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Editorial Statement

Matthew Holden, Jr.*

Introduction

It is my particular honor to have been appointed Editor of the *National Political Science Review* for Volumes IV-VI (1992-94). Lucius J. Barker, my colleague of many years, has been brilliantly successful as the founding Editor. It is sufficient challenge to maintain the high and independent intellectual standard that Barker has established. No major changes of policy or practice are contemplated. As before, the first requirement is careful scholarship, but no particular methodological or theoretical orthodoxy is to be enforced. *If it is political science, the NPSR is interested.* As there is a special history, however, some additional comments may be helpful. The *National Political Science Review* has been, and continues to be, particularly open to research about the political relations of African-descended groups, especially in the United States.

Note on the Intellectual Background

On the basis of published research, over the past one hundred years, it is fair to say that the discipline of political science, overall, has proceeded as if these political relations were *exotica*. They might be interesting possibly to Blacks or to occasional white scholars.¹ On the whole, the political relations of African Ameri-

cans were treated *as if* they presented no analytically interesting questions. They surely were not deemed significant to *central issues of political science*. That is why Ralph J. Bunche could say, in 1941, that generally in political science "there isn't a very cordial reception for papers dealing with the Negro."²

The explanation probably lies in some combination of social and intellectual history. The central intellectual concern of late 19th and early 20th century political science was "popular government," restyled "democracy" later on. This political science studied, more than anything else, the law, philosophy, and history of "government," with an acute emphasis on American institutions, the governments of France, Germany, and Great Britain, and international law, with a moderate addition of Asian and colonial government. It emerged within the Anglo-centric intellectual tradition that dominated American scholarship well into the 20th century. Woodrow Wilson, A. Lawrence Lowell, Frank J. Goodnow and William Bennet Munro may be regarded as adequately representative figures in the tradition. The leaders of this emergent discipline more or less took for granted that the political community was essentially a "white" community.³ The big question, instead, was about both the empirical and the normal role of wealth in the polity. Whether understood as group (later "pressure group" and still later the cooled down "interest

group") politics or as class politics, with or without the Marxist variant, this treatment left no intellectually compelling issues regarding race or ethnicity. The assumption of the Anglo-centric polity remained an undisturbed feature of the canon.

The inklings of a "scientific" study of politics, notably in the work of Charles E. Merriam, just after World War I, anticipated by a long distance what would occur after World War II. After World War II, political scientists came strongly to accept a more self-conscious and explicit idea of "science" and a more abstract concern with "power." This did not alter, however, the central tendency of political scientists to think of Black-related questions as peripheral. They could, from the viewpoints held, be understood fully within existing intellectual parameters. Nor did the introduction of a social science saturated with intellectual problems defined from the moral problems of Central Europe make much difference for a long time. The moral and intellectual problems of the United States were substantially set aside.

Recent Work

There has been a perceptible shift, especially since about 1960 and certainly since the effects of the civil rights movement have come into academic life.⁴ There is now a book literature. There is now emerging a

periodical literature. The latter, especially, increasingly reflects the applications of those quantitative methods from the Angus Campbell-Warren Miller-Survey Research Center mode to the politics of non-white ethnic minorities. The effect is strong enough that one can note the remarkable fact of another journal carrying last year two such articles in one issue.⁵ We similarly note the emergence of panels at the American Political Science Association on "Race, Gender and Ethnicity," which suggest the emergence of a new subfield in the discipline.

This shift is important for the basic intellectual health of the discipline. The *National Political Science Review* is open to disciplined thought and substantial empirical inquiry about such relationships. Perhaps it will be helpful to suggest broadly some of the possibilities. In the first place, of course, there is the normal array of studies that are defined within existing parameters of political science: Presidency, Congress, public administration, interest groups, state and local government,⁶ and so forth. Beyond these, it may be worthwhile to indicate some other possibilities.

Some Possibilities for the Time

1. Ethnic Plurality

The *National Political Science Review* will encompass not merely African-American politics, but the political relations of other historically, or presently, subordinated groups and the contexts in which those relations have been manifest. The problem is not how sympathetic or unsympathetic a scholar may be to the claims of African-descended persons. It is how to explore the multi-ethnic dynamic, how to appraise the prospects of the racially-stratified constitutional democracy, and how to forecast the political consequences of a market economy characterized by severe racial inelasticities. The underlying conceptual issues in the multi-ethnic polity go to the question of what is a viable (accurately predictive) theory of political integration (and its converse, disintegration). The issue also presents itself in the

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polity that is not constitutional, in our sense, and in which the market economy does not exist, as is manifest in Soviet politics of recent times.

