

Introduction and Comments

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To whom should political scientists address themselves? Should we be content to pursue more or less purely intra-disciplinary concerns, whether those be driven by some specialist “literature” or by one or another preferred method of inquiry? Is it intellectually responsible to do so? Do we have the tools or capacity to do otherwise? Given the fallible character of even our most confidently held research findings, what are the ethical or intellectual consequences of addressing ourselves to audiences in the world of law or policy or politics? And given that any potential interlocutors in those extra-disciplinary, non-academic domains quite legitimately have interests and agendas of their own, how should we anticipate the knowledge claims we advance might fare on various terrains of contest and power? These questions and others are central to the mission of this journal.

In the first issue of each volume, *Perspectives* is privileged to publish a revised version of the address delivered by the Association President at the annual meeting the previous fall. This year Ira Katznelson takes up questions like those I have just posed. He offers us a set of historically informed reflections on the tasks facing the discipline in the contemporary world. He insists at the outset that political science as a discipline is “indispensable” to any enlightened effort to “guard against unreason and depredation” in domestic and, especially, international domains. He simultaneously acknowledges that, despite its having achieved a variety of undeniable advances in knowledge and understanding of political affairs, the discipline also remains “inadequate” to the task of aiding efforts to navigate current political exigencies. This, he plausibly argues, is precisely because our research traditions have encouraged us to remain “aseptic, even serene, sometimes lacking urgency or purpose beyond the aesthetic appeal of scientific inquiry well-done.” Katznelson, it is fair to say, finds this state of affairs lamentable and, importantly, avoidable. In an effort to argue the latter point he highlights intellectual traditions and organizational exemplars that provide resources should we, as he hopes, turn our efforts to “the task of understanding power in circumstances of perpetual fear.”

Among the strengths of political science at its best is the willingness of some scholars to engage one another across

both fields of substantive interest and methodological commitments. This might be seen as contributing to the inward-looking tendencies that Katznelson laments. However, as the first two articles in this issue make clear, such frank intra-disciplinary conversations are necessary if we hope to be confident that whatever public pronouncements we advance are credible.

Much of current foreign policy debate takes place in the shadow of the Cold War. One might question whether this is well- or ill-advised. I do not want to engage that difficult question here. Given, however, that debate proceeds as it does, it seems especially crucial that scholars clarify which factors or combination of factors animated conflict and cooperation between and within political blocs during the Cold War. Brian Sala, John Scott, and James Spriggs approach this task in an ingenious way by examining judging patterns in Olympic figure skating competitions. The second paper, by Citrin, Lerman, Murakami, and Pearson takes issue with the influential arguments Samuel Huntington advances regarding the threats posed to American national identity by Latino immigration to the United States. Huntington advanced his views in non-academic venues in the context of growing public debate about immigration policy. Citrin et al. argue that the empirical data simply do not support Huntington's views. If, as Katznelson hopes, the discipline is to address itself effectively to matters of broad public concern, such intra-disciplinary scrutiny would seem to be especially important.

As an unavoidable feature of political inquiry, then, fallibilism ought to induce a sense of modesty among political scientists should they, as Katznelson hopes, turn attention to what he terms “investigations of enlarged scope.” The virtue of such modesty is one central theme of the third article in the issue, Joel Johnson's “A Connecticut Yankee in Saddam's Court.” There, Johnson addresses the perils of “benevolent imperialism” and suggests that Mark Twain's novel affords a useful basis for reflecting on its perils. He is especially concerned to show how Twain invites us to question certainties. The remaining two articles in this issue offer some sense of the complexity of politics. Ange-Marie Hancock highlights the perplexities that intersecting identities pose for both political actors

and political scientists. David Meyer and Stephen Boucher trace the unforeseen consequences generated when activists rely on political exemplars under changed political circumstances. In each case the authors remind us that certainties, whether in political action or research, threaten to prove ephemeral.

Finally in this issue Patrick Thaddeus Jackson and Stuart Kaufman offer a “Persepective” exploring the exigencies of moving from the world of scholarship into the world of politics and policy. They report on the effort by Security Scholars for a Sensible Foreign Policy in 2004 to influence the decisions of foreign policy makers in the Bush Administration. Jackson and Kaufman use this epi-

sode to raise frank questions about why, even in the face of seemingly deep and wide scholarly consensus, this initiative remained remarkably ineffective. The lesson is that even if political scientists forcefully address the public and its political representatives on matters of pressing concern there is no guarantee that their voices will be heard.

I do not believe this lesson should discourage those who wish to take up Katznelson’s challenge. Indeed, it seems simply to be a corollary challenge. Once we have broadened our audience it clearly is imperative to consider how to capture its imagination and command its attention. Obviously, that is a task that is not entirely within our control.

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 R. Beissinger. “Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions.”

Martin Elff. “Social Structure and Electoral Behavior in Comparative Perspective: The Decline of Social Cleavages in Western Europe Revisited.”

Michal Ben-Josef Hirsch. “From Taboo to the Negotiable: The Israeli New Historians and the Changing Representation of the Palestinian Refugee Problem.”

Arthur Lupia, Adam Seth Levine, Jesse O. Menning, and Gisela Sin. “Were Bush Tax Cut Supporters ‘Simply Ignorant?’ A Second Look at Conservatives and Liberals in ‘Homer Gets a Tax Cut.’”

Lisa L. Miller. “The Representational Biases of Federalism: Scope and Bias in the Political Process, Revisited.”

Colleen Shogun. “Anti-Intellectualism and the Modern Presidency.”