editorial

This issue of *EPS* is dominated by the symposium on 'The European Origins of American Political Science', edited by Richard Bellamy. As Bellamy writes in his introduction, echoing points made in the article by Dirk Berg-Schlosser and even more strongly by James Farr, it is important not to derive the conclusion that there is an 'American' or a 'European' political science but rather two communities of political scientists with intense interactions between them. There is still an unfortunate tendency among many European political scientists to consider 'hard' behaviouralist political science an American phenomenon and that a more eclectic, historical, 'soft' humanistic political science is 'European'. While the insights of the symposium should go some way in dispelling that notion, so too should a knowledge of the debates and sometimes fierce divisions within American political science itself on the state and direction of the discipline – the import of which is rarely understood or acknowledged in Europe where such discussions are either non-existent or muted by comparison.

We are referring here to the emergence in 2000 of the so-called 'Perestroika' movement which launched a full frontal attack on what one of its major exponents, Gregory Kaska (2001) called 'the hegemonic project of hard science' – of 'rational choice theorists, formal modellers and those who do exclusively quantitative research'. This was not the first time that a rebellion had occurred among the ranks of American political scientists. The Caucus for a New Political Science had been established as far back as 1967 at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association (APSA) in Chicago to challenge the profession's 'unexamined centrism' and 'behavioural methodology that limited its ability to study important political issues' (Swidorski, 2003).

The 'Perestroika' movement, arising in quite different political times, has been concerned with similar issues, and led to an outpouring of discontent with the leadership of APSA, with what it considered the dominance of rational choice methodologies in leading political science departments, and the relegation of other perspectives to second-class status. It proposed instead a more 'pluralistic' approach to methodology, focusing on a resurrection of 'qualitative' methods, and, moreover, a turn away from 'method-driven' to 'problem-driven' research (Kaska, 2001; for the best early presentation of different views by movement sympathisers, see *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 2002).

One consequence of this 'raucous rebellion' in American political science (Monroe, 2005) has been a renewal of APSA leadership in recent years. Robert Putnam and Theda Skocpol, though not themselves self-declared 'perestroikans', appointed sympathisers to various APSA bodies during their tenures as APSA president in the early 2000s. The 'perestroikan' Susanne Hoeber Rudolph (president from September 2003) oversaw the launching and first years of publication of the new APSA journal *Perspectives on Politics* that has sought to present a more ecumenical professional profile than the *American Political Science Review* (APSR). The latter, too, has also embraced a greater degree of methodological pluralism in recent years, an approach also favoured by the current APSA

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president, Ira Katznelson (Jacobsen, 2005).

A second consequence has been a rigorous discussion about the nature of the discipline and its pursuit in the United States, a debate, however, that has not always been kind to the 'perestroikans' themselves. The latter have factionalised and frequently failed to articulate a coherent agenda and have been unable to respond effectively to the criticism that though they know what they are against, it is less obvious (though see the articles in Monroe, 2006) what kind of political science they are for (e.g., Bennett, 2002; Landman, 2002). Ponce (2004) argues that despite the flaws and limitations of the dominant behaviouralist position, post-behaviouralism and the Perestroika movement have failed to challenge that dominance precisely because they lack a clear alternative methodology and suffer from an absence of organisational cohesion and a strong and cumulative body of knowledge.

Nevertheless, the outcome of the 'raucous rebellion' has undoubtedly been beneficial to the discipline in the United States – and potentially elsewhere as well. The debate has stimulated reflection on the ways in which the profession is organised and led, the nature and orientations of its leading publications, and the methods by which it is 'handed down' to the next generation via graduate training. Graduate seminars on research methods often now include a survey and analysis of the debate between 'hard' and 'soft' political science. However, interestingly enough, the 'perestroikans' have also stimulated both 'hard' and 'soft' research on the nature of the profession itself, the best of which has questioned the image of the profession presented by its more extreme critics and set out new paths for the development of a genuinely pluralistic political science. Tobin Grant (2005), for example, musters 'hard' quantitative evidence to repudiate the claim that the profession is divided primarily between 'hard science' and 'soft humanism', establishing that the primary divisions are by subject area rather than methodology (and that the nature of subject areas tends to dictate methodological choices). Dryzek (2003) attempts to launch a genuine 'critical political science' in response to what he derides as 'Perestroika's empty pluralism' – one that is based on an engagement between identifiable ontologies, theories and methods, mutual intelligibility across research traditions and an agreement on standards beyond those internal to any particular research tradition.

Dryzek's call for a critical engagement across disciplinary and intellectual traditions has particular relevance for the European practice of political science. For despite its 'self-assured' portrayal by Berg-Schlosser as 'diverse, excellent and relevant', it tends to be less subject to internal reflection and debate even than its American counterpart, and suffers from a national fragmentation of intellectual traditions and a still weak engagement with methodological developments and training. It also suffers from only a weak (and sometimes weakening) institutionalisation in many European countries and a failure (as we detail in a future *EPS* symposium) to invest in the renewal and reproduction of the discipline among its youngest members – those on the first rungs of the professional ladder.

The symposium in this issue provides fascinating insights into the importance of European intellectual traditions in contributing to 'American' political science. However, an awareness of the fundamental importance of that contribution should not blind us to the vitality and vibrancy of the discipline in the United States, nor make us smug about the conditions under which the discipline is currently being practiced in Europe.

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