2. *The Internal Politics of Groups*

While "the State" is again in vogue, the Editor will also welcome research grounded in other perspectives. Among other things, there is room for new work on "private politics," or the internal conduct of non-governmental entities. What, for instance, is the decision-making mode present in "the Black community," so that the preferences attributed to the African-American population are identified or changed? What is the support basis and the decision-making mode for any of the major Black organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, or the National Baptist Convention of the U.S.A., Inc.? What is to be said of interest groups, how they arise and change, and what their level of efficiency is in achieving what they seek? What is the empirical knowledge of the structure of the Black community in comparison to, as an example, the structure of the Jewish community? Scholars might, for instance, choose to examine not only the governance of the public to which they commonly direct their attention. They might also direct their attention to the governance of the work place in which they spend most of their lives, namely the college or university itself.

3. *Public Policy*

The Editor would welcome attempts to apply political science concepts to the examination of public policy. Contributions are invited in which public policy and policy relationships to African-Americans and other subordinated groups would be examined. Among the subjects on which sound research is particularly needed is the entire system of public order (or "criminal justice," if some prefer). This might include study on how communal order is induced (if it is), which is both a major practical

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voyages, decision-making about them, and their consequences for human society, both on this side of the Atlantic and in Europe, and Africa. In the same spirit, the Editor would particularly welcome attempts to explore the later transformation of European imperial ventures into a self-conscious "white supremacy."

The global politics of "white supremacy" in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the first third (more or less) of the twentieth century deserves attention. In this last decade of the twentieth century, political scientists may also wish to consider the new politics that should be associated with a Europe that tends to be both unified and powerful, in a way that a Europe never was before, as well as to other power shifts in the world.

General Comment

The special emphasis in the previous discussion must also not obscure the fundamental point. The *NPSR* is a journal of political science, as its first volumes have shown, and is open to inquiry on any subject. The present Editor will receive not only papers within the scope indicated, as well as the papers on the politics of economic and financial change, on "globalization," and the political consequences of technological change. The Editor will, moreover, welcome direct inquiries on any other subject.

A word may be in order as to the receipt of submissions. The answer is that we are wide open to all scholars. Some highly regarded journals have deemed it worthwhile to restrict publication to authors chosen on extrinsic criteria, such as location. The *National Political Science Review*, though sponsored by the National Conference of Black Political Scientists, adopts no such extrinsic criterion. The Editor looks forward to the receipt of submissions from scholarly colleagues on the widest possible basis, both in the United States and elsewhere in the world. The Editor also looks forward to communications from any scholar of politics discussing subjects related to the welfare of the journal or the study of politics.

issue and a theoretical issue of far-reaching proportions. Studies of public order might include not only police and policing, but prosecution, the judicial system, the prison and penal systems, and the relationships between those systems and the social environment. Similarly, one might make inquiries into the systems of social insurance and public assistance, re-examinations of the systems of public housing, and of the educational system. The Editor believes there is need for deep and thorough inquiry into the phenomenon of affirmative actions, its origins, its supporting and opposing coalitions, and its results as well as unintended side effects.

The foregoing items are merely *illustrations*. The *NPSR* will welcome policy studies, where the analytical and conceptual tools and problems of political science are brought to bear, without restriction as to the subject matter of the policy. The prime requirements will be that work

reflect new data, thorough re-examination of old data, or some substantial new conceptualization. The Editor will discourage mere expressions of opinion.

4. *Extra-Disciplinary Connections*

The present Editor has a special interest in work about politics that attempts to assimilate concepts and data from other disciplines, notably anthropology, economics, geography, history, psychology, sociology and law. The crucial requirement is that concepts or data produced in other fields be systematically applied to *politics*, and that the relationships to existing political science concepts be treated seriously.

As one potentiality, note that the first volume under the current Editor will appear in 1992, which is the 500th anniversary of the Columbian voyages. The occasion may call for retrospective application of political science concepts to the Columbian

Notes

*This statement by the Editor of the *National Political Science Review (NPSR)* has been prepared for publication in the *NPSR* in Volume III, forthcoming in 1991.

1. In my view, the premier figure in this regard was Harold F. Gosnell, whose *Negro Politicians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935) was far ahead of the curve. Gosnell deserves our respect, as well, as one of the earliest political scientists to take seriously, in his other works, to quantitative methodological innovation.

2. Comments in Melville J. Herskovits (ed.), *Interdisciplinary Aspects of Negro Studies*, Washington, DC: American Council

of Learned Societies, Bulletin No. 12, 1941.

3. The premise appears to have been even stronger in sociology, psychology, and philosophy as one infers from John Mecklin, *Democracy and Race Friction*, New York: Macmillan, 1914, especially Chapter II on "Race Traits." The notes in that chapter are particularly instructive.

4. Hanes Walton, Leslie Burl McLemore, and C. Vernon Gray, "The Pioneering Books on Black Politics and the Political Science Community, 1903-1965." Review Essay, *National Political Science Review*, II (1990): 196-218.

5. Lawrence Bobo and Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr., "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment," *American Political Science Review* 84:2 (June 1990):

377-393; and Paula D. McClain and Albert K. Karnig, "Black and Hispanic Socio-economic and Political Competition," *ibid.*, 535-545.

6. Georgia Persons, "Blacks in State and Local Government: Progress and Constraints," *The State of Black America*, New York: National Urban League, 1987, 167-192.

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