

# Introduction and Comments

By Jennifer L. Hochschild

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Welcome to the first issue of the second volume of *Perspectives on Politics*—a milestone for those of us who worried that political scientists might not have enough interest in such a journal to sustain it beyond the first flush of enthusiasm. Whatever our problems, that is not one; we are receiving an increasing number of unsolicited manuscripts, and authors are becoming more attuned to the unusual nature of this journal. All of that makes the job of selection more difficult for the editors (see comments below), but also more rewarding.

Inadvertently, every article in this issue of *Perspectives* follows the same theme: depicting and analyzing a process of change. The issue opens with “Voice and Inequality,” a revised version of the presidential address that Theda Skocpol delivered at the 2003 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association. Skocpol turns her distinctive theoretical lens of historical institutional analysis onto the now-canonical issue of social capital, to excellent effect. She shows how organizations with political salience have moved from having a mass-membership base in units integrated within and across communities and states to having a small professional staff in Washington, D.C., or a state capital, and a large fund-raising list. Elites now serve on boards of foundations rather than participating as members of fraternal associations. Skocpol points out the implications for practical politics of this rather unappealing transformation and suggests that it may attenuate democratic practices and worsen political (and perhaps others forms of) inequality.

Zsuzsa Csergo and James Goldgeier, in “Nationalist Strategies and European Integration,” focus on another sort of transformation, accompanying a different institutional dynamic. They reject the possibility that partial unification of European states through the European Union will eliminate old-fashioned nationalism. Nationalism is here to stay, at least in the foreseeable future. It is, however, splintering into four related but distinct ways of reconciling commitment to one's group with the fact that state boundaries often do not coincide with nationality boundaries. Csergo and Goldgeier use their typology to explicate political choices in Eastern European politics, and they show how one form of nationalism morphs into another. It is probably not possible or even desirable to eliminate the passions and jealousies of nationalistic fervor; but as this article suggests, they can at least be understood better and at most be managed

better—though whether through the European Union remains to be seen.

Steven Teles and Matthew Kaliner, in “The Public Policy of Skepticism,” address the question of change from a more explicitly normative angle than the other articles in this issue. They start by analyzing Michael Oakeshott's distinction between the politics of faith and the politics of skepticism. Oakeshott is (as are Teles and Kaliner) by and large more sympathetic to the latter, which generally encourages a move toward conservatism in politics and policy. But skepticism is not always the right choice, and it is not always conservative—and therein lies the value of Oakeshott's framework. The authors then apply the Oakeshottian approach to three complex and controversial policy arenas: school choice, public health, and Social Security. In so doing, Teles and Kaliner exemplify *Perspectives'* bridge-building mission and contribute a more sophisticated frame of reference to these policy disputes than they usually enjoy.

The next article takes us from politics to policies and back again. In “The Consequences of Public Policy for Democratic Citizenship,” Suzanne Mettler and Joe Soss point to a curious lacuna in political scientists' study of citizenship and policy debate. As a group, we appear to be more inclined to adopt a paradigm from another discipline—economics, psychology, sociology, history, or even literature—for studying politics than to focus on a purely political framework, even though we do not lack the concepts to develop the latter. Mettler and Soss bring together an array of scattered political tools and use them to construct a *political* argument about how policy choices shape the citizenry, who then face a new set of choices about priorities and alternatives that reshapes the citizenry, who then face . . . This dynamic affects who engages, how, why, what participants get from government, and how the government itself is thereby changed. Mettler and Soss do not themselves investigate the normative implications of their new framework, but it could easily extend into discussions of distributive justice, democratic deliberation, and theories of rights.

The final article in the opening section of *Perspectives* takes the broadest and most ambitious look at change of them all. C. Mantzavinos, Douglass North, and Syed Shariq provide a bird's-eye view of all learning, from individual to institutional and societal, in “Learning, Institutions, and Economic Performance.” They argue that the phenomenon of learning by an individual can be understood to be essentially the same

thing as “learning” by an institution or even a polity, so we need not be stymied by the problems of moving across levels of analysis. Not surprisingly, their primary concern is the effect of learning on economic performance, but along the way, they show how learning affects the growth of political institutions and, eventually, political performance.

