IN MEMORIAM: PROFESSOR ALAN ZUCKERMAN, 1945–2009

Alan Zuckerman, Professor of Political Science at Brown University for almost forty years, passed away 20 August 2009. Zuckerman was an exemplary scholar—intellectual, passionate, curious, creative, relentless, and demanding. He was a true comparativist, who not only used the comparative method but defined and refined the analytical principles of comparative politics. He knew how to ask the big theoretical questions while also producing outstanding and diverse country-specific scholarship. His first book, stemming from his Princeton dissertation, *The Politics of Faction: Christian Democratic Rule in Italy* (Yale University Press, 1979) is a classic example of the latter. His *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, co-edited with Mark Lichbach (Cambridge University Press 1997 [2nd ed. 2009]) exemplifies his “appreciation for grand questions of politics encased in theory and method” (2009: xv). This book advocates the combination of important questions and theoretically informed research applying the most appropriate methods, the signature of Zuckerman’s scholarship. As a matter of fact, Alan Zuckerman is just about the only political scientist I know who was trained in the qualitative case study approach tradition, but learned sophisticated quantitative techniques on his own, once he realized they were the appropriate tools for his theoretical concerns.

His book with Josip Dasović and Jennifer Fitzgerald, *Partisan Families: the Social Logic of Bounded Partisanship in Germany and Britain* (Cambridge University Press 2007), is a superb manifestation of such an application. Substantively, it brings the social context back into the study of party identification and vote choice, where political psychology and economic rational choice theories have taken over the field. The book was the winner of the International Society of Political Psychology’s Alexander George Award for the best book published in 2007, even though it puts political sociology above psychological (and economic) perspectives to political preferences and decisions. It places social context, networks, and socialization at the center of political choice. Applying sophisticated statistical models to panel data from extensive German and British household surveys that span many years, the book establishes that partisan choices are made in the context of immediate social circles, in particular the family, resulting in bounded partisanship.

Being sensitive to context, Zuckerman was interested in expanding this research to Israel, assuming that multicultural and multiparty Israel will produce different

findings. Unfortunately his illness cut short his preliminary explorations, but this is definitely a worthwhile research project to pursue and sure to enhance our understanding of how political views are acquired, how partisanship is established, and how political change occurs.

Alan Zuckerman's work includes theoretical and conceptual treatises and empirical studies in various contexts: Italy early on, Germany and Britain recently, Israel and Jews at various junctures of his career. His studies on Israel and on Jews were always motivated by the big theoretical questions that interested him, but still left their mark within the fields of Israel studies and Jewish studies. His book with Calvin Goldscheider, *The Transformation of the Jews* (University of Chicago Press, 1984, 2nd. Ed. 1986) is an excellent example of this, showing the impact of modernization on Jewish cohesion in general terms of social structural characteristics. Similarly, his challenging work on the (in)stability of the vote in Israel and on the social and political sources of party activism in Israel were novel and extremely valuable.

His interest in Israel was of course not only academic. He was Jewish with all his heart and mind, and no less Zionist. He was an orthodox practicing Jew, yet liberal and open-minded. He was American but seriously considered making aliyah at different points in his life. He spent several years in Israel, forging scholarly ties and making friends at Tel Aviv University and at the Hebrew University. He was a colleague and friend to many of us, teacher and mentor to many others in the discipline. He died of cancer only a few months after its detection. He was surrounded by his loving family, at peace with his untimely passing. We understand him, ourselves, and politics better due to his example, his humanity, and his scholarship.

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