SYMPOSIUM

A Response to Jeffrey Isaac

Gregory J. Kasza

The purpose of the present symposium was to evaluate Perestroika's impact. Since the *American Political Science Review* (*APSR*), the *American Journal of Political Science* (*AJPS*), and the *Journal of Politics* (*JOP*) were all targets of criticism in the movement, whereas other national and regional association journals such as *Perspectives on Politics* and *Political Research Quarterly* were not, I looked for change in the former. Comparable data on the past contents of the *APSR* and *AJPS* had already been published, so I focused my recent surveys on those two. This focus implies no judgment as to the relative prestige of these journals. They pretend to represent the discipline as a whole and are paid for by all association members, and these are sufficient reasons to address their editorial biases.

I wish that Perestroika could claim credit for the founding of *Perspectives*, but my understanding is that *Perspectives* was conceived (if not yet in publication) before the Perestroika movement began. I suspect that *Perspectives* would easily win a popularity contest among Perestroikans over the *APSR*, *AJPS*, or *JOP*, but the Perestroika movement did not found or shape *Perspectives*, so it falls outside the scope of my comments. If Perestroika played a bigger part in the launching of *Perspectives* than I have understood, I would certainly like to know. As it is, other than creating a more supportive environment for qualitative and problem-driven research, I am not sure that Perestroika did much to promote *Perspectives*.

Even if *Perspectives* has risen to the august status that its current editor claims for it, its existence does not blunt my criticism of today's *APSR*. *Perspectives* was not intended to introduce a methodological division of labor with the *APSR*, such that it would carry qualitative research while the *APSR* would favor quantitative work. The establishment of *Perspectives* therefore offers no excuse for the methodological biases of the *APSR* and no reason why political scientists should be complacent about the latter.

To clarify, it is not my understanding that the *APSR*'s collective editorship at UCLA was designed to facilitate methodological pluralism. A collective editorship has the potential to realize that aim, but its main objective in this case was apparently to render the editorial task more manageable. If I am mistaken in this belief, I invite those who participated in the formation of the joint editorship to correct me, but at least one person privy to the process told me that methodological pluralism was not a key issue in the switch to multiple editors. Indeed, when the editors held an open forum at the first APSA convention after they took over, they had little to say about the journal's methodological orientation. Several of us attended that meeting to impress upon the new editorial team our expectations of fair treatment for qualitative work, but there was little mention of this goal in the editors' prepared remarks.[1] In any event, whether methodological pluralism was part of the original intent behind a collective editorship or not, this aim is not realized in the journal's pages, and this confirms that Perestroika has not had the impact that many of its adherents had hoped for.

To be honest, I expected to find more diversity in the contents of the *APSR* and *AJPS* than I did after more than a decade of contention over their editorial policies. The results of the recent surveys came as a surprise. ■

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NOTE

1. The initial policy statement by the editors at UCLA can be found at https://www.apsanet.org/content_43281.cfm. They declare that "No paper will be excluded on the basis of subject matter or methodological approach." This statement is par for the course, as the editors of these journals never confess to methodological bias. But in their lengthy discussion of the collective editorship in that document, they make no comment linking the form of the collective editorship to the goal of methodological pluralism.

doi:10.1017/S1049096510001393

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096510001393 Published online by Cambridge University Press

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Quarterly. Volume 81, 2011. ISSN 0001-9720. E-ISSN 1750-0184

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War and the Crisis of Youth in Sierra Leone

KRIJN PETERS

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096510001393 Published online by Cambridge University Press