Introduction and Comments

James Johnson

As is now traditional we begin this issue of *Perspectives on Politics* with the presidential address, this year by Robert Axelrod who offers sound advice about how political scientists might alter what is commonly seen as a lopsided balance of trade with other disciplines. It is difficult to imagine a message more in keeping with my own vision for this journal.

The first of our research papers, Keally McBride's "State of Insecurity," plumbs the recesses of fear and the corollary anxious impulse to predict and control embedded in our most basic political institutions. McBride relies on the Trial of Job as a vehicle for exploring themes of insecurity and punishment that are especially timely in the American context. Our second paper, too, is by political theorists. In "Democratic Theorists and Party Scholars" Ingrid van Biezen and Michael Saward lament the lack of intellectual engagement between those who study democratic theory and political parties. Theirs is not simply a lament, however. They offer a set of fruitful suggestions for how political scientists in the two sub-specialties might profitably surmount their mutual indifference.

Our third contributor, Elizabeth Perry, too, ventures into the terrain of political thought, exploring the way conceptions of rights inform Chinese philosophical and political discourse. Perry traces the Chinese discussions of rights over the course of several centuries in order to demonstrate that recent demands are neither especially new, nor necessarily threatening to the Chinese regime. This careful exploration by an accomplished comparativist not only affords insight into contemporary politics but tacitly offers a sophisticated response to recent calls for the development of a "comparative political theory" (see, for instance, Fred Dallmayr's "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory," *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (2): 249–57).

Our next three papers address one or another dimension of contemporary American politics. Jocelyn Crowley, Margaret Watson, and Maureen Walker examine the ways two groups of fathers (differentiated by race and class) talk about state-enforced systems of child support. Their aim is to establish how interactions within policy regimes are constructed by such talk and to draw implications from that observation for issues of democratic citizenship. Jeffrey Ladewig and Matthew Jasinski take up the relatively neglected issue of *inter*state malapportionment of seats in the U.S. Congress. They first seek to establish the causes and baleful consequences of this pattern and then recommend what will surely seem to some to be a controversial remedy for it, namely altering the fixed size of the House of Representatives. Finally, Daniel Drezner argues that contrary to common presupposition that takes it to be "liberal," the American public is remarkably "realist" in its views on foreign policy. He suggests too that this rather contrary finding is masked by the fact that American elites tend to be more committed to liberal internationalism than the public at large.

We conclude this issue with a pointed exchange between Tali Mendelberg and a pair of critics, Gregory Huber and John Lapinski. This exchange is unusual in several respects that I feel it important to address. The exchange was prompted by an essay that Huber and Lapinski published in 2006 in the *American Journal of Political Science* where they challenged some of Professor Mendlelberg's earlier published research on the political effects of racial priming in American electoral campaigns.

When Prof. Mendelberg first approached me with the question of whether I would consider publishing her essay, I faced a set of questions. The first was whether the subject at issue was both substantively important enough to merit devoting pages to and of broad enough concern to fit within the mandate of *Perspectives* as I understand it. The second question was whether the *AJPS* would not afford a more appropriate venue for her paper and, if not, whether *Perspectives* is indeed an appropriate venue. The third question was how to be fair to Professors Huber and Lapinski since the Mendelberg paper itself calls their work into question.

In my judgment the answers to the first questions were quite obviously "Yes." As colleagues as diverse, for example, as Ira Katznelson or Rogers Smith to Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal to Michael Dawson or Cathy Cohen make amply clear, the effects of race are centrally and crucially important to American politics. Moreover, it seems to me that issues raised by Professors Mendelberg, Huber, and Lapinski in their initial contributions were—despite their disagreements—especially important precisely because they bring to the fore several complex-

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ities involved in studying those effects. My second question produced a much more ambiguous answer. Professor Mendelberg explained that the editors at *AJPS* were unwilling to consider her essay. I had no interest, then or now, in inserting myself into the midst of conversations between authors and editors at another journal. However, taking the foreclosure of publication at AJPS as given, there seemed to me no reason not to consider Professor Mendelberg's essay at *Perspectives.* After all, Professor Mendelberg's initial research had not appeared in *AJPS* where Huber and Lapinski had published their subsequent criticisms. In the event, it seemed to me that what might appear to be venue-shopping really was a moot point. Moreover, it seemed to me that the most important thing was less *where* political scientists debate important substantive and methodological issues, than *that* they debate them. As I have said in this space before, I take it to be a central part of our mandate at *Perspectives* to facilitate productive disagreement. In my estimation the parties to this exchange more than oblige; they disagree, but they do so with an eye toward advancing our understanding of complex, important substantive issues. The answer to my final question turned out to be relatively simple. I treated Professor Mendelberg's essay as I do virtually everything we publish and, when it survived our standard review process, I invited Professors Huber and Lapinski to respond with the proviso that I would offer Professor Mendelberg the last word. My aim throughout has been to enhance rather than foreclose debate. I believe this exchange does precisely that.

Notes from the Managing Editor

Forthcoming

The following articles and essays have been scheduled for publication in a forthcoming issue of *Perspectives on Politics.*

Mark Bevir and Asaf Kedar. "Concept Formation in Political Science: An Interpretive Critique of Qualitative Methodology."

Josh Busby and Jon Monten. "Without Heirs: The Decline of Establishment Internationalism in U.S. Foreign Policy."

Kimberly H. Conger and Bryan T. McGraw. "Religious Conservatives and the Requirements of Citizenship: Political Autonomy."

Elliott D. Green. "Understanding the Limits to Ethnic Change: Evidence from Uganda's 'Lost Counties'."

Kathryn C. Lavelle. "Congress in the World: Benefits of the Congressional Fellowship Program for the Study of International Relations."

Suzanne Mettler and Ira Katznelson. "On Race and Policy History: A Dialogue about the G.I. Bill."

Mariah Zeisberg. "A New Framing? Constitutional Representation at Philadelphia's National Constitution Center."

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