

The Rule of Law, Democracy, and Intelligence

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The foundation of democracy is faith in the capacities of human nature; faith in human intelligence and in the power of pooled and cooperative experience. It is not belief that these things are complete but that if given a show they will grow and be able to generate progressively the knowledge and wisdom needed to guide collective action (John Dewey, “Democracy and Educational Administration,” 1937).

I began drafting this Introduction on July 30, 2013, the day that Bradley (now Chelsea) Manning was convicted on 19 of 21 charges, including 6 counts of espionage, in a U.S. military court martial. Manning is a former U.S. Army intelligence analyst who covertly conveyed to WikiLeaks a massive file of over 700,000 classified documents—including battlefield reports from Iraq, reports from Afghanistan, and State Department cables—thereby publicly disclosing extensive information about U.S. military conduct, and misconduct, of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Manning was subjected to harsh treatment, including solitary confinement during the first nine months of his detention, sparking public outcry and leading a UN Special Rapporteur on Torture to hold that his detention represented cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment.

Manning’s conviction, and the 35-year prison sentence he recently received, highlights the importance of legal and political controversies surrounding the leaking of classified documents and their rapid and extensive dissemination online. Much more is at stake in these controversies than the definition of “national security” or the right of the government to exercise broad prerogatives in its name. Manning’s disclosure of official secrets of broad public relevance raises the broadest possible questions about the meaning of intelligence in a democracy based on the rule of law. These issues are not limited to the United States, as the related controversies surrounding Edward Snowden make clear. Snowden, a 30-year old former defense contractor, has been charged by the United States under the Espionage Act for leaking information to reporters about the National Security Agency’s worldwide surveillance and data-gathering networks. Blocked from travel after the United States revoked his passport and issued an international arrest warrant, Snowden spent weeks in a Moscow airport before being

granted temporary asylum in Russia. This set off a diplomatic firestorm between the United States and Russia. More importantly, Snowden’s revelations about NSA spying sparked an outcry among European states that have long been allies of the United States in the “war on terror,” only to discover that the communications of their own citizens have also been the target of NSA surveillance. The apparent complicity of the United States and United Kingdom governments in harassing the London *Guardian* and its writer, Glenn Greenwald—in the vanguard of publishing Snowden’s revelations—raises fundamental questions about the tensions between counterterrorism and state-defined “national security,” on the one hand, and liberal democracy on the other (on these questions, I recommend Archon Fung’s “What the Snowden Affair Tells Us About American Democracy,” published in *Boston Review* and accessible online at <http://www.bostonreview.net/blog/what-snowden-affair-tells-us-about-american-democracy>). Given the importance of these questions within and beyond academic circles, we have decided to use our special book review section to feature books on the rule of law.

Our lead article, Wendy H. Wong and Peter A. Brown’s “E-Bandits in Global Activism: WikiLeaks, Anonymous, and the Politics of No One,” could not be more timely. Wong and Brown argue that new digital technologies have introduced a new kind of political actor—hacktivists such as WikiLeaks and Anonymous—and a new kind of political agency, which, drawing on Eric Hobsbawm, they call “extraordinary bandits” (e-bandits). “Using anonymizing technologies to create a transnational ‘politics of no one,’ e-bandits are principled actors that capitalize on the Internet and other information technologies to lead disembodied, virtual attacks against physical targets in order to encourage political change.” Wong and Brown explore the dynamics of this hacktivist politics, its historical novelty, and the practical and normative challenges that such a dispersed, virtual, and anonymous form of political agency presents to conventional ways of thinking about international relations, political resistance, and politics more generally. The theme of digital politics has become a major concern of political scientists interested in a wide range of

topics, from civil liberties to social movements and so-called “Twitter revolutions.” As Wong and Brown suggest, the new technologies do more than present new challenges for public policy or empower (and sometimes disempower) new social movements. They lay the basis for unique and destabilizing forms of transnational agency that have the potential to profoundly anonymize, “desubstantialize,” and level conventional forms of political organization and authority. Indeed, as this issue of *Perspectives* goes to press, news reports indicate that the Syrian Electronic Army—an Assad-linked entity which recently carried out successful electronic attacks on the *New York Times* and Twitter—may have recently been successfully hacked by Anonymous—one more sign of the importance of hacktivist politics and of the networks that proceed beneath the surface of international politics.

