

Introduction and Observations

By Jennifer L. Hochschild
December 2002

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Perspectives on Politics*, the new journal sponsored by the American Political Science Association (APSA) for all political scientists and others interested in academic analyses of politics. The associate editors and I are thrilled, and a bit daunted, by the challenges of putting together a journal that reaches across and outside our discipline and seeks to draw all of its members, and others, into a conversation about politics, policy, power, and the study thereof.

Articles in *Perspectives* aim to clarify the political significance of accumulated research regarding a particular area of the world, an important policy problem, a deep normative conflict, or a significant institution or process; they may also demonstrate the insights that accrue from assessing politics from a distinctive viewpoint, method, or type of evidence. In order to bring together all readers interested in the study of politics, articles in *Perspectives* need to be engagingly and clearly written with a minimum of technical language. They must meet the highest standards of scholarship and thought. Beyond those shared requirements, articles can be of several types:

- *So what?*—explaining what central political issues are at stake in a given topic of research, and showing why those issues matter to a wide audience and how the reader should understand the issues in light of particular evidence, history, frameworks, or values. Such an article will probably also explain what problems remain to be studied or cannot be resolved.
- *Connect the dots*—showing how a multiplicity of individual research projects in a given area can be organized and related to produce a major shift in our understanding of some important aspect of politics. The goal of such an essay is to enable political scientists to reconfigure settled understandings and focus on new questions or arguments.
- *Product differentiation*—demonstrating what political science can offer to help people understand a crucial political event or process that journalists, political actors, or insightful observers cannot. Authors might provide recommendations for political action, moral judgment, or policy choices that show the distinctive contributions of our discipline to the problem at hand.
- *Change over time or space*—reflecting on how the study of politics and power has changed over time or on how concepts and usages vary across space. Authors may trace the development (or distortion) of a crucial idea or theory, perhaps across generations of scholars; or they might show how

people from different nations or social locations use (or misuse) the same term in different ways. Generally, for it to be appropriate for *Perspectives*, this conceptual exercise must help us to better understand some concrete political phenomenon.

- *The perennial unanswerables*—showing how political scientists can contribute at least partial answers to the biggest questions about power and politics. How can we make sense of sin and evil, or virtue and inspiration? Why did communism fall and religious fundamentalism rise? And so on. Some articles in *Perspectives* might be better noted for giving us new ways to think about old and intractable problems than for finding clear and definitive solutions.
- *The proof is in the pudding*—demonstrating how knowledge generated by political scientists affects and is affected by organizations such as foundations, courts, regulatory or legislative bodies, and schools. How do policy makers, journalists, other social scientists, or political activists outside the discipline use knowledge produced by political scientists—and what types of knowledge do they wish we would produce? What academic insights have we generated while serving as consultants, expert witnesses, advocates, or policy analysts?
- *Building bridges*—combining work from subfields of political science that seldom engage with one another, or combining work from political science with knowledge and frameworks of a different discipline, in order to provide new insights. Given that disciplinary and subdisciplinary fields are useful but sometimes inhibiting conventions, what do we learn by rejecting some of them?

These categories are illustrative, not exhaustive or exclusive. Regardless of just how articles in *Perspectives* fit into these categories, they all will be—if we achieve our aims—well written, broadly integrative, oriented around politics, and exciting to a wide array of readers. Articles will occasionally be grouped into a symposium in which several authors examine a shared issue or problem from different perspectives.

The journal has three other sections apart from articles or symposia; all are on display in this first issue. The most unusual is a section called “Perspectives,” which will generally contain two types of articles. The first is short, sharp interventions on a particular topic with just enough evidence to move the argument beyond an op-ed piece; if the rest of *Perspectives* is intended to be an inch deep and a mile wide, these articles are intended to be an

inch wide and a mile deep. We envision authors who have been mulling over a provocative idea for weeks or months, and who then sit down, in a burst of inspiration, to make their case—with enough support for the argument to be plausible but without all of the usual academic apparatus of literature review, hypothesis testing, textual exegesis, or caveats.

