Introduction and Comments

James Johnson

The issue of *Perspectives* that you hold in your hands (or that you perhaps are perusing online) is the product of complex behind-the-scenes editorial and production processes. In this sense *Perspectives* is like other journals where, in particular, much of the editorial process properly takes place out of sight. This opacity is inherent in the anonymous review process that every manuscript we publish undergoes. That said, there are aspects of the editorial process here that have created understandable frustration among a subset of the authors who have submitted manuscripts for consideration. For some of our contributors our editorial process has been too slow and I have been insufficiently responsive to concerns expressed by some of those who have been frustrated by that pace. Two contributing factors provide relevant background here.

The first factor is what I take to be a surprisingly high rate of unresponsiveness among those individual scholars I ask to read and offer assessments of manuscripts. This is a general pattern that has proven particularly problematic for some submissions. The second factor has been the challenges we have had in moving our operations to a web-based manuscript processing system. In combination, these factors have made the task of monitoring the progress of manuscripts through the referee process difficult, as we have in some instances had to solicit and remind as many as eight or nine readers on a manuscript without having an automated process to keep track of the resulting complexities.

I offer these comments as neither a jeremiad nor a rebuke nor, especially, as an excuse. The problem some of our submitting authors have experienced has arisen from how I have navigated this confluence of factors. In short, the responsibility here is mine as editor of *Perspectives.* I do not want to dwell on this state of affairs. Instead, I want simply to note that at the time of writing (mid-March) I have taken a number of concrete steps to remedy the situation. I have established several changes in the process by which we log submissions, communicate with authors, and monitor the referee process. Indeed, by the time you are able to read this we ought to have implemented a web-based manuscript processing system. That system will allow us to automate communications with authors and allow them to track the progress of their submissions throughout the referee process. This combination of changes, I am confident, will reduce the opacity of our operations. In the meantime, I apologize to those contributors who feel I have treated them poorly.

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Our current issue presents an eclectic, intellectually stimulating group of papers. We begin with an essay by Bronwyn Leebaw that explores the complexities surrounding the notion of "impartiality" among activist groups in the international arena. In particular, Leebaw stresses the political conundrums that arise when human rights organizations endeavor to press claims that are inherently judgmental while at the same time refraining, or at least appearing to refrain, from passing judgement on those states alleged to violate human rights. We then have a paper by Michal Ben-Josef Hirsch who traces the crucially important political impact of an intellectual debate among historians of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Specifically, Hirsch argues that the Israeli New Historians pushed both the elites and the general public to re-conceptualized their relationship to Palestinian refugees and how that re-conceptualization served open and invigorate political discussion and debate.

Mark Beissinger traces and analyses the diffusion of resistance and dissent across formerly communist states. Martin Elff challenges what has become common wisdom about the declining relevance of social cleavages such as religion and social class to voting behavior in Western Europe. The demise of such social factors has, Elff assures us, been greatly exaggerated. Colleen Shogan explores the way U.S. presidents generally, and Eisenhower, Reagan, and Bush in particular, deploy anti-intellectual rhetoric. Finally, Lisa Miller calls our attention to the diverse ways policy issues traverse various levels in the American federal system and the diverse consequences that follow on such movements.

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Notes from the Managing Editor

Forthcoming

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

Karen Beckwith and Kimberly Cowell-Meyers. Sheer Numbers: Critical Representation Thresholds and Women's Political Representation

Deborah Boucoyannis. "The International Wanderings of a Liberal Idea, or Why Liberals Can Relax and Love the Balance of Power."

Justin Crowe and Christopher F. Karopwitz. "Where Have You Gone, Sherman Minton? The Decline of the Short-term Supreme Court Justice."

Michael Goodhart. "Europe's Democratic Deficits through the Looking Glass: The European Union as a Challenge for Democracy."

Jeffrey W. Ladewig and Mathew P. Jasinski. "On the Causes and Consequences on Interstate Malapportionment."

Allison M. Martens. "Reconsidering Judicial Supremacy: From the Countermajoritarian Difficulty to the Constitutional Transformation Question."

Sidney M. Milkis and Jesse H. Rhodes. "George W. Bush, the Republican Party, and the 'New' American Party System."

Rodger A. Payne. "Neorealists as Critical Theorists: The Purpose of Foreign Policy Debate."

Oleg Smirnov. Altruistic Punishment in Politics and Life Sciences: Climbing the Same Mountain in Theory and Practice."

Joshua Tucker. "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Colored Revolutions."

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