Daniel Nexon and Alexander Cooley’s “‘The Empire Will Compensate You’: The Structural Dynamics of the U.S. Overseas Basing Network” considers the role of overseas bases in both U.S. foreign policy and in global politics more generally. As Nexon and Cooley write: “The U.S. basing network not only plays a critical role in American global force projection, but it also enmeshes Washington in the domestic politics of its numerous base hosts, shapes bilateral relations, and sometimes becomes a flashpoint for anti-Americanism. Shifting strategic priorities and the current pressure on U.S. defense budgets may lead to major transformations in the nature and distribution of the basing network. In every region of the world—from East Asia to Latin America—the changing politics of basing will have profound ramifications for global order and international security.” Nexon and Cooley draw on network theory and on recent discussions of “imperial orders.” Following John Ikenberry, they argue that the U.S. basing system has a “neo-imperial logic,” and that the complex, hybrid form this system takes is a source of both strength and vulnerability (this concern with the fragility of order is an important connection between their article and the piece by Wong and Brown). As they write: “The hybrid character of the basing network risks producing many of the pathologies found in imperial systems, but without the full range of benefits empires realize from their organizational logic. In fact, contemporary globalization processes—such as enhanced global communications and opportunities for transnational mobilization—exacerbate these pathologies. They render Washington more vulnerable to credible *threats of exit* from host countries, *coordinated resistance* to aspects of U.S. basing policy, and *hypocrisy costs* endemic to maintaining heterogeneous bargains with diverse base-hosting regimes. Associated processes that once took decades now play out over a few years.” (Amanda Murdie’s discussion of Andrew Yeo’s *Activists, Alliances, and Anti-U.S. Base Protests*, which appears in our review section, is usefully read alongside this discussion. And though Kevin Morrison’s “Whither the

Resource Curse?” focuses primarily on questions of distribution and development, it also touches on the geopolitics of oil, a subject with obvious connections to U.S. basing and force projection).

If our first two articles highlight the fissiparous character of contemporary global politics, our remaining three articles center on the limits of “domestic” politics within the nation-state.

Deborah Boucoyannis’s “The Equalizing Hand: Why Adam Smith Thought the Market Should Produce Wealth Without Steep Inequality” challenges widely accepted readings of Smith as a defender of market-based inequalities. Boucoyannis argues that “Smith’s system, if fully implemented, would not allow steep inequalities to arise. In Smith, profits should be low and labor wages high, legislation in favor of the worker is ‘always just and equitable,’ land should be distributed widely and evenly, inheritance laws liberalized, taxation can be high if it is equitable, and the science of the legislator is necessary to put the system in motion and keep it aligned.” This argument represents an important contribution to recent revisionist readings of Smith offered by historians of political thought. But it also does much more, by linking this re-reading of Smith to important recent scholarship by scholars of U.S. politics and comparative politics interested in distributive politics. As Boucoyannis writes: “Smith’s diagnosis is strikingly close to some of the most progressive analyses today. In the United States, unequal outcomes have been traced both to special interests actively shaping legislation and to deliberate failure of legislative elites to counteract such pressures, what Hacker and Pierson have called ‘winner-take-all’ politics. Similarly, Smith dissects the ‘special interests’ that distorted economic policy in his time. This is normally glossed as specific to his critique of Mercantilism, but his strictures apply to any system where some groups ‘live by profit.’ The persistent theme of [Smith’s] *Wealth of Nations* is how such groups can and do deceive legislatures and the public.” Boucoyannis thus reads Smith as a critic of capitalist rent-seeking and as an advocate of political reform, and “wise legislation,” in order to “incentivize economic rationality and counterbalance wealth asymmetries.”

