié le scrutin majoritaire uninominal à un tour parce que cela n'était tout simplement pas dans leur intérêt de le faire » (p. 327).

L'ouvrage atteint d'autre part les objectifs annoncés. Bien rédigé et accessible, le lecteur peut comprendre le fonctionnement et les effets découlant du scrutin majoritaire uninominal à un tour. En outre, l'analyse que fait l'auteur permet de mieux comprendre les enjeux sous-jacents du processus de réforme électorale en cours sous le gouvernement Legault.

La principale force de ce livre est que Julien Verville se base sur des données originales et inédites. Originales par son travail de recherche historique des réformes électorales se basant sur les Mémoires des délibérations du Conseil exécutif, sur le Centre d'archives de la Bibliothèque, et sur les Archives nationales du Québec. Inédites également puisque l'auteur s'aide d'une demande d'information faite à Election Québec qui permet au lecteur d'accéder à des informations qui n'avaient pas encore été publiées et qui portent sur le processus de réforme du gouvernement Legault.

En revanche, lorsque l'auteur soutient que l'intérêt partisan crée des dissensions au sein des partis gouvernementaux et que cela engendre généralement un abandon de la réforme électorale, cela induit que l'avenir des réformes se joueraient principalement au sein des caucus. Or, le caractère secret du caucus ne permet pas de rendre tout à fait compte de ces dissensions. Si l'auteur parvient à prouver l'existence et l'influence qu'ont pu avoir les désaccords internes des anciens gouvernements sur les processus de réformes à l'aide de déclarations ou par des entretiens, cet exercice est moins évident pour l'analyse du projet n°39 : difficile d'entrer dans les coulisses d'une réforme encore en cours.

Finalement, ce livre est un incontournable pour les personnes désireuses de mieux comprendre le processus de réformes du mode de scrutin au Québec et invite spécialistes et autres citoyens à se (re)saisir du sujet. De plus, l'ouvrage s'inscrit dans un contexte de déficit démocratique et de crise de légitimité qui justifie encore davantage l'intérêt d'étudier les tenants et aboutissants des règles électorales. Ce livre arrive à point nommé pour participer à la discussion collective qui s'accroîtra d'ici le 3 octobre 2022, date à laquelle est normalement prévue le référendum québécois sur la réforme du mode de scrutin.

## The Motivation to Vote: Explaining Electoral Participation

André Blais and Jean-François Daoust, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2020, pp. 156.

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About half or more of the eligible voters typically participate in national elections in established democracies. Millions of citizens vote, even though the odds their ballot will decide the outcome is vanishingly small. What sustains voter participation is, upon reflection, not obvious.

During a career of pioneering work, André Blais has studied the decision to vote from a variety of angles. Among his many contributions, Blais has shown in previous work that variation in beliefs about the odds of casting a decisive ballot—the main focus of the classical version of the rational theory of voting—has only a modest influence on participation (Blais, 2000). In his illuminating and well-crafted new book *The Motivation to Vote*, Blais and co-author Jean-François Daoust demonstrate the importance of four individual-level factors on electoral participation: a voter's level of political interest, civic duty, the perceived ease of voting and how much the voter cares about a particular election. The first two factors are enduring individual predispositions that are shaped early in life, while the latter two are election-specific considerations. The book draws on the highly ambitious Making Electoral Democracy Work (MEDW) survey project and reports the results from surveys conducted in five countries over 24 elections between 2011 and 2015. The main analysis is based on the 26,000 interviews conducted prior to these elections.

Although all four of the factors studied by Blais and Daoust predict the decision to vote, Blais and Daoust report that the individual's level of political interest and civic duty are much more important than election-specific factors. As they write, "Our claim is that these two basic predispositions, one's level of interest in politics and one's feeling that voting is or is not a moral obligation, are the two most powerful individual-level determinants of the decision to vote or abstain. Because these predispositions are stable, there is strong stability in the propensity to vote" (103). This important finding suggests that scholars should devote greater attention to investigating how the enduring psychological commitment to voting develops and what the root causes are of political interest and a sense of civic duty.

