Note from the Editors

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This issue consists of three special sections, each examining crucial issues shaping access to and struggles over power in the world today. We review each in turn.

Economic Inequality & Redistribution

As economic inequality rises across the world, a pressing task for political scientists is to understand the causes, dynamics, and consequences of both income disparities and the governmental policies that might offset them. This section presents novel theoretical and empirical contributions that emphasize the role of voters, politicians, parties, and institutions in shaping both economic inequality and redistribution. Using diverse methods and forms of data, these works underscore new normative challenges and pave the way for future research.

Do political outcomes reflect the preferences of the rich more than those of the rest of the population? While influential scholarship has found evidence of income bias in political responsiveness in the United States and Europe, several studies have questioned this conclusion. Mads Andreas Elkjær and Michael Baggesen Klitgaard open the section with "Economic Inequality and Political Responsiveness: A Systematic Review," which assesses this literature and finds that political outcomes, on average, are more likely to reflect the preferences of the rich. However, results vary substantially across models and studies, driven by model specification and the focus on short-term versus long-term policy changes. To assess the mechanisms underlying these relationships, the authors examine variation in results across policy domains and political outcomes. They do not find evidence that crony capitalism and money in politics drive the observed differences in political responsiveness, as representation of the preferences of the wealthy does not appear to be more pronounced on economic issues. Instead, they suggest that a more generic driver might uniformly influence responsiveness across domains. The study ends with several methodological recommendations for future research to make results comparable across studies and to better understand the underlying mechanisms. Noting the similarity of certain findings across countries, the authors also call for greater interaction between research on the United States and other regions.

Sam Zacher investigates the voting behavior of affluent Americans in his "Polarization of the Rich: The Increasingly Democratic Allegiance of Affluent Americans and the Politics of Redistribution." Using various types of data to measure wealth, the author demonstrates that while the rich, including the very rich, predominantly voted for the Republican Party in the past, they have increasingly voted for Democratic candidates since the 2000s. This trend is true for the upper-middle class and the very wealthy, as measured by income, stock ownership, and occupation. This finding holds across races and ethnicities, is particularly strong among college-educated voters, and is confined to voters living in large metropolitan areas. Zacher discusses the potential implications of these findings for redistribution and argues that as the Democratic Party gains the support of the wealthy, it might become less inclined to adopt redistributive measures that hurt that part of its voting coalition. The study calls for more research on the potential effects of this trend on the economic policies of the Democratic Party and, consequently, on inequality and redistribution in the United States.

Further exploring the relationship between income and political influence, Daniel Krcmaric, Stephen C. Nelson, and Andrew Roberts put forth a research agenda on billionaire politics in "Billionaire Politicians: A Global Perspective." The authors introduce an original dataset comprising the close to two thousand individuals who made it to the Forbes Billionaires List. The data suggest that more than 10% of billionaires have sought or held official political positions and that they are more likely to enter politics in autocratic regimes than democratic ones. When billionaires vie for office, they tend to aim for national-level positions and often win. The authors also provide preliminary evidence suggesting a greater likelihood for billionaires to affiliate with right-wing parties. The authors argue that the increasing number of billionaire politicians raises normative concerns about the influence of wealth on politics and the potential for plutocratic rule. They also note that, given billionaires' capacity to influence politics behind closed doors, future research should investigate the trade-offs these individuals face when deciding to pursue political office. The article also

calls for new research on the attributes of billionaires entering politics, those abstaining, and the consequences of their participation for public policy.

The remaining articles in this section turn from the role of affluent members of society in politics to policies affecting economic inequality. Mallory E. SoRelle and Serena Laws examine voters' perceptions of a policy aimed at reducing inequality in the United States in "Deservingness and the Politics of Student Debt Relief." The authors investigate how borrower characteristics influence voter perceptions of the deservingness of student debt forgiveness and whether these perceptions sway support for debt cancellation. Through analysis of a conjoint experiment, the authors find that respondents deem borrowers more deserving of debt relief when borrowers demonstrate greater need (such as lower income or higher debt burden), have made efforts to repay their debts, or belong to racial minority groups. However, some of these trends vary among self-identified Republicans and Democrats, as well as among respondents of different races. In addition, the results of a framing experiment suggest that these beliefs about who is more deserving of debt relief do not translate into support for debt cancellation. When exposed to a frame that emphasizes the need for debt relief, respondents are not more likely to support debt cancellation. Similarly, a frame suggesting that wealthy professionals would most likely benefit from student debt relief only slightly decreases support among Republicans; and messages emphasizing racial disparities in student debt burdens do not affect Democrats' support while slightly decreasing that of Republicans. The study underscores the importance of considering deservingness when designing social policies and sheds light on an understudied aspect of the American welfare state.