If Boucoyannis contributes to discussions of the possibilities of liberal reform, Eric Patashnik and Julian Zelizer’s “The Struggle to Remake Politics: Liberal Reform and the Limits of Policy Feedback in the Contemporary American State” centers on the *obstacles* to “sustainable reform” in American politics. The authors “develop an argument about the obstacles to durable liberal reform in the modern American state . . . [and] the conditions under which policy breakthroughs can refashion the political context in ways that actually entrench and deepen the reforms themselves.” Patashnik and Zelizer argue that such entrenchment and deepening is far from automatic, and is indeed “contingent, conditional, and contested.”

They outline the range of institutional, temporal, and strategic factors in play, and consider the ways that these come together during the enactment and especially the postenactment phases of legislative reform. They then employ this framework to analyze the forces shaping the two major reform efforts of the Obama administration, the Affordable Care Act and the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, as well as the postenactment challenges facing these reforms. Their basic point is that the challenge of durable reform is not merely to pass reform legislation but to develop the conditions under which enacted reforms can actually sustain popular and elite support and thus be effectively executed.

As Patashnik and Zelizer conclude: “President Obama’s difficult leadership situation reflects not just the snags and setbacks that are to be expected whenever an administration seeks to implement an ambitious agenda, but also the forbidding terrain of the Policy State. Given the dense infrastructure of existing public policies, agencies, and organized interest groups in Washington, the project of sustaining reforms that can deliver enduring value to citizens has become enormously challenging.” This account is wonderfully complemented by Andrew Rudalevige’s “Narrowcasting the Obama Presidency,” which discusses six recent books that “seek to place Obama in a broader context—in the tactics and strategies of presidential leadership, in the ebb and flow of American institutional history, in the span of American political thought, and of course in the shifting intersection of race and politics in the United States. While these books certainly discuss Barack Obama as person and chief executive, they are not really about President Obama. Rather, they are about the larger meaning of the Obama Presidency.”

The Obama Presidency is impossible to fully understand outside of the fraught history of American racism and racial politics, a point underscored by many of the books discussed by Rudalevige, especially Desmond S. King and Rogers M. Smith’s *Still a House Divided: Race and Politics in Obama’s America* and Frederick C. Harris’s *The Price of the Ticket: Barack Obama and the Rise and Decline of Black Politics*. Keith G. Bentele and Erin E. O’Brien’s “Jim Crow 2.0?: Why States Consider and Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies” addresses an ominous development of recent years with clear racial significance: “the increasing proposal and passage of state laws that place new restrictions on various aspects of both the voter registration process and the opportunity to actually cast a ballot. Required photo identification or proof of citizenship to vote, more stringent regulation of groups or individuals who aim to register new voters, shortened early voting periods, repeal of same-day voter registration, and increased restrictions on voting by felons exemplify the different types of policies that have been proposed and adopted in various states since the mid-2000s.” Bentele

and O’Brien seek “to bring empirical clarity and epistemological standards to what has been a deeply charged, partisan and frequently anecdotal debate . . . [by using] multiple specialized regression approaches to examine factors associated with both the proposal and adoption of restrictive voter access legislation from 2006–11.” They find that “proposal and passage are highly partisan, strategic, and racialized affairs . . . consistent with a scenario in which the targeted demobilization of minority voters and African Americans is a central driver of recent legislative developments.” In assessing the evidence, Bentele and O’Brien also place these recent developments in a comparative historical context, noting that “the legal regime that emerged following the passage of the Twenty-Fourth Amendment and the Voting Rights Act has made it more difficult to engage in the blunter forms of voter suppression utilized in the past. From this perspective, the recent policy changes examined here are analogous to the restrictive laws and practices in the Jim Crow era designed to achieve discriminatory impacts without violating the Fifteenth Amendment.” (Their account is usefully read alongside Daniel Martinez HoSang’s review of *Race, Reform, and Regulation of the Electoral Process: Recurring Puzzles in American Democracy*, edited by Guy-Uriel E. Charles, Heather K. Gerken, and Michael S. Kang).

