

Counterpoint

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I read the editor's comments on the John R. Alford and John R. Hibbing's piece in *Perspectives on Politics* 2:4 ("The Origins of Politics") with growing bemusement. She suggests, in her editorial summary, that "political science may yet witness its own version of the Darwinian revolution that roiled biology and Christianity more than a century ago." Yes, it is indeed a revolution—but it is one that has been underway for some forty years and has engaged literally hundreds of political scientists in this country and abroad. The article (and consequently her summary) leaves the reader quite unaware of almost all of the following.

The first article dealing with the significance of evolutionary theory for students of political behavior was published in the *Midwest Journal of Political Science* in 1968; the International Political Science Association formally established a Research Committee on Biology and Politics in 1970, and this committee has sponsored panels not only at IPSA meetings but, for at least the past half-dozen years, also at APSA's annual convention; the Association for Politics and the Life Sciences was established in the late 1970s, has several hundred members, has published a journal (*Politics and the Life Sciences*) for some twenty years, and for many years was an affiliated organization of, and sponsored panels at, APSA's annual meeting; the series entitled *Research in Biopolitics* has published some eight volumes since 1991; the literature of this "movement" now subsumes perhaps a thousand articles, at least a couple of dozen books, and has explored the relevance of an evolutionary approach for almost all of the major fields recognized by our discipline; the *British Journal of Political Science* has published two articles describing this development in political science, and it has also been noted by several historians dealing with the resurgence of evolutionary thinking in the social sciences (see, for instance, Carl Degler's *In Search of Human Nature* [1991]); and, to mention only one more relevant point, a doctoral program specializing in this area has been offered at Northern Illinois University for the past two decades.

In short, the revolution is hardly in its infancy (ah, those were the days!), but is now approaching its 40th

year. I am truly sorry that so much of this history seems to have escaped the article's attention; it would have given *Perspectives'* readers a much better understanding of what we have sought to accomplish, where we have succeeded—and where, so far, we have not.

That said, I am happy to welcome the authors to the cause. Middle-aged revolutions (and, sigh, even more mature revolutionaries) need all the help they can get.

Albert Somit, Carlsbad, California



Susanne Hoerber Rudolph's 2004 presidential address to the APSA, published in *Perspectives on Politics* 3:1 ("The Imperialism of Categories"), advocates attention to specificity, contextualization, and interpretation. These are admirable goals, essential for good scholarship in the third millennium. Nevertheless, her argument has some troubling implications. I am particularly concerned with Rudolph's discussions of survey research and of the philosophy of Edmund Burke—topics not as unconnected as they may appear to be.

Part of Susanne Rudolph's address is based upon research that she and Lloyd Rudolph directed in Tamil Nadu, almost half a century ago now. She argues against the export of Western research categories and particularly "methodological individualism," stating that "in village India [in 1957] the individual was not the unit of opinion." But as a brief mention of "the village woman" suggests (and the article in which this survey was reported makes clear) the problem was less with individuals as such than with low-caste rural women. Unlike "compliant" suburban American housewives, these Dalit women apparently resisted the "simple two-person interaction" that American survey researchers expected. The result was public, group discussions of the questions posed. From this fact, Rudolph infers that those women had, for cultural reasons, no separate identity or views. However, rural Indian women's views on, for example, contraception and the desirability of education for girls, have been recorded, and they are

not such as would be expressed to strange men or with husbands and others present. Nor are such views politically irrelevant.

It is not surprising that the Rudolphs' Indian interviewers, MA students, "city boys," found it virtually impossible to speak one-on-one with Dalit women or to take their views seriously. What is disappointing is Rudolph's interpretation. Although in this piece she refers knowledgeably to caste structures in India, she indicates no awareness of the gender structures that still make Dalit women the most excluded and devalued category in the country. In fact, Susanne Rudolph presents her own search for the views of individual Dalit women as an example of a mistaken application of Lockean liberal analysis, what the Rudolphs have labeled Western "imperialism of categories." In so doing, she rejects the views of individuals under circumstances where community practices make those views difficult to ascertain and discount their importance. Worldwide, these continue to be the problems encountered when seeking the voices of women, especially those who are multiply disadvantaged.

There is no need to turn to paternalism and communitarianism as an alternative to some version of survey research. When I proposed in the 1980s to survey politically relevant views of rural Catholic women, I was told that those women were so "traditional" and apolitical as to be negligible. I was also told that we would not get candid responses about sexuality (especially in Quebec) or political preferences (especially in France). Local women served as interviewers and helped to prepare the schedule of questions. We obtained the information we were told was unobtainable. And we were able to demonstrate that our subjects had a significant level of political sophistication and involvement.

