

the reforming content of the religion(s) of liberty that Viroli celebrates and the use of religious sentiments in politics generally. Moreover, in spite of all that this history covers, Viroli's argument doesn't confront the historical evidence of what happens when reformers who fight for a religion of liberty gain power. Viroli laments that the religion of liberty has always faded away, but he does not here consider the potentially negative consequences of a world where the reformer's zealous spirit becomes a lasting, dominant voice, or where these enthusiasts compete amongst themselves for the title of most holy or patriotic. To do that may have required him to reach beyond Italy and again to the question of the dangerous patriot; he might have gone down this road had he more than marked the differences between what were, after all, the religions of liberty. In general, however, the book is a very welcome addition to ongoing debates and will remind readers of a strand of Italian history deserving of attention.

**Art in Public: Politics, Economics, and a Democratic Culture.** By Lambert Zuidervaart. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 354p. \$92.00 cloth, \$29.99 paper.  
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— Donna M. Binkiewicz, *California State University, Long Beach*

Lambert Zuidervaart is a philosopher as well as a former president of the Urban Institute of Contemporary Arts. His previous publications have taken up Theodore W. Adorno's aesthetic theory and the conceptualization of artistic truth. In this latest book, Zuidervaart offers a highly philosophical and theoretical justification for government support for the arts. He proposes that the arts foster critical and creative communication that is essential to a properly functioning democratic culture and social economy. Zuidervaart concludes, "Direct state subsidies for the arts are warranted on the basis of both public justice and societal need" (p. 310).

The text begins in a familiar time and place by addressing the culture wars of the 1990s. Zuidervaart states that debates about government funding for the arts have been mired in "three conceptual polarities" (p. 5). The first is the conflict between advocating government support for the arts and relying on a free market system. The second is that between free expression and traditional values. The third is the tension between a view of the arts as questioning the status quo and one that sees the arts as ushering in a breakdown of societal norms. The author claims that such arguments bypass important philosophical issues and contribute to a deficit in culture and democracy (p. 17).

Zuidervaart then proceeds to examine the existing philosophical and theoretical frameworks of these debates. It is beyond the scope of this review to detail his intricate analysis of the literature regarding the arts in economic, political, and modernist theory. To provide a brief overview: The author examines the economic theories of Ruth

Towse, John O'Hagen, Russell Keat, and David Throsby. Zuidervaart proposes moving the economic discussion beyond their focus on benefits and merits of the arts and beyond the tendency to pit state subsidies for the arts against free market forces. He calls for recognition of a "three-sector economy" that includes a civic sector (p. 47). He analyzes political theorists Joel Feinberg, John Rawls, and Ronald Dworkin, who he believes ignore the socio-cultural character of art and make art dependent upon only economic and political considerations. He also points to David Schwartz as one theorist who provides a better analogy between enhancing the arts and democratic education. Still, Zuidervaart argues instead for a concept of the arts as essential to public justice and for the *relational* autonomy of the arts (p. 69). Zuidervaart's assessments are impressive. He clearly dissects a wide range of texts and proposes his own theoretical frameworks, which he acknowledges are most indebted to the ideas of Adorno and Jürgen Habermas.

Discussions of economic, political, and aesthetic theories remain highly abstract throughout this book. Aside from a brief mention of the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts and its artists' and administrators' collaborations with the public and local government in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the section where Zuidervaart examines a stronger connection between theory and any practical application of these ideas is in his discussion of feminist theory and new genre public art. He considers Nancy Fraser, Seyla Benhabib, and Suzanne Lacy, and notes the element of engagement in their work. New genre public art aims at social intervention, and its artists question "modernist notions of authenticity in favor of a new emphasis on social responsibility" (p. 251).

The main concepts Zuidervaart advances are those of a civic sector, *relational* autonomy of the arts, authenticity, and social responsibility—the realization of which will advance a truly democratic culture and society. He defines civic sector as "an economic zone of nonprofit mutual benefit, and non-governmental organizations" (p. 132). He argues that theories of nonprofits as a result of "government failure and contract failure" "assume the factual and normative primacy of the proprietary market. To my mind this is a fatal flaw" (p. 142). Rather, "solidarity . . . [is] the primary societal principle governing civil society and the public sphere" (p. 147) and the civic sector must include this social economic basis. Government should support arts in public because they constitute a sociocultural good: Artists often challenge money and power and strengthen the fabric of civil society; thus, they need support to keep them independent of the economic system as well as the administrative state. Zuidervaart asserts that the place for the arts lies in the civic sector. However, his concept of relational autonomy proposes an interface between art in civil society and the economic and political systems (rather than arts maintaining individual or

art-internal autonomy). Authenticity is the expectation that artists create original works, yet social responsibility demands more—that artists should be not only trustworthy in their task but also responsive to society, for they are members of a larger community (p. 303).