Bentele and O’Brien’s article resonates with other work we recently have published, such as Mary Katzenstein, Leila Mohsen Ibrahim and Katherine D. Rubin’s “The Dark Side of American Liberalism and Felony Disenfranchisement” (December 2010), and our symposium on Joe Soss, Richard C. Fording, and Sanford F. Schram’s *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race* (December 2012). Bentele and O’Brien acknowledge this, noting that “useful conceptual links may be drawn between contemporary voter restrictions and recent developments in criminal justice and social welfare policy. In all three of these policy areas racial threat and myths are particularly salient, and the character of state-level legislation is particularly responsive to the racial composition of states.”

The issues raised by Bentele and O’Brien’s very careful empirical analysis are important not simply for scholars of U.S. politics, but for *all* political scientists who study the themes of inclusion and exclusion, democratization and de-democratization—themes that have been at the center of U.S. political science ever since the founding of the American Political Science Association in 1903, and the appearance of the first issue of the *American Political Science Review* in 1906. Indeed, in writing this section of my Introduction, I went back to that first issue of the APSR, and discovered, to my fascination, that two of the issue’s five articles dealt with the same subject discussed by Bentele and O’Brien. The persistence of this issue in U.S. politics is rather striking, and so I take the liberty of reproducing two texts:

The Constitution of the United States as amended provides that “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” These words are plain. Everybody understands them. They mean, and every one knows that they mean, that, from the constitutional point of view, one question relative to the suffrage is no longer open. That question is the very one about which I am asked to write. From the political point of view, from the historical point of view, from the social point of view, from the economic point of view, and from the ethical point of view, there is much to be said about negro suffrage. For centuries yet to come there may be much to be said. From the constitutional point of view, accurately defined, there has been nothing to say since March 30, 1870. On that day the Secretary of State of the United States proclaimed that the Fifteenth Amendment had been ratified by the legislatures of twenty-nine out of the then thirty-seven States. . . . It was made a part of the Constitution for the sole purpose of assuring that from the constitutional point of view there should, as to the suffrage, be no negro question. Yet subconsciously, if not consciously, the great majority of all the white people of the old slave States have felt and feel that the Fifteenth Amendment had no moral sanction and is not binding on their consciences. For more than thirty years every man who has so sworn has known that the Fifteenth Amendment is a part of that Constitution. Yet an overwhelming majority of those Southerners who hold State and elective Federal offices feel that they are morally justified in evading and defeating the admitted purpose of the Fifteenth Amendment. Please bear in mind that I am not making this or any other statement in this paper in the way of either praise or blame (John C. Rose, “Negro Suffrage: The Constitutional Point of View,” pp. 17, 19).

The suffrage clauses recently adopted by six of the Southern States, beginning with Mississippi in 1890 and ending with Virginia in 1902, have disqualified for the elective franchise a majority of the negroes of voting age without appreciably diminishing the possible number of white voters. In other words, there have been racial distinctions in the matter of suffrage without their being so defined in the letter of the law. Now, the question is: Are these suffrage distinctions the only racial distinctions found in the Southern law, either expressed or implied, or are they only members of a group of such distinctions which have been evolving since the negro has been a free man? In this paper it shall be my aim to show briefly that the latter is the case, that there are other racial distinctions recognized in the Southern law, that some of the distinctions once present in Southern codes and constitutions have since been dropped, and that others have been introduced from time to time. And by making the suffrage distinctions only links of a chain, I hope that we shall arrive at some conclusion as to the trend of Southern legislation with regard to the negro (Gilbert Thomas Stephenson, “Racial Distinctions in Southern Law,” p. 44).

Political learning is apparently a difficult and tenuous process. The role of political science—as a body of knowledge, as a set of intellectual and pedagogical practices, and as an organized discipline—in this process is clearly an equally difficult, tenuous, and contested question. Yet it cannot be doubted that this question has been a central preoccupation since the origins of the American Political Science Association, and rightly so. In some ways *this* journal’s very editorial mission, and its vision of serving as “a political science public sphere,” is a testament to the

question’s contemporary valence. And in some ways everything we publish offers an answer of sorts, because we seek to publish research and writing that engages matters of genuine political importance, and that by contributing to a broadening of discussion within the discipline, also contributes to an openness of the discipline to the broader public world beyond it. I thus note, with pleasure, that this issue of *Perspectives* contains two important review essays that reflect directly on these themes: Richard M. Battistoni’s “Should Political Scientists Care About Civic Education?” and Edward W. Gimbel’s “Making Political Science Matter? Phronetic Social Science in Theory and Practice.”

