

Boundaries

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“Before I built a wall I’d ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out.
And to whom I was like to give offense.”
—From Robert Frost, “Mending Wall”

Readers of *Perspectives* will hopefully have noticed that in recent issues we have instituted a new practice of supplementing our journal’s long-standing four-field classification of all books under review with a fifth “theme” section of book reviews—on such topics as gender and politics, democratization, and most recently immigration politics. This addition signifies more than a change of scholarly bookkeeping or journal formatting. It represents one of many ways that we have sought to bridge and to reconfigure standard subfield and methodological divides in our profession, and to open up new and more problem-oriented ways of thinking about the thing our profession is presumably organized to study—*politics*.

Why the standard four subfield structure of the book reviews, and of the profession more generally? This is a very good question indeed, and it is a question that the *Perspectives* editorial board continues to discuss in earnest, as a question that has both intellectual and programmatic importance. In the past two years we have indeed organized Theme Panels at the annual APSA conference on this broad question. At the same time, I am pleased to note that a number of our board members have explicitly addressed this question in their own scholarly work, none more frontally than Timothy Kaufman-Osborne, in a number of publications and especially his 2006 “Dividing the Domain of Political Science: On the Fetishism of Subfields” (*Polity*, January 2006, v. 38, n. 1, pp. 41–71). That the subfields *are* widely fetishized is one of the dirty little secrets of our profession, and it is one that it widely acknowledged in settings ranging from informal hallway conversations between colleagues to policy-related discussions of the APSA Council.

At the same time, it is honestly difficult to come up with an alternative to the fetishized subfields that is any less arbitrary and any more likely to generate reasonable consensus. While the *Perspectives* board continues to have a robust conversation of these issues as they relate to journal policy, for now our way of addressing them is twofold: to continue organizing a fifth thematic review section, dedicated to a different theme in each issue; and to do

everything in our legitimate editorial powers to encourage and promote research and writing that is broadly “problem driven” and that demonstrates, *in practice*, the value of questioning, bridging, reconfiguring, and transcending subfield divisions, and methodological divisions, in political science. As we hope the many interesting things that appear in our pages make clear, it is very possible for political scientists to employ a wide range of approaches, discuss a wide range of political topics, and be both serious and rigorous, and at the same time talk meaningfully to each other. Readers of *Perspectives* know that we take great care to make this clear in each issue, by the way we work with each author to help them maximize the reach and thus the intellectual power of their contribution; by the way we package articles, essays, and reviews; and through editor Introductions that try to draw connections between our many entries, hopefully fostering conversations among our readers.

Our typical way of proceeding with special book review sections is to plan ahead, as a staff, with an eye to the common themes we can discern among the many books we receive at any given time, and another eye focused on the broader themes that we think it important to highlight simply because they are timely and important—as for example we did with climate change and environmental politics. But for this issue we decided to experiment, and to go right “down to the wire” of our printer deadline without planning a special “theme,” with the confidence that patterns would emerge organically from the contents of the issue itself, and that it would be possible to discern broad and interesting thematic connections linking a significant number of books under review with each other and with our articles and review essays.

The theme upon which we have arrived is the theme of *boundaries* themselves.

Boundaries are everywhere in politics. One does not have to be a follower of Carl Schmitt to note that one of the most important dimensions of politics is the multiplicity of ways and criteria by which human communities constitute themselves in terms of boundaries, defining who and what is properly included and who or what stands outside. Power, conflict, identity, recognition, citizenship—these cardinal concerns of political science all relate to how boundaries are constructed and contested,

as we highlighted in our last issue's focus on immigration politics (a topic that is receiving much attention from colleagues nowadays, which is why the current issue includes almost ten additional book reviews on it). As I thought about the broad theme of boundaries, and about this Introduction, I was reminded of Peter Katzenstein's 2009 Presidential Address on "Walls Between 'Those People'? Contrasting Perspectives on World Politics" (published in the March 2010 *Perspectives*), and the Robert Frost poem that he quoted, from which I borrow above. Boundaries empower and disempower. They include and exclude. They comfort. And they give offence.