Andrew Hurrell’s article “America and the World” continues our newly invented genre of syllabi review essays. Hurrell analyzes about 30 undergraduate and graduate syllabi on U.S. foreign policy, exploring their virtues, defects, and idiosyncrasies—at least as seen by someone from the other side of the pond. Using the syllabi as a window into U.S. foreign policy, Hurrell finds that the subfield incorporates a constructive mix of cases and abstractions, realism and liberalism, policy and politics. It could, however, become more sophisticated if scholars achieved greater critical distance from the subject matter and greater theoretical integration with the broad field of international relations. Hurrell then offers suggestions on how to chase down those elusive goals of deeper perspective and higher theory. The essay should be of use not only to those teaching in the subfield, but also to anyone searching for ways to step back from his or her own intense involvement with a given subject.

In sharp contrast to Mantzavinos et al., Michael Smith in “One Piece at a Time” gives us a microcosmic study of change—on one bill, in one legislative house, over the course of one day. He guides us through the intricacies of political maneuvering (which William Riker called a heresthetic), thereby showing how “losers in politics sometimes become winners,” to quote Kenneth Shepsle from an earlier issue of *Perspectives*. Timing, sequencing, appeals to morality as well as common sense, and incremental maneuvering (plus a soupçon of personal dislike and professional jealousy) turned a few losing amendments to an all-important redistricting bill into winning amendments only hours later. The story is fascinating and the implications provocative.

The final set of essays will be, we hope, unique in the history of *Perspectives on Politics*. In the summer of 2002, at age 91, Gabriel Almond submitted an essay to the journal, titled “Who Lost the Chicago School of Political Science?” I am glad to remember that we corresponded about it and that he was planning to work with Henry Brady on revisions and

further development. Professor Almond died, however, in December 2002. This is possibly, therefore, his last piece of sustained academic writing. The published essay has been copyedited for clarity and ease of exposition but not substantively changed. Additionally, we have commentaries from two scholars, Kristen Monroe and Michael Neblo, who are deeply knowledgeable about the “Chicago school.” They are perhaps more critical of it or its successors than Professor Almond was, but he would have enjoyed the exchange, as we trust that readers of *Perspectives* will.

In this first issue of a new volume of *Perspectives*, it seems worthwhile to remind readers of our unusual decision-making process. The five associate editors and I solicit some articles, and we plan to do even more of that in hopes of obtaining broad, bridge-building articles of the type that scholars seldom begin on their own. We also consider all proposals or manuscripts that come in over the transom. In order to develop

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the unusual type of article for which *Perspectives* was established, the editorial staff discusses all submissions, notifies most authors that their manuscripts are inappropriate for the journal, and sends suggestions for revision to the rest. Most revised manuscripts undergo the usual three double-blind reviews; from that point on, the process becomes more like that of the conventional academic journal.

However, we do much more intensive editing than do most journals, and we give ourselves considerable maneuvering room if reviews come in mixed, as they frequently do with wide-ranging and often controversial articles. In short, like an acquisitions editor at an academic press, we—in conjunction with expert reviewers in various fields—work closely to develop a small number of manuscripts for publication.

Our rationale for selection is simple but, we believe, compelling: any other process would not generate articles with the scope, synthetic quality, elegance of writing, clarity of argument, and attention to issues of immediate or enduring political importance to which *Perspectives* aspires. Perhaps those of you who have been less than pleased with our timing, decisions, or process of negotiation can take comfort in the words of the immortal Mark Twain: “How often we recall, with regret, that Napoleon once shot at a magazine editor and missed him and killed a publisher. But we remember, with charity, that his intentions were good.”