the philosophies of social science, and social science more generally, have moved away from simplistic positivist conceptions of social change to draw upon post-positivist ontologies and epistemologies.

This aim is pursued throughout the twenty-odd chapters, totaling almost 700 pages, with reference to five main themes, grouped into discrete though overlapping parts. The first part covers issues of causality, including 'mechanisms', 'process-tracing' and 'complexity'. All these discussions avoid the traditional positivist position of there being an eternal law of causality which science can 'discover'. The second part discusses issues surrounding 'evidence'. This includes 'Duhem's view' 'of there being multiple ways to measure aspects of theories' (p. 12), the use of 'Bayesian statistics', 'randomised control tests' and the role of 'computational models'. All these attempt to move away from the contention that it is only possible to achieve an evidential basis for research through pure logical consistency. The third part moves to discussions of 'culture, norms, and sociality', including 'methodological individualism', 'behavioural regularities', 'human intelligence' linked with the 'evolutionary programme' and the 'biological notion of race'. These aim to demonstrate how philosophy and science are intimately linked, and how there is no objective position from which to produce knowledge. The fourth part focuses on the 'sociology of knowledge', which includes 'feminist comparative politics', 'mental illness' and the use of sociological factors in assessing 'scientific standards' of various research outputs. The final part focuses on 'normative issues', including discussions on 'political philosophy', 'mental health outcomes' and 'well-being'.

While this volume presents an extensive range of topics, they are narrowly conceived in their approach. For instance, the discussion of feminism goes to great lengths to deny the virtues of a constructivist version, let alone with any reference to more politically radical versions, de-limiting the parameters of what is taken to be acceptable philosophy of social science. It is hard then to consider this book to be pursuing a post-positivist direction, as advertised; rather it is one more concerned with tracing the developments away from a vulgar to a more nuanced positivism.

Jamie Jordan
(University of Nottingham)

Democratic Reason: Politics, Collective Intelligence and the Rule of the Many by **Hélène Landemore.** Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013. 279pp., £27.95, ISBN 978 0 691 15565 4

Pluralism, Democracy and Political Knowledge: Robert A. Dahl and His Critics on Modern Politics by **Hans Blokland.** Farnham: Ashgate, 2011. 374pp., £65.00, ISBN 978 1 4094 2931 9

Hélène Landemore's book contests the widespread view according to which small groups and/or a single expert are supposed to make wiser decisions than large groups. On the contrary, she argues that, under conditions of appropriate deliberation and through a sound use of majority rule, democratic decision procedures are likely to achieve more efficient outcomes than any other kind of undemocratic decision procedure. Not only does Landemore defend the applicability of the 'collective intelligence' hypothesis to contemporary mass democracies, she also supports 'a strong version of the epistemic argument' for democratic regimes (p. 3). Her main argument is that democracy tends to be 'epistemically smarter' (p. 2) than the rule either of the few or of a paternalistic dictator. She clearly makes the point that traditional and recently advanced arguments against majority rule and collective intelligence derive from the pre-commitment to methodological individualism that is typical of mainstream political science and its notion of reason as autonomy. At the same time, she pinpoints the procedural view of democracy that grounds the common diffidence towards any form of citizens' expertise (à la Dewey): in the vein of David Estlund's work on democratic authority, Landemore aims at rehabilitating the idea that, for democratic decisions to be fully legitimate and justified, their descending from a set of supposedly neutral and a priori established procedures is not enough.

According to Landemore, democracy must also rely upon citizens' deliberation in order to make the process of decision making more respectful towards those who are directly affected by it and also to get the most out of the different skills inevitably pertaining to large groups. This is exactly what she means by 'democratic reason' – a kind of intelligence that goes beyond the mere aggregation of individual expertise. After having outlined the common prejudice of philosophers and theorists against 'the rule of the dumb many' (p. 24), Landemore first traces a historical and selective

genealogy of the epistemic argument for democracy (from Protagoras to Hayek). She then examines two complementary mechanisms of democratic reasons (inclusive deliberation and majority rule) and their respective fallacies, both empirical and theoretical. Finally, she offers a defence of 'political cognitivism' – i.e. the belief in a procedure-independent standard of correctness in political decision-making – and develops a conceptualisation of institutions and norms as 'cognitive artifacts' embodying the collective intelligence of the people distributed across space and time. This fascinating book discloses path-breaking perspectives for democratic theorists as it develops James Surowiecki's argument for the 'wisdom of crowds' by combining political theory with the outcomes of recent research in evolutionary psychology and applying the appreciation for the role of cognitive diversity to the case of democratic decision making.

Hans Blokland's book provides a highly needed critical and chronological reassessment of the development of the political theory of pluralism. Moving from a systematic analysis of the work by Robert Dahl (and partially by Charles E. Lindblom) between the 1930s and the 1970s, the author offers a historical account of one of the most dominant paradigms in twentieth-century post-war political science. Yet Blokland's narrative relies upon two closely interconnected arguments: on the one hand, he argues that pluralism is a pre-eminent articulation of the threefold process of modernisation (differentiation, individualisation and rationalisation) that has shaped Western political orders in the second half of the last century; on the other, he urges contemporary democratic theorists to engage critically with the core assumptions of the theory of pluralism in order properly to understand power relations shaping existing social orders and the subsequent lack of 'positive political freedom' (p. 1) in contemporary mass democracies. In particular, this book draws on Max Weber, Karl Mannheim and Joseph Schumpeter's accounts of modernity, which Blokland analysed in his 2006 work *Modernization and Its Political Consequences*, to highlight the limitation of personal autonomy and shared 'substantial' rational action as opposed to 'functional': whereas functional rationality aims at goals that are set beforehand, substantial rationality grounds action on a careful assessment of the costs, benefits and values that are at stake in a specific situation.

Stemming from this distinction, Blokland points to the thick dimension of individual freedom as well as the absence of shared conceptions of the public good that beset current democratic societies *vis-à-vis* the 'iron cages' of bureaucracies and markets. Therefore, his genealogy of the theory of pluralism up to the 1970s and the decline of such a paradigm in the following decades is significantly inspired by the conceptualisation of political science as a cumulative knowledge against the behaviouralistic idea of the study of politics as a monolithic knowledge based on the social/natural sciences analogy. By re-exploring the foundations of the conception of polyarchy and the diverging epistemological premises grounding the debate between pluralists and elitists, Blokland conveys an accurate and ambitious reading of Dahl's evolving thought throughout the last century and its legacy for 'rehabilitating politics' (p. xiii) – i.e. for coping with the malaise that typifies contemporary democracies at the individual and societal levels, inside and outside political institutions.

David Ragazzoni
(Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies, Pisa, Italy)

On Complicity and Compromise by **Chiara Lepora and Robert E. Goodin.** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. 192pp., £50.00, ISBN: 978 0199677900

On Complicity and Compromise is the product of an innovative collaboration between a philosophical theory (in the person of Robert E. Goodin) and humanitarian practice (represented by Chiara Lepora, a doctor and a programme director for *Médecins sans Frontières*). Opening with a dialogue between the two authors in which they talk through the demands and methods of their respective fields, the book then unfolds a meticulous and illuminating analysis of difficult terrain in practical ethics.

Those who wish to do some good in the world often face the problem not simply of opposition from those engaged in perpetrating great wrongs. Often, in order to have any chance of success, they must also rub shoulders with those who perpetrated the very evils they seek to remedy, enjoining them to do less wrong or enlisting their protection or service in programmes to mitigate the effects of their actions. The case with which Lepora provokes the discussion at the outset is a powerful one: asked by a soldier whether he ought to