Rudolph's article suggests that gender analysis has not yet had much influence on the profession. Perhaps that is part of the reason why she is comfortable with presenting the very conservative Edmund Burke as a model. In any case, Rudolph's version of Burke is seriously incomplete. The attractive figure she evokes is sympathetic to causes we tend to cherish today, such as respect for Europe's colonial subjects and the valorization of places and of ancient cultures. But the Burke of this article does not seem to have commented on the French Revolution; his ferocious response to that hardly fits the benign image of him presented. Burke's respect for Indian culture is certainly praiseworthy. All the same, *pace* Harold Laski (as cited by Rudolph), it is hard to imagine that Burke would have sympathized with the campaign for *swaraj*. Nor does it seem likely that he would have agreed with Gandhi's empowerment of the Dalits that Rudolph implicitly endorses, or his empowerment of women that she does not mention.

Burke's philosophy encourages pragmatism and moderation, which are usually good. It also includes resistance to change, which is a much more questionable character-

istic. Here again attention to gender is relevant. Tradition has tended to support the subordination of women, if only because it has always existed. John Stuart Mill—properly chided by Rudolph for accepting the "infantilization" of colonial subjects—was more clear-sighted about women. Like feminists in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries, he recognized both women's entitlement to equality and the specificity of women's condition. But for Burke, specificity always trumped equality.

Burke's views about the French Revolution were directly challenged by Mary Wollstonecraft in a *Vindication of the Rights of Man*, which made her famous. Her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* followed, initially provoked by the Revolution's refusal to include women among citizens of the Republic. We can doubt whether the antirevolutionary Burke would have been any more willing to recognize women as equals. It is not necessary to be wildly Lockean (or Rousseauvian) to be uneasy about following the man who argued against the responsibility of elected officials to their constituents, and who had the generous, warm-hearted, and egalitarian Wollstonecraft as an opponent.

Naomi Black, Professor Emerita, York University, Toronto



The graduated income tax is widely approved because it is believed to help the poor and penalize the rich (see Larry M. Bartels, "Homer Gets a Tax Cut," and Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, "Abandoning the Middle," *Perspectives on Politics* 3:1). It indeed does penalize the rich, but its effect on the poor is not clear. By weakening the motives for hard work and saving by our most productive citizens, it lowers the entire GNP. If this is similar to most taxes, almost all of them lead to less activity in the field taxed. Thus we would build more expensive houses were it not for the real estate tax. Having said this as a general economic proposition, I must admit that I have no idea how large the effect is, nor any suggestions as to how to measure it.

The people interested in helping the poor sometimes seem to be in favor of the graduated income tax in the belief that it reduces the inequality of post-tax incomes. Indeed it does by reducing the after-tax income of the better off, but it does not automatically raise the income of the poor. People who favor raising the income of the poor normally favor this in order to help the poor, not to adjust the income distribution for more equality.

In general, taxes taken from the highest-income people are not specifically allocated to the poor. Thus reducing the income tax for the upper income people would not necessarily lower transfers to the poor. It might be, of course, that the budget would be balanced by raising the tax rates at the lower levels or by reducing relief levels. Either would increase the degree of the inequality. This is

not, however, a necessary consequence. Cutting back on the money now spent to keep farm products expensive would be one way of saving money when the tax is reduced. It also is a way of helping the poor, albeit more the poor outside the United States than inside.

One sector that would unambiguously lose from a reduction of the upper levels of the income tax would be that very prosperous group, tax accountants. From the standpoint of the economy as a whole, however, this would be a net gain. They are highly talented and intelligent people and accustomed to working hard, particularly in early April. If they were switched to some other activity, the economy would gain.

It is true, of course, that reducing the degree of progressivity of the income tax might well reduce the total taxes received and possibly that reduction would be made up by taking money away from the poor. This seems unlikely, however. It is true that the poor are relatively politically weak and the wealthy politically strong. But still, it doesn't seem likely that changing the Kerry family wealth, for example, so they can have six mansions instead of five, would immediately reduce our payments to the poor.

Altogether, reducing the tax on our most productive citizens would not necessarily reduce the transfer income now received by our least productive. Helping the poor is widely held to be a desirable objective. High taxes on the rich, however, are irrelevant to that goal.

Gordon Tullock, George Mason University School of Law



Mark A. Graber's "Constitutionalism and Political Science: Imaginative Scholarship, Unimaginative Teaching" (*Perspectives on Politics* 3:1) raises thoughtful questions and commentary about teaching undergraduate constitutional law. He argues that while the political science research has moved beyond a Supreme Court focus on constitutional law doctrine to engaging broader questions raised by recent scholarship, teaching of this subject remains fixed to the tried and true mini law professor model.

