

Introduction and Comments

James Johnson

This is the first issue of *Perspectives on Politics* to appear under my editorship. In the relatively short time I have been working on the journal it has become clear that the enterprise can be no better than the people who work on it. So, rather than leaving the acknowledgments and introductions for last, I want to make them up front.

All of the material appearing in this issue took shape under the guidance and judgement of my predecessor Jennifer Hochschild. It is difficult to state how great a debt the discipline owes Jennifer for so ably and imaginatively launching this journal. The transition from Cambridge to Rochester has proven somewhat rocky for reasons neither Jennifer nor I could have foreseen. I personally thank Jennifer for her insight and encouragement over the past eight months. I also want to thank Thomas Kozachek, who served as Managing Editor for Jennifer, as well as her Associate Editors Henry Brady, William Galston, Atul Kohli, Paula McLean, and Jack Snyder for their labor on this fledgling enterprise. The future successes of *Perspectives* will build on the solid foundation these people have set in place.

Jennifer and her editorial staff were supported by two key groups. Michael Brintnall and the staff at APSA, especially, Rob Hauck, Polly Karpowicz, Bahran Rajaei, Robin Smith, and Steve Yoder are unfailingly helpful and supportive. Likewise, Mark Zadrozny, Ed Carey, and Ralph DeMarco at Cambridge University Press work steadfastly on production and distribution. I anticipate regularly calling on the folks at APSA and Cambridge in the future.

Now for the introductions. I am fortunate to have received truly excellent support here in Rochester. Linda Lindenfelter has taken on the position of Managing Editor. Some of you may recall that Linda occupied the analogous position at the *American Political Science Review* when it was housed at Rochester in the early 1990s. Her sound judgment, hard work, and good humor have been invaluable to me and we really have only just started! In addition to Linda, three of our brightest graduate students—Matthew Jacobsmeier, Elena McLean, and Matthew Platt—have signed on as editorial interns. Gerald Gamm worked hard to persuade the administration in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering that bringing *Perspectives* to our depart-

ment was a great opportunity. As a result of his efforts, I am able to express my gratitude to our Dean, Joanna Olmstead, for providing generous financial support to the journal.

When I applied for the editorship I suggested that it would be useful to expand the size of the group of Associate Editors modestly from five to eight. My thought was that this would distribute the burden of labor somewhat as well as enhancing the geographical and intellectual diversity in the journal's governance structure. In my application I also specifically identified eight individuals whom I thought would be wonderful candidates for the position of Associate Editor. I am pleased to say that, despite their already quite considerable commitments, each and every one of those people readily agreed to take on this additional task. You will find on the masthead the following names: Kathleen Bawn, Michael Desch, Martha Finnemore, Clark Gibson, Ruth Grant, Walter Mebane, Tali Mendleberg, and Iris Marion Young. In addition, Jeff Isaac will join the Associate Editors in his role as Book Review Editor. I want to take this opportunity to thank all these colleagues in print. I approached the task of recruiting Associate Editors with some trepidation. To a person these individuals made the task quite enjoyable. I am confident our conversations about *Perspectives* during the next few years will only make the journal better.

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Over the past several months, many people have asked me about my "vision" for *Perspectives on Politics*, about how I see the journal, and where I hope to take it. Here are some initial thoughts.

It is, I think, fairly easy to say what *Perspectives* is not. It is not a forum for academic research like the *APSR* or more specialized publications like, say, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Political Theory*, or *International Organization*. Nor is it primarily an outlet for more or less conventional "survey" articles like the *Annual Review of Political Science*. Nor is it a journal of opinion like *The New Republic* or *The Nation*. Finally, it is not a journal of professional news and comment like *PS: Political Science and Politics*.

That is the easy part. When one takes a first look at what *Perspectives* has become, it seems somewhat schizophrenic. On the one hand, it is inward looking to the extent that it takes up issues of primarily disciplinary concern. This is reflected in the first three volumes, for example, in a symposium on competing notions of “science,” several essays on broadly methodological matters, a retrospective forum on the “Chicago School” and an homage to Bill Riker. This inward-looking impulse is largely reflexive in the sense that it consists of second-order considerations of past or ongoing practice within the discipline. It is amplified by the fact that roughly half of the pages in any issue of *Perspectives* are given over to reviews of academic books. The audience for these sorts of articles and for the book reviews by and large is, and will continue to be, overwhelmingly professional political scientists.

On the other hand, the journal aspires to be resolutely outward looking, in the sense that it aims to engage with what we might call first-order problems. In the first three volumes papers on the prospects of American labor, the dynamics of political violence, political equality and its consequences, the politics of tax cuts, presidential power and its vicissitudes, as well as symposia on electoral rules and on social science and law seem to me to be exemplary in this regard. They are substantively important both to political scientists and, at least potentially, to readers beyond the discipline or even the academy.

While I think this inward looking/outward looking distinction is real, I probably have drawn it too starkly.

Political scientists cannot convey what we know to audiences outside the discipline without some understanding of who “we” are, however incomplete and contested that understanding might be. The sorts of inward looking papers and forums I mentioned above afford vehicles for addressing just that topic. They allow us to talk to ourselves about ourselves and so allow us to try directly to renovate old notions of who we are or to advance new ones. I see some place in *Perspectives* for such second-order discussions of the discipline’s past and present. Authors of such papers, however, can find numerous outlets for their work (indeed, I myself have several published and forthcoming papers of this sort). Moreover, I am not convinced that inward-looking assessments are the only—or even the best—way to identify and contest the edges and fissures of the discipline. I think that task is more usefully performed as scholars advance first-order political analyses of significant issues and present them to other political scientists and extra-disciplinary audiences in a way that announces, “Here is what political science the way I practice it can tell us about X”. In so doing, such authors can address topics or advance approaches that contest extant boundaries or exploit existing fault lines as they appear to her. Ideally, then, I would like to see the ratio of inward to outward looking papers in *Perspectives* tilt more decisively toward the latter. I will direct my editorial efforts toward that end.

Notes from the Managing Editor

Forthcoming

The following articles and essays have been scheduled for publication in a forthcoming issue of *Perspectives on Politics*.

Ira Katznelson and John Lapinski. “At the Crossroads.”

Barry Friedman. “Taking Law Seriously.”

“Symposium on Immigrant Incorporation”

Luis Fraga and Gary Segura. “Culture Clash? Contesting Notions of American Identity and the Effects of Latin American Immigration.”

Richard Alba. “Mexican Americans and the American Dream.”

Susan Eckstein. “Cuban Émigrés and the American Dream.”

Frank Bean, Susan K. Brown, and Rubén Rumbaut. “Mexican Immigrant Political and Economic Incorporation.”

Jonas Pontusson. “The American Welfare State in Comparative Perspective: Reflections on Alberto Alesina and Eddward L. Glaeser’s *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe*.”

Samuel L. Popkin. “Hard Facts about Soft News.”

“Review Symposium on Anne Norton”

Kirstie McClure. “Reading 95 Theses on Culture, Politics, and Method.”

Katherine Walsh. “Applying Norton’s Challenge to the Study of Political Behavior: Focus on Process, the Particular, and the Ordinary.”