Ultimately, Zuidervaart believes government must support the arts to achieve not merely a formally political democratic state, but a “democratic society” in which, “resources everyone needs in order to flourish . . . do not continually flow into the private coffers of the most wealthy and powerful . . . a society where the norms of participation, recognition, and freedom prevail in the institutions

and organizations . . . [where] people would enjoy justice, resourcefulness, and solidarity across the entire range of their social lives” (pp. 315–16). This is a very tall order, indeed, and one not likely attainable in the present. The goal is so lofty, it distracts from acceptance of his arguments. I hoped for more concrete examples of how his theories might play out. However, Zuidervaart insists such a “fully democratic society” is worthy of our imagination. It is hard to take issue with that vision. While Zuidervaart’s work remains essentially theoretical, it is a substantial scholarly monograph advancing the philosophy of art in public.

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## AMERICAN POLITICS

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**Abortion Politics in Congress: Strategic Incrementalism and Policy Change.** By Scott H. Ainsworth and Thad E. Hall. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 240p. \$85.00 cloth, \$26.99 paper.  
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— Chris Den Hartog, *California Polytechnic State University*

Abortion stirs heated passions among many US citizens and legislators; moreover, many people think of it as an all-or-nothing issue on which there is little middle ground. So it is all the more surprising that members of the US House of Representatives tend systematically to support incremental, rather than major, changes in federal abortion policy. This is the puzzle at the heart of Scott H. Ainsworth and Thad E. Hall’s significant book about the making of abortion policy in Congress.

The authors’ solution to the puzzle centers on a theory of legislative decision making that predicts that House members who care about changing abortion policy will tend to support incremental changes as a strategic response to the constraints and incentives they face. (Of course, representatives sometimes offer bills that propose non-incremental changes for symbolic reasons, knowing that the bills have no chance of passage; Ainsworth and Hall note this but are interested in genuine attempts to change policy.)

Factors inside and outside of the House cause this “strategic incrementalism.” The internal factors consist of the imposing legislative hurdles to be overcome if any bill is to become law. The thrust of this part of the theory is that enacting any new law is extremely difficult and incremental proposals have a better chance of passage than non-incremental proposals: Incremental changes are generally acceptable to more legislators than are proposals to adopt larger policy changes and are also less likely to generate serious legislative opposition. An incremental proposal thus has a better chance of successfully navigating the committee, party, and separation-of powers obstacle course of the

legislative process. The external factors have to do with pleasing constituents in order to be reelected. The authors posit that for a variety of reasons (discussed later), incremental proposals are more likely than nonincremental proposals to bolster legislators’ reelection chances. A House member who wants to change policy thus has a strong incentive to propose moderate changes.

*Abortion Politics in Congress* is methodologically diverse. Its theory is grounded in congressional literature but also draws from other disciplines; it uses insights from formal legislative models, but merges them in an innovative manner with ideas not typically incorporated into formal models. The book also includes an array of qualitative and quantitative evidence to support the theory and to help make sense of abortion policymaking.

One consequence is that the book works on a number of levels and offers something for many different audiences. It is a nice, accessible primer on the history of abortion policy and politics in the United States, including the history of abortion legislation in Congress. It is also an introduction to the procedural and electoral imperatives that shape congressional behavior generally—and it is a case study of congressional policymaking on a deeply contentious issue.

Readers with strongly held beliefs about abortion or who are otherwise interested in the issue, but who are not very familiar with Congress, will likely come away with a deeper understanding of why Congress tends to adopt incremental policy and perhaps also with a greater appreciation for the systemic reasons why even committed pro-life and pro-choice legislators have strong incentives to support incremental policy changes. Many people have a limited understanding of Congress and experience frustration when it produces incremental policy changes that fall short of expectations. Anecdotally, it seems that people often blame such shortcomings on the individuals serving in Congress at that moment. One lesson of this book is that such shortcomings are less a function of individual congresspersons and more a function of their environment than is often supposed.