

*Jack Birner*

**The Quiet Revolution in Dutch Politics. How Economics Changed the Norms for Dutch Electoral Programs**

For a long time, The Netherlands was the only country in the world where political parties voluntarily submitted their election programs to an economic and econometric audit by an independent agency, which evaluates the internal consistency of the programs and their expected economic effects. This tradition has gradually evolved over a period of more than 40 years and it has profoundly changed the behavior of political parties and improved the quality of Dutch democracy. The article tells the story of how this tradition established itself. It then gives an explanation of how it could arise in The Netherlands after the Second World War. The explanation involves the central position of Jan Tinbergen in Dutch economics and in the institutional environment of the Dutch economy, the political concertation or polder model, the independent and critical press, and exogenous economic developments. The final part argues that the lessons from the Dutch experiment may be used for trying to introduce the habit of imposing a minimum of financial and economic discipline on electoral programs in Italy.

*Gabriele Giacomini*

**From Rousseau to rousseau.it. The Ideal of Direct Democracy (through Digital Technologies) and its (in)Feasibility**

The crisis of representation and the innovations of ICT have given new life to the ideal of direct democracy and to its modern creator, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau, in Italy, is often evoked by the “5 Star Movement” digital party. In fact, the Movement called its participation platform “Rousseau”, named after

the philosopher. The reference is not accidental, and the analogies between the Rousseau's political philosophy and the identity elements of M5S will be underlined. Generally speaking, the digital party aims at combining, through ICT, referendum and participatory/deliberative methods. However, this project faces some difficulties. This article makes one claim: that Rousseauian ideal through digital technologies, as pursued by parties like the M5S, has unwanted effects: it does not respect the cognitive and social characteristics of the human being and it can decrease the quality of the decision-making outputs. On the contrary, the forms of representativeness are preferable because, at the same time, they allow citizens to participate without asking them for excessively burdensome tasks and promote methods of mediation, decantation and elaboration.

*Francesca Graziani, Annachiara Rotondo*

### **The Right to the Truth; an Emergent Right in International Law?**

The right to the truth, i.e. the right of victims of gross violations and of their families as well as of the society as a whole to know the full and complete truth about the circumstances surrounding serious violations, has emerged as a key priority in the agenda of United Nations and of regional Organizations. In this context, the right to the truth is commonly understood as a general principle of international human rights law and, specifically, as an autonomous, independent and inalienable right. However, international practice and jurisprudence (Inter-American Court of Human Rights and European Court of Human Rights) hardly support this conclusion as well as the existence of a right to the truth in customary international law.

This paper aims at demonstrating that the “right to the truth” does not seem to be conceived as a right *strictu sensu* in international human rights law but rather as an emphatic formula gathering other fundamental rights.

*Pietro Maffettone, Gaetano Vecchione*

### **Institutional choices and the economic determinants of populism**

A spectre is haunting the Western world, the spectre of populism. What do events like Brexit in 2016, the election of Trump in the same year, Syriza and Golden Dawn in Greece, Podemos in Spain, and the growth of right wing movements like the Front National in France, or Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, and in Scandinavia etc. have in common? In the paper we argue that some of their shared and deep roots lie in the functioning of economic institutions over the past forty years. We shall pay particular attention to the distribution of the

burdens and benefits created by global economic integration and by the latest wave of technological change. In addition, we shall claim that a further element that can explain populists' success in Western countries is closely related to the economic policy measures adopted by several Western governments over the past four decades. We shall briefly outline two such policy regimes, namely, the debt driven consumption boom in the US and the resort to the theory (and associated policy measures) of 'expansionary austerity' in Europe. Our claim is that the failure of the latter policy regimes has contributed to magnify the distributive impact of global economic integration and technological change and has thus favoured the emergence of populist movements.

*Costanza Marcellino*

### **What does Neorealism Imply for Transatlantic Security Relations?**

Ever since its establishment, neorealism has been regarded as one of the most influential approaches to international security relations and a benchmark for following theoretical paradigms. Yet, several neoliberal institutionalists and neo-classical realists have called into question the validity of neorealist predictions concerning transatlantic security relations, underlining the continued existence of NATO and the excessively overlooked salience of domestic variables on states' foreign policy as inconsistencies of neorealism. In order to reply to these contradictions, this article addresses the question: "Which special contribute does neorealism give with its predictions and explanations to the subject of transatlantic (EU-US) security relations?". By taking into consideration the evolution of NATO and EU-US relations, the article conducts a historical analysis of three main periods: the post-cold war era, the Bosnian, Kosovo and Iraq wars and finally the latest 21st century developments characterized by a further fragmentation of the international system and a re-nationalization of Europe. Through this analysis, the research ultimately assesses the special contribute the neorealist account provide to EU-US occurrences, highlights the credibility of its paradigm versus other international relations theories, and fulfils the gap of systematic knowledge around neorealism applicability to international relations developments. The findings of this analysis based on the post-cold war emergence of new actors within the international system, NATO's revised approach and the widening rift between the two Continents show a faithful match between neorealist explanations and the historical path EU-US relations have undertaken, undermining the explanatory power of the critiques of other international relations theories' narratives.