Assuming Graber is correct, why do political scientists continue to teach constitutional law the same old way, despite scholarly advances? Several hypotheses are possible, and can be formulated in terms of another old tried and true format—the multiple choice question.

QUESTION. The reason why the teaching of undergraduate constitutional law fails to incorporate recent public law scholarship is:

- a. Graber is right—we are unimaginative.
- b. Graber confuses constitutional law with judicial process classes.
- c. Graber confuses undergraduate and graduate teaching.

- d. Political scientists who teach public law are confused about their role and purposes.
- e. Lack of relevance of the scholarship.
- f. Lack of nerve on the part of faculty to introduce the scholarship.
- g. All of the above.

The correct answer is g. Why?

Political scientists may be unimaginative teachers (a). Many teach the way they learned the material, be it as an undergraduate, graduate, or in law school. Moreover, it may be hard or time-consuming to integrate the public law scholarship into a constitutional law class. Few have that leisure, preferring to adopt the method of doing what was previously learned. Additionally, with so little emphasis placed on teaching skills in graduate training, many might instead work from a preexisting syllabus.

The failure to integrate public law scholarship into constitutional law may be driven by what one can teach in a three- or four-credit class in one or two semesters. In response, many may teach a judicial process class that does more of the "political sciency" stuff that Graber calls for. Here one might engage attitudinal models or look at the endless statistical analyses of *cert.* petition voting and speculate on its meaning as far as the courts and judges being political actors.

In judicial process classes, professors may reference cases from constitutional law and explore political and institutional factors; conversely, in constitutional law, one might actually raise questions about law and politics that are not reflected in the syllabus (b). A division of labor in classes between constitutional law and judicial process may suggest that the pedagogic objectives of each class are different, but by putting a couple of classes together professors may be more imaginative than Graber suggests.

Undergraduate and graduate teaching are different (c). For undergraduates, professors may still be working on basic analytical skills, with learning how to read and understand a court case being one of them. Undergraduate teaching by the case law method may also be a way of explaining the constitutional fabric of what holds the American political system together. Graduate teaching is different. Students are taught what is at the bleeding edge of scholarship, seeking to develop in them new research skills to become scholars. They must master the field of public law for their exams and to have a frame of reference for dissertation literature reviews. Expectations and skills between graduate and undergraduate students are thus different. Graber's complaint slights that difference.

Are political scientists confused about their roles (d)? Maybe yes. First they may be confused about what political science is. For those at the bleeding edge of scholarship, case law analysis seems pedestrian and old-fashioned, but many still believe that examination of Court doctrine is legitimate political science. Moreover, if one goal

in teaching undergraduates is to prepare them to be responsible citizens, getting them to understand what the law is, what the Constitution says, or what free speech means, is closer to what an educated adult reading the *New York Times* would say is important than would be what much of our scholarship says it is. The bleeding-edge stuff is interesting to us; but it may not be suitable for the task of preparing undergraduates to be citizens and voters.

If political scientists are confused about whether we are producing citizens or future public law scholars, we are also confused about whether we are training students for law school. Political science is a law school feeder, and many professors feel that they are helping prepare students for it. Constitutional law is taken in law school, but it is taught differently than a good undergraduate class can be. The latter can place the law into a liberal arts perspective that is often missing in law school. Finally, the case law approach is perhaps what most students want in a constitutional law course. Is it a crime to be attentive to the needs or interests of students?

Maybe the literature that Graber references is not relevant to undergraduate constitutional law classes (e). Many might assert that some of the high-powered statistical studies or nuanced discussions of institutionalism may be of

interest to us, but not suitable in an undergraduate pedagogy.

Finally, is the failure to integrate as Graber suggests merely a lack of nerve on the part of faculty (f)? Do we lack confidence in what we research, write, and publish such that we do not have the nerve to introduce our undergraduates to what we do? Maybe that is the case. Perhaps we are too used to writing for tenure and one another and not to engaging students and the public. Only a small number of undergraduates plan to become political scientists or go to graduate school. Is that a choice reflected, in part, by our failure to write stuff that engages them in the study of public law? Perhaps so.

As one who believes scholars have a public duty to speak to larger audiences, maybe our scholarship needs to reach to a broader public, including students. Wouldn't that be a nifty thing to do?

Alas, (g) is the right answer for all the reasons cited above.

David Schultz, Hamline University

See also Jeremy Pressman's "Historical Schools and Political Science: An Arab-Israeli History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict," in this issue.