

# Introduction and Comments

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This journal is an experiment, an attempt on the part of APSA to encourage political scientists to find ways to communicate with others beyond their narrow specialty or sub-specialty, using a form other than the familiar research article. This is in many ways a difficult undertaking precisely because there are few models of how to proceed in the space between the familiar journal article and a more journalistic essay. Many of the contributions to this issue of *Perspectives on Politics* afford some aid in direction

We begin this issue of *Perspectives* with a set of papers that taking as their provenance one or another of the traditional sub-fields in the discipline—American politics, International Relations, Comparative Politics, and Political Theory—address a set of topics central to contemporary politics: Gary Miller and Norman Schofield on the shifting contours of political coalitions, Josh Busby and Jonathan Monten on the shifting fortunes of post-WWII internationalism, Elliot Green on the shifting connections between identity and geographical territory, and Clement Fatovic on the shifting claims of executive power and privilege. We follow these contributions with an essay by Mark Bevir and Asaf Kedar in methodology or, more specifically, on the philosophical scaffolding on which political scientists have constructed what they call “qualitative methods.” The authors argue that what appears to be an intellectual shift toward methodological pluralism in fact trades

on substantial, if tacit, and counterproductive philosophical continuity.

If our first five contributions at least look familiar, we then turn to a less usual format. Suzanne Mettler and Ira Katznelson engage in a lively and wide-ranging exchange on their divergent interpretations of the origins and consequences of the G.I. Bill. This obviously is a matter of considerable contemporary importance. But from the perspective of the journal it is important to note that the exchange was prompted not by contending research articles but by two award-winning books. The authors have taken it upon themselves to sharpen rather than paper over their disagreements. They pursue this intellectual agenda in an exemplary way rather than leaving that task to others. This exchange is, in my experience, a model of how disagreement can be both productive and civil.

Our next two contributions, from Kathryn Lavelle and Mariah Zeisberg respectively, again appear unfamiliar. Each author offers reflections on personal experience—as a staff member working on Capitol Hill and as a visitor to the National Constitution Center. Each uses her reflections to raise a set of broad questions about American politics and how we study it. Neither of their thoughtful perspectives resembles a standard research article. In that sense they both are pushing our experiment forward by offering the rest of us important lessons not just about a substantive topic, but also about how we might convey knowledge.

## Notes from the Managing Editor

### Forthcoming

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

**Karen J. Alter and Sophie Meunier, Symposium Editors.** "The Politics of International Regime Complexity."

**Sherri Berman.** "The Primacy of Economics versus the Primacy of Politics: Understanding the Ideological Dynamics of the Twentieth Century."

**Marijke Breuning and John Ishiyama.** "The Politics of Inter-country Adoption: Explaining Variation in the Legal Requirements of Sub-Saharan African Countries."

**Debra Candrea.** "Conrad and the American Empire."

**Daniel Lipson.** "Where's the Justice? Affirmative Action as Diversity Management in Post-Civil Rights America."

**Andrew R. Murphy.** "The Jeremiad and the Power of the Past."