The other type of article in the “Perspectives” section will come from writers outside the field of political science reflecting on some aspect of the discipline or some political phenomenon in a way that gives us a new angle on how we do our work or how our subjects of research look to others. While meeting the highest standards of acuity, these essays are intended to be relatively short, informal, and reflective rather than formally research-based.

The *American Political Science Review* (APSR) and other disciplinary journals have long published review essays; *Perspectives* carries on that tradition and seeks to expand it in the next section of the journal. We hope to publish at least one review essay in each issue that reflects on important books or articles. But we propose also to broaden the range of appropriate subjects for review: authors could write integrative review essays on anything from Web sites to political speeches or cartoons, syllabi, novels or plays, museum exhibitions, legal decisions, legislative debates, or any other text, broadly defined.

In particular, we are inaugurating a series of syllabi reviews in the first issue. We provide an author with at least 20 syllabi in a given subfield, selected from a range of graduate and undergraduate courses at leading colleges and universities. The author then uses the syllabi to analyze the state of a field of study. Syllabi, which are after all the outcome of a set of opportunity costs, demonstrate how scholars conceptualize a subfield and what they think are its most important elements. They show how a subfield has changed or is changing; they indicate how a topic is measured or analyzed; and they reveal (inadvertently) what aspects of the topic scholars are not attending to but should. Each review essay will include information on how to obtain the syllabi it discusses, so that scholars designing their own course on this topic can benefit from the collective wisdom of others.

We invite proposals for other kinds of innovative review essays. How, for example, should we evaluate Web sites for election campaigns, or speeches made in the UN Security Council? We see this section, along with the section called “Perspectives,” as a natural home for newly developing topics in our discipline, as well as for articles that give a contemporary look at classic works of political science that are more honored in the breach than in the observance. We do not, however, invite proposals to review particular books or articles; the integrity of the review process requires that we match books with reviewers within the editorial office in order to avoid any possibility of a conflict of interest.

The “we” in that paragraph points to the final section of *Perspectives*: the book reviews. The APSR has traditionally reviewed almost 100 books per issue, and that book review section is migrating to *Perspectives*. It is in the capable hands of Susan Bickford and Greg McAvoy, who were introduced to readers in an earlier issue of the APSR. In addition to managing this section, the book review editors solicit review essays, as do I and the associate editors of *Perspectives*; it is a joint venture in the best sense of that term.

The Structure of *Perspectives*

To accomplish these tasks, *Perspectives* has an unusual editorial configuration—more like that of a university press than that of a standard academic journal. That is, we don't have a large board of editors. Instead, I—along with five associate editors (identified on the masthead) and the book review editors—review all manuscripts and proposals that are sent to us. We also solicit articles, symposia, and reviews. With the help of the assistants to the editor (see the masthead) and other in-house readers, we identify a few pieces that have exceptional quality and fit the profile of *Perspectives*. We then work with the authors of these articles to develop or revise their manuscripts before they are sent out for review; thus the review process occurs at the end rather than the beginning of the pipeline, and only a small proportion of manuscripts that we receive are reviewed.

All reviewed manuscripts receive two to four double-blind peer reviews; if these readings warrant it, authors then revise their manuscripts in light of reviewers' suggestions and our editorial judgments. Articles in the “Perspectives” and “Review Essay” sections are also reviewed by peers, but more with an eye toward making suggestions for revision than with the goal of making a recommendation about publication. We invite authors of manuscripts that are identified for an external reading to give us suggestions for reviewers.

The peer reviews have been stellar. Writing a review for *Perspectives* is a task made especially difficult by the fact that we are asking colleagues to evaluate a different type of article for a brand-new journal. Reviewers do not all reach the same conclusion or give the same advice for revision, and we sometimes make decisions about publication that are not consistent with one or more recommendations. But reviewers' advice is invaluable, and we editors and authors are grateful for the engagement and careful attention. The articles are greatly improved as a consequence—and we plan to call on many more *Perspectives* readers for counsel.

