

the low intercoder reliability across sets of quantitative data, the lack of updates to data sets based on revised histories, the sampling of data on dependent variables, and so on—all just as credibly could have come from his positivists consistently applying their own standards. If there is a case to be made that the absence of Deweyan pragmatic historiography prevents them from doing so, it is not here. An approach to political inquiry based on the precepts of *Designing Social Inquiry* has its problems, but these are not among the sins we can lay at King, Keohane, and Verba's feet alone.

The disengagement and irrelevance of political science research is in great part due to the influence of positivism—or, more precisely, to the influence of the debate between what Richard Bernstein has called a “positivist temper” in political science and its unreflective opponents (see Bernstein, *The Reconstruction of Social and Political Theory*, 1976). Dewey's pragmatism can explain why this influence is so pernicious. But Deweyan pragmatism would also examine how the institutional and political contexts within which political science operates—the research university and American political liberalism—have encouraged positivism's influence on the way that political scientists craft their disciplinary identity around their status as “scientists” and their choice of methodological exemplars. Isacoff's account downplays or omits these factors. And pragmatism would inform a far more radical criticism than Isacoff's of how political scientists do political inquiry, starting with the very identification of social inquiry as an explanatory and predictive science. The author's accounts of positivism in Chapter 1 suggest that he finds an explanatory-predictive model problematic, but he does not pursue that line of criticism, not even where that model informs King, Keohane, and Verba's demotion of qualitative research to an intermediate stage of properly scientific quantitative research.

Despite my sympathy for Isaacoff's goals and my shared affinity for Deweyan pragmatism, I believe that these limitations severely weaken Isaacoff's argument. The problems that drive this argument are real and deserve our attention. But this book does not give them the critical attention they require.

The Place of Families: Fostering Capacity, Equality, and Responsibility. By Linda C. McClain. Cambridge, MA:

Harvard University Press, 2006. 392p. \$45.00.

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— Joan C. Tronto, *Hunter College*

Linda McClain's excellent book provides a comprehensive account of the political issues concerning families in United States public policy and a coherent perspective from which to evaluate proposals for change in these policies. Writing as a liberal feminist, McClain has an approach that will not please everyone, but since her starting point takes

families seriously as political units, no serious discussant in these debates can ignore this book.

In recent years, conservative critics have proposed a number of policies aimed at strengthening American families, and attribute the weakening of personal responsibility to a decline in a flourishing family life. At the same time, gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people have pushed hard for a more inclusive form of marriage that permits same-sex marriage. McClain carefully assesses all of these competing arguments, documenting their internal logic and leading claims. She shares with many conservatives a concern about the fate of families in the United States and about the need for strong families to serve as “seedbeds of democracy.” Yet in holding firmly to her original concern, she also demonstrates that concern for families in a liberal, democratic society requires a commitment not just to one value but to three: As the subtitle suggests, families are critical in fostering capacities, equality, and responsibility. In a liberal society, McClain argues, it is not possible to separate out these three values and accomplish any one of them thoroughly without also keeping the other two values in balance. In this way, she spells out a coherent and far-reaching liberal feminist vision of new family policies that “melds liberal and feminist principles, while finding a place for civic republican concerns for fostering civic virtue” (p. 17).

The author begins by establishing liberal principles under which it is legitimate for the government to intervene in family life. As no one can any longer seriously maintain that families are unaffected by government policy (even J. S. Mill argued for such interventions), the question then becomes: What principles should guide such intervention? McClain argues that the constraint of allowing individuals autonomy means that liberal governments cannot intervene to protect any old value that occurs to them as worthy. So, she begins the text by arguing that government involvement with families must be guided by the principle of “toleration as respect,” which she illustrates with a discussion of the Supreme Court's opinion overturning Texas's sodomy statute, *Lawrence v. Texas* (2005). If liberal governments are committed to democratic values, then, they can only make three concerns their central “family values”: fostering individual capacity for self-government, fostering equality, and fostering responsibility.

This is thus a strong defense of creating a “place for families” that goes beyond lip service to serious changes that will foster family life. In arguing for government's role in fostering capacities for self-government, McClain describes the purposes of families both in terms of raising children and caring for infirm members, and also in terms of fostering the ongoing autonomy and capacity of adults to care for themselves and each other. Thus, she argues, “Government could adopt laws and policies that create incentives for and remove obstacles to both fathers and mothers investing in care-giving and market labor” (p. 78).