As the text with which I began this Introduction notes, there is a close connection between democracy and intelligence broadly understood. We political scientists no doubt hold many different views about democracy, intelligence, and their connection. At the same time, there can be no doubt that the modern social sciences represent an extraordinary mobilization of specialized social knowledge that is in constant dialogue with the broader forms of “social intelligence” that animate the social world at large. My own way of thinking about these issues is strongly influenced by C. Wright Mills’s *The Sociological Imagination*, and so I bring this introduction to a close by quoting Mills’s preferred vision: “to remain independent, to do one’s own work, to select one’s own problems, but to direct this work *at* kings as well as *to* ‘publics.’ Such a conception prompts us to imagine social science as a sort of public intelligence apparatus, concerned with public issues and private troubles and with the structural trends of our time underlying them both—and to imagine individual social scientists as rational members of a self-controlled association, which we call the social sciences.” Mills’s vision is not the only vision, and indeed while it inspires me in my work as a scholar but also as an editor, it is not the official vision of this journal. *Perspectives on Politics* seeks to promote a *political science* public sphere, something that is at once more disciplinary and more academic in orientation that Mills envisioned. At the same time, the points of overlap are obvious. For, like Dewey, Mills believed that social inquiry is not limited to the work of social scientists, and that the work of social science has the capacity to obscure or to illuminate the important issues of our time. Political science is most definitely a social science. And *Perspectives on Politics* is dedicated to featuring a wide range of political science perspectives on the important issues of our time, in the hope that by being broad and by being interesting, we can promote a lively intellectual culture within the political science discipline, to the benefit of our contributors and readers, but also to the students, universities, and broader public worlds of which we are a part.

Statement of Mission and Procedures

Perspectives on Politics seeks to provide a space for broad and synthetic discussion within the political science profession and between the profession and the broader scholarly and reading publics. Such discussion necessarily draws on and contributes to the scholarship published in the more specialized journals that dominate our discipline. At the same time, *Perspectives* seeks to promote a complementary form of broad public discussion and synergistic understanding within the profession that is essential to advancing scholarship and promoting academic community.

Perspectives seeks to nurture a **political science public sphere**, publicizing important scholarly topics, ideas, and innovations, linking scholarly authors and readers, and promoting broad reflexive discussion among political scientists about the work that we do and why this work matters.

Perspectives publishes work in a number of formats that mirror the ways that political scientists actually write:

Research articles: As a top-tier journal of political science, *Perspectives* accepts scholarly research article submissions and publishes the very best submissions that make it through our double-blind system of peer review and revision. The only thing that differentiates *Perspectives* research articles from other peer-reviewed articles at top journals is that we focus our attention only on work that in some way bridges subfield and methodological divides, and tries to address a broad readership of political scientists about matters of consequence. This typically means that the excellent articles we publish have been extensively revised in sustained dialogue with the editor—me—to

address not simply questions of scholarship but questions of intellectual breadth and readability.

“Reflections” are more reflexive, provocative, or programmatic essays that address important political science questions in interesting ways but are not necessarily as systematic and focused as research articles. These essays often originate as research article submissions, though sometimes they derive from proposals developed in consultation with the editor in chief. Unlike research articles, these essays are not evaluated according to a strict, double-blind peer review process. But they are typically vetted informally with editorial board members or other colleagues, and they are always subjected to critical assessment and careful line-editing by the editor and editorial staff.

Scholarly symposia, critical book dialogues, book review essays, and conventional book reviews are developed and commissioned by the editor in chief, based on authorial queries and ideas, editorial board suggestions, and staff conversations.

Everything published in *Perspectives* is carefully vetted and edited. Given our distinctive mission, we work hard to use our range of formats to organize interesting conversations about important issues and events, and to call attention to certain broad themes beyond our profession’s normal subfield categories.