The five associate editors were selected for their substantive specializations and intellectual breadth, as well as their recognized excellence and their commitment to helping *Perspectives on Politics* succeed. They have worked with me to develop the vision for the journal outlined above, and to set policies, design processes for solicitation and review, and make decisions about publication. I rely heavily on their expertise in evaluating manuscripts in particular subfields and on their energy and creativity in soliciting articles and reviews, identifying reviewers, and developing symposia.

Our managing editor, Lisa Burrell, holds all of this together. Her talents range from reining in my proclivities to spend too much on splashy photos to careful and sensitive editing of all the pieces in *Perspectives*; if the issue appears at all, never mind on time, and if the articles sparkle, most of that is owing to Lisa's insights and unstinting efforts. We thank her deeply.

The assistants to the editor (see masthead) do a great deal to facilitate Lisa's work, as well as that of the associate editors. They check facts, identify possible manuscript reviewers, generate ideas for symposia and for “Perspectives” authors, find syllabi and other materials for review essays, and provide the imagination and energy needed to keep the whole process fun and innovative.

This Issue

Let me turn, finally, to the fruits of all of this shared labor. The first issue of *Perspectives* begins with Neta C. Crawford's article "Just War Theory and the U.S. Counterterrorism War," which beautifully models engagement of scholarship with political phenomena. She starts with the ancient and arguably outmoded political philosophy of just war theory, traces its use and misuse through centuries of changes in warfare, and applies it to all-too-contemporary wars against terrorism. She concludes that it remains a touchstone for moral warfare, if that is not an oxymoron, but points out how this new and frightening kind of war may be overwhelming this old and honorable framework for making the right choices.

Dan Reiter continues the focus on how to make sense of war in "Exploring the Bargaining Model of War," but from a different perspective. He argues that war is bargaining by other means: both (or all) sides believe that they can gain more by fighting than by surrendering, negotiating, or walking away from the conflict. In retrospect, that belief turns out to be wrong for some or even all combatants—so why do they fight? Reiter reviews evidence showing that a framework of bargaining can supersede or replace other answers to this ancient question, and points the way toward research that will confirm (or deny?) this contention.

In "Organizing Power: The Prospects for an American Labor Movement," Margaret Levi examines a different kind of bargaining and fighting, one that is less often violent than conventional warfare but that can be almost as tense. American labor unions, like those in many but not all other

nations, rose and declined over the twentieth century; Levi examines why and proposes strategies for their revival from a framework of institutional contexts, normative judgments, and historical constraints. The driving force behind her *tour d'horizon* is the conviction that unions represent the best means for promoting justice and democracy in advanced capitalist societies; without a commitment to greater equality, unions may die out (and might deserve to), and Americans will be morally and politically—not to mention economically—more impoverished.

Thomas E. Mann continues the theme of bargaining and conflict, but in an even more refined setting: the financing of American political campaigns. His article "Linking Knowledge and Action: Political Science and Campaign Finance Reform" is distinguished by its focus on how political scientists, including himself, have conceived of campaign finance reform, intervened in the legislative and judicial processes to control it, and helped to shape our nation's understanding of "good" and "bad" rules for financing campaigns. He gently chastises fellow political scientists for sometimes getting crucial aspects of the story wrong and demonstrates by his own example how one can, and on occasion should, maintain one foot in the academy and one foot in the messy but exciting world of political contestation.