Richard Barton moves from the behavior of citizens to that of policymakers in "Upending a New Deal Regulatory Regime: Congressional Reform and Democrats' Turn Against Financial Regulation." He studies the reasons behind Democratic legislators' shift away from New Deal financial regulations in the 1980s, a policy change that was puzzling because it was not only opposed by many Democratic constituents but also anticipated to exacerbate inequality. Existing research argues that political parties seek to either retain support from highly demanding policy groups within their coalition or to solidify backing from diverse and intersecting groups. Challenging this view, Barton argues that this significant shift in financial regulatory policy was instead driven by congressional reforms such as the elimination of the seniority rule, which strengthened party leaders and diminished the tendency of rank-and-file Democrats to prioritize the interests of their constituents over the interests of the broader population. The author contends that these deregulatory reforms notably intensified the economic power of the

nation's largest firms and wealthiest individuals. By studying how congressional reforms affected regulatory and redistributive policies, the article offers valuable insights into the benefits and drawbacks of parochialism versus power centralization in congressional parties.

In the concluding paper of this section, Vincent Mauro's "Party Systems, Inequality, and Redistribution" shifts from congressional institutions to party systems as key determinants of redistributive policies. The author posits that two dynamics of party systems, their structure and institutionalization, help explain whether governments adopt such policies. Structure influences competition both across and within parties, thereby shaping the extent of social reform. Institutionalization, on the other hand, is essential for consistent, broad-based redistribution. Mauro presents preliminary empirical evidence of the association between the structure and institutionalization of party systems with inequality and redistribution based on data on 136 countries between 1990 and 2020. The author concludes by outlining potential directions for future theoretical and empirical research, including addressing endogeneity or reverse causality in the relationship between the structure and institutionalization of party systems and redistribution, as well as investigating whether this argument aligns with, or contradicts, alternative theories of redistribution in democratic regimes.

Political Violence: Attitudes and Determinants

In past months, violence in Israel-Palestine has taken on shocking new forms and levels. As many members of the political science community respond personally, politically, and intellectually, *Perspectives* hopes to contribute to informed discussion by spotlighting recent work on political violence. While working on distinct cases, this research offers a host of insights into why people endorse violence, the underlying determinants of different types of violence, and how violence can affect public attention to policy issues.

In their article "Who Supports Political Violence?", Miles T. Armaly and Adam M. Enders use responses from a survey of 1,100 U.S. adults, to construct 24 possible correlates of support for political violence and produce a classification and regression tree model to determine the most important factors. They find that subjective social-psychological orientations, such as perceived victimhood, are more powerful predictors of support for political violence than are objective social conditions, such as socioeconomic depravation or social standing. The authors use their results to build a profile of characteristics of political violence supporters and test its validity in predicting the belief that the January 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol riots were justified. The study encourages

continued research on how constellations of factors, including the combination of partisan attachments and non-political orientations, can account for support for political violence in ways that individual variables cannot.

Similarly examining popular support for violence, Julie M. Norman turns specifically to perceptions of terrorism in "Other People's Terrorism: Ideology and the Perceived Legitimacy of Political Violence." She notes that while studies have explored how public views of terrorism vary with perpetrators' identities, little research has explored how observers' own ideological biases shape their perceptions. Through an experimental survey, Norman tests respondents' judgments of violent actions aligned with their conservative or liberal political identity relative to actions that are not so aligned. The findings show that respondents were less likely to label ideologically-aligned actions as terrorism and more likely to find them morally justifiable. Indeed, controlling for perpetrator identity and type of violence, the impact of ideology on respondents' designation of an action as terrorism was nearly double that of the severity of violence. Pushing beyond the dichotomy of whether an action is or is not terrorism, the article encourages more research into nuances in public opinion on political violence and especially into how people assess the legitimacy of violent acts.

In "Scattered Attacks: The Collective Dynamics of Lone-Actor Terrorism," Stefan Malthaner, Francis O'Connor, and Lasse Lindekilde also study terrorism, spotlighting one proliferating and particularly puzzling form: lone-actor terrorist attacks. Drawing on empirical data, the authors develop a framework to analyze how this form of political violence has collective dynamics, even as it is planned and perpetrated by single actors. First, seeking to understand how lone actors are socially embedded, they conceptualize lone-actor radicalization as a relational pathway shaped by the structure and legitimizing discourses of radical milieus and movements. Second, aiming to clarify how lone-actor attacks are connected as a part of larger "waves," they theorize three interactive processes connecting violent incidents: attacks tend to cluster in time and space as disconnected individuals respond in parallel to particular events or changes; processes of diffusion transmit tactics and ideas across movements and societies; perpetrators link their actions to prior attacks and broader movements giving rise to interconnected campaigns. This framework aids future work by shifting analysis from particular perpetrators to the larger relational ties and processes that highlight the social and political character of even discontinuous incidents.