For further details on writing formats and submission guidelines, see our website at <http://www.apsanet.org/perspectives/>

The Centrality of Books to Political Science and to *Perspectives on Politics*

By Jeffrey C. Isaac, Editor in Chief

Almost half of every issue of *Perspectives* is dedicated to our Review section. This structure of the journal is something that we inherited, for when *Perspectives* was created, it was decided to move the APSA book reviews, which had previously been published in the *APSR*, to *Perspectives*, and to open up the new journal to a range of writing formats.

We inherited this structure, but we also embraced it.

Indeed, I assumed the position of Editor in Chief of the entire journal after having served for four years as the Book Review Editor under the editorship of my predecessor, Jim Johnson. During my tenure as Book Review Editor we made a conscious decision to innovate with this section, by creating new formats—Critical Dialogues, Book Symposia, different kinds of thematic review essays, and Review Editor Introductions highlighting common themes—and trying to make the “back end” of *Perspectives* a space for lively conversation across conventional subfield and methodological divides in the discipline. These innovations were announced and explained in my inaugural editorial statement, “A Statement from the Book Review Editor” (*Perspectives on Politics*, March 2006, pp. 3–4), and the approach to the journal’s treatment of books has remained true to the perspective outlined in that public text.

When I was offered the editorship of the entire journal in 2009, I agreed to accept this position on the basis of a clearly defined vision that was grounded in our experience with the Review section, and I was committed to editing the entire journal as a whole. My reason was straightforward: I believed that the journal was a unique and precious intellectual resource, and I was—and am—deeply committed to placing it on the strongest possible footing as a venue that features a wide range of political science perspectives and formats in a genuinely integrated way. It is surely possible for the two “ends” of the journal to be edited by separate individuals, working together in a collaborative fashion. But I was and am strongly committed to the idea that the two ends can and should be integrated into a single whole; that each “end” should in fact have diverse formats, so that in fact the journal would be much more complicated and interesting than a simplistic oppo-

sition of “articles” and “reviews” implies; and that these formats should speak to one another.

This vision was endorsed by the APSA officials—the search committee chaired by Rogers Smith, APSA President Peter Katzenstein, and the APSA Council—who unanimously supported my appointment.

When my editorial team took over the entire journal in 2009, we “branded” the journal as “A Political Science Public Sphere,” and worked hard to nurture synergies between the research articles and essays published in the journal’s “front end” and the reviews and book discussions published in its “back end” (this vision was announced in “*Perspectives on Politics: A Political Science Public Sphere*,” my editorial statement published in the March 2010 issue, and now printed at the beginning of each issue). My staff and I have devoted enormous energy to this approach to the journal, with the strong support of our dedicated Editorial Board and with the support of the APSA Council. These efforts were recognized by the 2011 Performance Review Committee that recommended the extension of our editorial tenure. But in my view the most important “recognition” of this approach is the fact that we continue to enjoy the enthusiastic participation of many hundreds of authors and reviewers every year, and to produce a publication that includes a wide range of excellent contributions across a range of formats.

At the heart of the journal as it has come to be structured, read, and appreciated within the profession, is the deliberate effort of our editorial team to discern, nurture, and publicize complementarities, synergies, and broad thematic interests that might otherwise be insufficiently recognized by our increasingly specialized academic life. Our entire range of formats is dedicated to this end. We have nurtured the production of research articles that are rigorous, rigorously peer-reviewed, and at the same time are written and framed more broadly than conventional research articles. We have nurtured a range of conversations about political science books, and promoted conversations between our articles and our book reviews and essays. These connections have been essential to our vision of “a political science public sphere.”

Readers of the journal will be familiar with this range of formats, and with their complementarities:

- Research articles
- “Reflections” essays
- Book Review Essays
- Book Symposia
- Book Critical Dialogues
- “Undisciplined” Reviews and Review Essays (featuring reviews of books from other disciplines)
- A special thematic Book Review section in each issue
- Standard single, double, and triple Book Reviews

Readers will also be familiar with the ways that we have sought to plan our production schedule so we can package writings in these formats together thematically, and highlight these themes in my Editor Introductions. These efforts draw scholarly and public attention to broad and interesting themes. And by promoting broad and relevant scholarly discussion, they also help us reach beyond the discipline, and to gain the attention, and sometimes even the involvement, of journalists, policy intellectuals, and sometimes even a broader reading public. Recent examples include:

- Our June 2012 issue featuring work on violence
- Our September 2012 special 10th Anniversary issue on “Post-Katrina New Orleans and the Politics of Reconstruction”
- Our March 2013 issue featuring work on “The Politics of Inequality in the Face of Financial Crisis”
- Our June 2013 issue featuring work on “Nature and Politics”

It is sometimes overlooked how central our Book Review section is to these efforts. But even a casual perusal of any recent issue of *Perspectives* will remind colleagues of the centrality of books.