In the final article, Ashutosh Varshney shows that not all of politics is bargaining and judgment; people sometimes act in

the public arena on the basis of deeply felt and mysteriously generated loyalties, values, or visions. In "Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality," he distinguishes between value rationality and instrumental rationality. People identify with and act on behalf of their racial or religious group for reasons that have nothing to do with, or even flatly violate, any conception that they will gain more than they lose by so acting. Once, however, they are motivated to act, their movements and focus can be directed by rational calculations; Gandhi's followers marched because of their passions, but they marched to the sea because of their judgments.

This issue also contains a symposium, the topic of which gives us the chance to shift our focus from conflict to cooperation, from bargaining to mutual assistance. But even here, perhaps not surprisingly, all is not copacetic; Dora L. Costa and Matthew E. Kahn, and Rodney E. Hero, show us why not in their analyses of social capital and diversity. Although these articles were written separately, they fit together elegantly, as Paula D. McClain demonstrates in her introduction. Costa and Kahn point out that economists have consistently shown that the more heterogeneous a group or society is, the less social capital it generates. Diversity may be good for liberty and other values, but it is apparently bad

for a sense of community, at least up to this point in history. Hero looks at the relationship between heterogeneity and social capital from the opposite perspective and finds that often the more social capital there is in a state or the nation, the greater the political and economic inequality between

European Americans and African or Hispanic Americans. A high level of social capital may be good for groups in the majority and for the society as a whole, but it can be bad for precisely those groups that need its benefits the most. A pair of disturbing and provocative findings.

As if all of this were not enough, we have three "Perspectives" articles and two review essays, along with a substantial book review section. Robert E. Goodin—in "How Amoral Is Hegemon?"—seems to have perfectly anticipated what we are looking for in a "Perspectives" piece: a short, sharp, powerful claim about an odd and important political phenomenon, based on just enough but not too much academic research. We hope to see many more articles of this kind. Alan Ehrenhalt and David Moats provide two additional "Perspectives" models—one ("Political Science and Journalism: Bridging the Gap") of a non- (or semi-?) political scientist reflecting wisely on the boundaries and nature of our discipline, and one ("Civil Unions in Vermont: Public Reason Improvised") of a working journalist who is surprised to discover that, as with Molière's M. Jourdain and prose, for many years he has been doing political science without knowing it.

James A. Morone, in "American Ways of Welfare," reviews seven books on the American welfare state in his own inimitable style. We learn about the virtues and shortcomings of each book, how the books fit together into a larger tapestry, and how policies

Our goal is to make political scientists and others read with enjoyment and illumination, to draw in people outside our discipline, and to spark conversations and fresh ideas.

of the American welfare state are really about sin and virtue—not about poverty and income transfers, as most of us had thought up until now. In “Teaching Democracy: A Survey of Courses in Democratic Theory,” Ronald J. Terchek inaugurates our syllabi review essays by wrestling the vast and unwieldy subfield of democratic theory into order. He shows us what democratic theorists teach and why, how they make choices and what those choices reveal about the construction of the subfield, and where our blind spots remain. I would have given anything for such a review essay when I first started teaching. And throughout our careers we will benefit from this and similar essays when we design new courses, rethink old ones, reach out toward new subfields, or simply talk with our colleagues.

The book review section looks a bit different (three columns instead of two, new fonts), but I am pleased to report that its essence has not changed. We provide reviews across the

discipline's four traditional categories, and we expect that readers will continue to find this section as valuable as always.

As of this writing, we're already hard at work putting together a stimulating second issue. It will include Robert Putnam's 2002 presidential address to APSA, as well as articles on gender and war, William Riker's heresthetic, the oddities of American balloting procedures, Islamism and revolution, and a variety of other topics.

One manuscript reviewer who is not in a political science department wrote, “[T]his article makes me want to subscribe to the new journal!” That, *mutatis mutandis*, is our goal—to make political scientists and others read with enjoyment and illumination, to draw in people outside our discipline, and to spark conversations and fresh ideas. We are glad to join the *APSR* and *PS* as APSA's journals; together, we hope, we are galvanizing scholarship, teaching, the exchange of ideas, and public engagement.