Christopher Barrie, Killian Clarke, and Neil Ketchley also interrogate how we make sense of forms of violence in "Burnings, Beatings, and Bombings: Disaggregating Anti-Christian Violence in Egypt, 2013–2018." They argue that competing explanations of ethnic violence are difficult to reconcile in part because they operate at too high a level of aggregation and thus lump together violence with different determinants. As an alternative, they disaggregate ethnic violence based on two criteria: whether the target of the attack is properties or individuals, and whether assailants are armed or unarmed. This framework yields three subtypes of violence, each of which aligns with different underlying conditions theorized by existing scholarship: burnings are associated with political dynamics because they are often attributable to entrepreneurs' mobilization of mobs or gangs seeking political gain; beatings are associated with changing socioeconomic conditions that heighten local animosities and spur targeted punitive attacks; bombings follow a terrorist logic because they require organized groups able to furnish advanced firearms. Findings from analysis of novel data on 413 anti-Christian attacks in Egypt from 2013 to 2018 support the hypothesized processes associated with the three violence types, while also indicating how the state's weakened capacity or deliberate inaction plays a role. This research demonstrates the analytical value of disaggregating ethnic violence, illustrating the importance of the posited typology and inviting other typological frameworks.

Closing out this section is "Why Do Issues 'Whose Time Has Come' Stick Around? Attention Durability and the Case of Gun Control," in which Kristin A. Goss and Matthew J. Lacombe connect violence to broader questions in democratic politics. They note that while most policy issues competing for the public's attention achieve salience only for short periods or among narrow audiences, some become what they call "durable attention items" and sustain significant attention over years. Taking up the case of gun control in the United States, they trace the issue's growing agenda status to pro-regulation advocates' mobilization by two kinds of threat: the event-based threat of mass shootings and the policy-based threat of efforts to relax gun policy. The authors analyze an original dataset of 4,500 letters to the editor over a 40-year period, offering evidence of a fundamental shift in attention to gun control over time. Their findings also support their argument about the role of contextual factors, rather than strictly individual- and organization-level factors, in driving that shift. This research encourages more consideration of how context and threat, especially working in tandem with partisan polarization, can structure the continuous engagement that makes some issues enduring features of the public agenda.

Conceptual Innovations in the Study of Race and Politics

Finally, three articles offer new perspectives on race and racism in American politics by developing critical new concepts, refining existing concepts in new ways, and empirically demonstrating the value of these conceptual innovations with diverse data and methods.

Davin L. Phoenix and Nathan K. Chan tackle the well-known notion of political efficacy in "Clarifying the "People Like Me": Racial Efficacy and Political Behavior" and show how attention to race can transform how we understand that concept. They note that political efficacy is typically operationalized by asking people to gauge the political influence of "people like me," and argue that this operationalization is limited by ambiguity about the reference group that respondents have in mind when they answer that question. Toward a more precise and useful measure, the authors introduce the concept of "racial efficacy," which they define as an individual's belief that their racial in-group possesses sufficient influence over government outcomes. They develop a novel three-indexed measure based on how often respondents believe that public officials work hard to help their racial group, whether their racial group has a say in how government handles important issues, and if elected officials in their racial group can make changes for that group. Using the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey, they find that, relative to conventional measures of internal and external political efficacy, racial efficacy is more strongly associated with how white, Black, Latina/o, and Asian Americans choose to participate in politics.

In "Inverting the Lens: White Privilege Denial in Evaluations of Politicians and Policy," Reagan Dobbs and Stephen P. Nicholson turn from efficacy to another crucial concept in the study of the intersection of race and politics: privilege. They show that white privilege denial—rejection of the idea that there are unearned advantages of being white—is an attitude distinct from racial resentment, racial group identity, or racial group solidarity. Using the 2016 and 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Studies, the authors find that nearly half of white respondents exhibit at least some denial of white privilege. Nearly one-third deny all the items in their white privilege denial index. White privilege denial fosters support for Republican leaders, diminishes support for Democratic leaders, and is associated with attitudes such as opposition to affirmative action, social welfare spending, liberal immigration policy, and NFL players "taking a knee" during the national anthem. These findings offer an addendum and contribution to work that primarily centers racial animus as the focus of research on white racial attitudes. The article demonstrates the importance of also attending to white privilege denial as a particular type of racial thinking with consequences for U.S. politics.

Amanda Sahar d'Urso also examines questions of white privilege in "A Boundary of White Inclusion: How Religion Shapes Perceptions of Ethnoracial Assignment." Observing that who does or does not access such power and advantage depends on who is or is not considered to be white, she argues that whiteness is thus another concept demanding critical theoretical development and empirical research in political science. Through analysis of both historical and contemporary data, d'Urso finds that country of origin and religion play separate, additive roles in how white Americans perceive who is white. Analysis of early twentieth-century U.S. court cases reveals the prominence of religious cues: judges tended to regard Christian petitioners with backgrounds from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) as white more consistently than they did Muslim petitioners from the same region. An original survey experiment reveals how these dynamics continue today. Respondents are more likely to designate Iranian and Russian Christians as white than their Muslim counterparts and are also more likely to perceive Muslims as having darker skin, even when they do not. These findings warn against taking racial assignment for granted and motivate ongoing research into the social construction of both racial categories and their boundaries of inclusion.

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Perspectives seeks to nurture **a political science public sphere**, publicizing important scholarly topics, ideas, and innovations, linking scholarly authors and readers, and promoting broad reflexive discussion among political scientists about the work that we do and why this work matters.

Perspectives publishes work in a number of formats that mirror the ways that political scientists actually write:

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