Even the best datasets have limitations, and the excellent MEDW surveys are no exception. One concern is how the key variables are operationalized and measured. The survey item used to measure political interest, which is intended to capture an enduring individual predisposition to like politics, is the response to a single question about interest in "the current federal election." The variable measuring how much the individual cares about the current election, which is used to distinguish the predisposition of political interest from how much the individual cares about the current election, asks how much the individual cares about "which party will form the government after the election." The relatively large effect of "political interest" on turnout reported in the analysis is the turnout boost measured in models without the "care" variable, while the impact of "care" is measured as the incremental effect once the variable "interest" is included in the model. This approach to distinguishing the effect of long-standing "interest" from that of caring about the particular election is well justified under a theoretical model in which the individual's political interest is fixed prior to the current election and if the relevant constructs are well measured.

More generally, the observed stability of an aggregate outcome variable like turnout or vote share may be due to either the insensitivity of individual behaviour to the current political context or due to the relative stability of contextual influences acting on the individual. The latter would suggest that factors proximate to the election can generate a substantial change in outcomes if the context shifts in significant ways. The recent US political experience, in which the 2018 midterm election turnout climbed to 50 per cent (up from 40 per cent in recent prior midterms), while the 2020 general election turnout increased to 67 per cent, a level not seen in over a century, provides suggestive evidence that contextual factors can be quite important. Although contextual effects appear relatively modest in the sample of elections studied by Blais and Daoust, such effects may be large and politically important at other times.

Blais and Daoust's work suggests the importance of gaining a better understanding of how the incentives of political elites and the structure of political competition shape the context in which citizens develop and maintain an enduring individual-level attachment to voting. Many once-popular activities that seemed rock solid, including church attendance and watching the

World Series, have shown serious participation declines in recent years, but voting remains strong. This could be the good fortune of democracy. Alternatively, the fact that voting has not gone out of fashion may reflect the strategic interests of politicians, parties and groups in increasing voter engagement through emotionally engaging issues or enhanced mobilization. If interest in voting fell, then elites would find that they would need to mobilize fewer voters to gain power. This would provide a strong incentive to search for ways to motivate supporters to vote, and we might see individual-level attitudes about voting change in response to these mobilization efforts.

Overall, Blais and Daoust have produced a major contribution to our understanding of voter turnout. Their book suggests many avenues for future research and should be read by all scholars of voting and political behaviour.

## Reference

Blais, André. 2000. *To Vote or Not to Vote: The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

## The Death of Asylum: Hidden Geographies of the Enforcement Archipelago Alison Mountz, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2020, pp. 295.

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Starting an analysis of asylum with asylum's obituary is nothing short of bold. So begins Alison Mountz's compelling text, *The Death of Asylum: Hidden Geographies of the Enforcement Archipelago*. Tracing the paths of migrants and the intensification of states' border games, Mountz critically analyzes the aggressive offshore enforcement of anti-immigrant policies. Methodically unpacking state policies that increasingly utilize forms of remote interdiction and detention in what Mountz refers to as an "Island Archipelago" of bordering practices, Mountz also sheds light on racism, xenophobia and the state of exception, which are now constants in this "architecture of enmity" that dominates contemporary asylum. An essential contribution to a growing conversation within the literature on the unabashedly racist, xenophobic and exceptional power of the state increasingly marshalled in anti-immigrant fervour—a conversation that also includes contributions such as Harsha Walia's (2021) *Border and Rule*, Todd Miller's (2021) *Build Bridges, Not Walls* and Reece Jones's (2021) *White Borders*—Mountz's careful, critical analysis provides a welcome intervention. If Walia's *Border and Rule* accounts for *why* states have pursued racist, exclusionary and exceptional policies toward migrants and refugees, then Mountz advances a compelling analysis of *how* contemporary states effectively mobilize this to disastrous effect.

Scrutinizing a range of case studies, including Australia, Canada, the EU and the US, Mountz tackles how, despite the futility of fences and the prevalence of international agreements and norms of hospitality, states manage to harden their borders to migrants. Grappling with this "futility of fences" and the strange simultaneous proliferation of border walls, Mountz engages in a genealogy of the sovereign state's externalization of bordering practices. Here, Mountz describes "the complex interplay between hypervisible, spectacular infrastructures of enforcement and that which is hidden from view, the more insidious forms of violence at work beneath the surface" (13). Simply put, Mountz exposes how states, through