She also argues “that government may foster capacities for forming and sustaining committed, intimate relationships” (p. 154), but this does not mean that she agrees with so-called marriage promotion. After a careful examination of the arguments made by marriage promoters and assessment of the evidence, for example, that marriage promotes social health, improves the conditions for children’s welfare, and stops poverty, she finds that these arguments are not compelling on the basis of the evidence. On the other hand, she argues that promoting relationships among equals, urging both parties to take responsibility for caring in the family, and limiting work demands on family life may be a positive direction for supporting “healthy marriage.”

By themselves, these claims do not seem controversial. The elegance of McClain’s argument becomes clear in the next step: As she examines recent policies that seem to be aimed at one or another of these three goals (for example, the favoring of marriage incorporated into welfare reform, as a way of fostering responsibility), many seem to run afoul of the other two goals while trying to uphold one of them. She insists that liberal policies toward families must promote all three goals. Adherence to all three provides clear guidance about which kinds of government policies toward families are acceptable and which ones are not.

Thus, McClain seems to share with communitarians a concern that governments foster individuals’ growth and development in the family, that families are the “seedbeds of virtue.” Having agreed with that position, though, she then insists that government policies that do not respect different sexual orientations, for example, cannot meet the test of serving as a seedbed of virtue because they are intolerant. She thus argues for a number of seemingly controversial family proposals: same-sex marriage, kinship registration, equality in sharing housework and caring duties, and comprehensive (rather than abstinence-only) sex education in schools.

Consider, for example, McClain’s argument for comprehensive sex education. Through a careful analysis of the content of “abstinence-only” programs, the author discovers that arguments about abstinence have a necessarily narrow understanding of human sexuality (in which everything is couched in terms of the dangers of sexual intercourse), which, she believes, hinders individuals’ capacities for understanding their own desire and thus their capacity to be self-governing. At the same time, such programs assign different views about sexuality to boys and girls and thus perpetuate a view of male irresponsibility in matters of sexuality.

Perhaps the most controversial chapter is McClain’s defense of same-sex marriage. She argues that “inequality among families” is as unjustifiable as inequality within families, and therefore argues that same-sex marriages should be permitted by law. In a close analysis of the *Goodridge* opinion (2004), she sides with the Supreme

Court of Massachusetts in their view that “civil marriage is an evolving paradigm,” and recalls the principle of toleration that she has set out. There is no reason, if marriage is a good, to deny it to gay and lesbian citizens.

In response to other recent feminist claims that marriage should be abolished entirely (a claim made by some gay and lesbian opponents to marriage and by Martha Fineman, who believes that the bond between caregiver and dependent should define family units), McClain continues to defend the importance of marriage. Nonetheless, the principles of equality and responsibility also demand that other forms of family relationships be respected, and so she favors a system of “kinship registration” that would permit families to receive state support for the various arrangements that they might make. Such registration, rather than weakening the family, she argues, would strengthen it.

There are limitations, of course, to McClain’s approach. In being almost entirely U.S.-focused, McClain does not consider proposals such as a family allowance, a policy in existence in all other industrialized states. Nor does she pay much attention to the kinds of inequalities among families that result from unequal economic circumstances (and their correlates, housing, education, safety, etc.). She runs up against the familiar objections raised against liberals about tolerance. Those who do not share her view of respect for others, for example, will probably continue to argue that same-sex marriage embodies proscribed evils, rather than that it disrespects people who deserve to be respected. But no matter. This book is well argued, surveys most of the ongoing issues in family policy, and demonstrates what a creative, coherent, liberal approach to family policy might entail.

Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy. By Diana C. Mutz. New York:

Cambridge University Press, 2006. 184p. \$60.00 cloth, \$20.99 paper.

Citizen Speak: The Democratic Imagination in American Life. By Andrew J. Perrin. Chicago: University of Chicago

Press, 2006. 208p. \$45.00 cloth, \$19.00 paper.

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Deliberative democracy is no longer reserved for the theorists. Empiricists now want a part of the action. With their various tools, social scientists are testing and considering both deliberative democratic institutions (e.g., juries, town hall meetings, deliberative polls, and other fora for citizen discussion) and the preconditions of context and character that theorists have proposed are necessary to make deliberative democracy work. Political scientist Diana Mutz and sociologist Andrew Perrin have written new books purporting to bring empirical work to bear on the claims of deliberative democratic theory. Both books are short and illuminating, though their postures as serious