I have been a professional political scientist for over thirty years. We are all well acquainted with the still widely accepted notion that book review assignments are convenient means of getting a free book that you want to read and of dashing off a thousand-word commentary during one’s breaks from “real” research and writing. For the past 8 years we have worked tirelessly, and successfully, to counter this unfortunate notion.

Books are important, and so serious intellectual attention to them is important.

While promptly published scholarly articles are also important, the book format remains the only format that allows scholars, in every field and from every perspective, to take the time and space to develop an argument in depth. Books are at the heart of political science. Important books help to create new research agendas. The names Almond or Dahl or Katzenstein or Putnam or Skocpol or Ostrom or Riker or Olson or Fenno or Mansbridge or Aldrich do not evoke journal articles. Each evokes an

important *book*, and typically more than one of them. Every year many hundreds of new political science books containing new political science perspectives are published. We know this. The Book Exhibit at the annual APSA conference is one of the main attractions for almost everyone.

These books seek and deserve more than mere citation and more than glorified “Book Note” type reviews. They deserve serious discussion in a serious scholarly context. They deserve well-written reviews that are carefully edited by editors who work with reviewers, and prompt them to think a bit more broadly, and to view their book reviews as real scholarly engagements. Such reviews do much more than publicize and provide short cuts to books that readers might not otherwise know about. They *engage* the books and make them really a part of serious scholarly dialogue.

But there is something else: these reviews make *their authors* part of seriously scholarly dialogue.

Most of our colleagues do not work at research-intensive universities. Most of them spend most of their time teaching, often with heavy loads, either as tenured or tenure-track professors at teaching institutions, or as adjuncts and part-time academic workers. For many of our colleagues, the chance to write a fine book review, and to have it seriously engaged by an editor, and to have it published in a “flagship research journal,” is one of the only significant opportunities they may have to write and to publish in a given year.

Every year *Perspectives on Politics* publishes hundreds of book reviews written by a very wide range of scholars with a wide range of institutional affiliations. We are very serious about the range and diversity of the contributors to our book review section. One reason is because it allows our journal to reach broadly, and to *include* many of readers as *contributors*. This “community-building” function of *Perspectives* is very important, for a scholarly community ought to be linked by scholarly conversation in which each participant has genuine opportunities to speak as well as to listen and to be an author as well as a reader.

But this kind of inclusion is also important in an *epistemic* sense. For it “enforces” a breadth of scholarly perspective, and brings expert discourses into conversation with more generalist perspectives, to the benefit of the kind of true critical engagement that is the heart of the scientific enterprise. In this sense, every 1500 word book review that we publish is much more than a professional “service”; it is a serious contribution to scholarship and to the development of scholarly research. And the publication of these reviews in a flagship journal of political science, alongside rigorously peer reviewed research articles, essays, symposia, and dialogues, highlights their importance.

We are excited about the range of formats contained within *Perspectives*, and the way that they work together to project a vision of scholarly and intellectual seriousness. We believe that in this age of specialization, “modularity,”

From the Editor

and almost costless digital creation and circulation of texts, it is important for an intellectually serious political science discipline to have at least one broad, integrated, and intellectually serious journal that features a range of perspectives, formats, and scholars.

We believe, in short, that it is important for there to be *a political science public sphere*.

We are also grateful to the many colleagues who support us in these efforts, and who embrace the chance to be active participants in and contributors to the journal and its many formats. We continue to receive a growing number of article submissions, and we have many exciting book review special features planned in the coming issues. As we move forward, we welcome your ideas and suggestions.