EDITORIAL

So often when preparing issues of *EPS*, one's thoughts as an editor are drawn back to Jean Blondel's (2001) article of welcome for the journal, published in the very first issue. Reflecting on the state of European political science and its progress over the last generation, Blondel argued that 'if we… think that we have relevant things to say about how politics works and about what can and cannot be achieved, we have to be visible in the "city"'. And, while 'we have come to be better known outside our "ivory towers"' we 'are still far from playing the kind of part which other social scientists – economists and sociologists – play…' For this reason, one of the tasks of *EPS* was to 'review the problems in relation to which the contribution of political science is essential, as well as promoting a more authoritative voice in the "city"' (Blondel, 2001: 4–9).

We could not agree more. Indeed, we believe that the effort of fulfilling the remit Blondel has set for us requires promoting an awareness that as social scientists we are in fact a – more or less influential – part of the 'city' whether we like it or not. More particularly, as we have argued before, the irreducibly normative element in all concepts, combined with the fact that our subject matter is not refractory to our attempts to understand it, means that all efforts at political theorising and investigation are themselves political acts with real political consequences. For this reason we would reject as bogus claims that our discipline is, or can be, 'scientifically neutral' in any absolute sense, and we would demand – normatively – that colleagues be more open and up front about the political agendas that – like it or not – inevitably drive their research work.

It is for this reason that we are delighted to host, in this issue, Richard Jackson's symposium on the case for critical terrorism studies, for it makes our point perfectly. Not only is it open about its own agenda – among other things, to challenge the so-called 'terrorism industry' and its 'assumption that Northern democracies are primarily victims not perpetrators of terrorism' (Blakeley, p. 228) – but it involves an explicit rejection of 'problem-solving theory' – that is theory that 'takes…the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organised, as the given framework for action' (Cox, 1981: 128) – in favour of an approach that asks searching, not to say awkward, questions about existing institutions and power dynamics. Such an approach is, obviously, central to the very calling of academic political science – if one is not asking questions one is not acting as an academic – while an insistence upon it is, we believe, indispensable if the discipline is to acquire the visibility that Blondel demands.

'Speaking truth to power' broadly conceived is, then, central to what we regard as the journal's mission. Yet this mission is currently under threat on at least three significant fronts. One of these is the threat to academic freedom that is inherent in university rankings. As Erne points out in his contribution to this issue, far from being 'neutral' instruments genuinely capable of raising academic standards, such rankings are driven by the unacknowledged political agendas of governments and intimately bound up with the efforts being made across the university sector in Europe to replace collegial with authoritarian-managerial structures of governance. A second, related, front is the incentive that is

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created by rankings to cut the corners of citation norms by increasing the pressure to perform – and the threat this poses to the unfettered circulation of ideas. As Budge points out, in his contribution, the very existence of a collective research tradition 'depends on researchers having sufficient confidence in the norms of due attribution and referencing that they are willing not only to publish results but to advance them in informal venues such as workshops, conferences, panels and seminars' (p. 302). A third front is the one constituted by the way in which research agendas have increasingly been set by funding bodies, through top-down political criteria of 'usefulness', rather than by academic communities themselves. The EU's decision to include the elements 'Ideas' and 'People' within the Seventh Framework Programme is, therefore, to be regarded as a welcome step in the opposite direction, as Klaus Armingeon argues in his contribution, though it is a step far too small from the perspective of the political science community.

If we are successfully to tackle these issues, then the development of European political science as a single, self-conscious community of practitioners becomes a *sine qua non* (although whether this means a single organisation to represent that community is another matter, and beyond the scope of the argument here). The remaining pieces in this issue offer evidence of the trends that – fortunately – are increasingly working in that direction. Thus, Joakim Ekman describes how Swedish political science has become increasingly oriented towards the international research community since the beginning of the new millennium with growing proportions of Ph.D. dissertations being written in English and on topics that go beyond the borders of Sweden itself. Meanwhile, though the indicators do not all point unambiguously in the same direction, there are significant signs of growing internationalisation in French and British political science as well, as Thibaud Boncourt's analysis makes clear. The articles by Anna Drzewiecka and Alaric Searle stand as testimony to these same processes by offering reflections on the authors' experiences of research and teaching outside their home countries, examples of the mobility that must increase if European political science is successfully to develop as an intellectual 'single market'.

Fortunately such a process is likely to be path dependent and self-generating as a moment's reflection suggests: the specific profile of a journal, for instance, is, as Boncourt (p. 276) implies, likely to be perpetuated and heightened through time as people continue spontaneously to submit the kinds of pieces they have previously found published there. From this point of view, *EPS* is itself, then, very much part of the process we have just described. This gives us cause to be hopeful that by carrying on the journal's work we shall make a not insignificant contribution to resisting the threats currently facing the freedom and autonomy of European political science as an academic community.

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