The importance of boundaries and their effects is one way of drawing together the articles, essays and reviews published below.

Brian D. Shoup's "Ethnic Redistribution in Bipolar Societies: The Crafting of Asymmetric Policy Claims in Two Asia-Pacific States" offers a careful and empirically rich comparison of ethnically-based redistribution policies in Fiji and Malaysia. It also raises broader ideas about social policy and political identity in post-colonial states grappling with the legacies of a sharp division between privileged ethnic minorities and underprivileged ethnic majorities. Shoup argues that while such policies sometimes have redistributive effects, they are best understood as tactics whereby post-colonial elites deploy narratives of indigeneity and ethnic patrimony in order to promote state-building and their own power to organize it. As Shoup concludes, such efforts have "powerful implications for our understandings of democratic transition and the negotiation of the tensions between inclusive citizenship and nationalist exclusion in post-colonial states."

If Shoup's article analyzes the sources and consequences of ethno-political boundaries within domestic nation-states, Sebastian Rosato and John Schuessler's "A Realist Foreign Policy for the United States" addresses the principal focus of "realist" analysis in international relations scholarship—the way to best understand the interests and *external* conduct of territorially-bounded and sovereign nation-states in a world of such states. Rosato and Schuessler take their cue from recent arguments by Joseph Nye and others about the need for international relations scholarship to be engaged and relevant. Writing in the context of US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, they offer a "prescriptive realist theory" that purports to join an explanatory account of the underlying dimensions of global politics with a *prescriptively* "realist theory of foreign policy to guide American decision makers." Indeed they argue that contrary to widespread criticisms of "realism," it is in fact a *liberal* approach to world politics that promotes tendencies toward war precisely by virtue of its universalism, which contains a lack of seriousness about the particularity of territorially bounded nation-states and their geopolitical interests, and thus encourages delusions of moral grandeur and foreign policy overreach.

Rosato and Schuessler's argument that the "realism" of "realism" about power and violence makes it an approach that is most hospitable towards peace is both serious and provocative, and is likely to generate much debate among scholars of war and peace. In valorizing an approach to "reason of state" with roots in Giovanni Botero, Niccolò Machiavelli, and Thomas Hobbes, Rosato and Schuessler write against the grain of much contemporary scholarship that regards "globalization" and "transnationalism" as forces that disrupt the boundedness of nation-states. This makes their piece all the more interesting to read in connection with a wide range of books featured in our review section on "boundaries." On the one hand there are a number of reviews of books written from a straightforwardly state-centered IR perspective. Of particular note here is Daniel H. Nexon's fascinating discussion of J. Samuel Barkin's *Realist Constructivism: Rethinking International Relations Theory* and Charles L. Glaser's *Rational Theory of International Politics*. On the other hand many of the books under review raise questions about the state as a source of political cohesion and civil order, an axis of discussion in our Critical Dialogue between Steven L. Taylor and Enrique Desmond Arias on violence and democracy in Latin America that is also raised in Paul Staniland's review of Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence's anthology *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict*, and in Laura Sjoberg's review of Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Berjarano's anthology *Terrorizing Women: Femicide in the Americas*.

Our symposium on Evan Lieberman's *Boundaries of Contagion: How Ethnic Politics Have Shaped Government Responses to AIDS*, featuring commentaries by Eduardo Gomez, Mccartan Humphries, and Daniel Posner, brings us full circle on these questions of boundaries. Lieberman's book regards the state as an agent of public goods provision, and seeks to explain why some states have been more assertive, and effective, than others in providing the public health policies necessary to address the AIDS pandemic. In a way consistent with Brian Shoup's account of ethnic politics, Lieberman argues that the primary *boundary* that obstructs effective state response is the boundary of strong and exclusive ethnic identities within the nation-state. At the same time, as Lieberman makes clear, neither the boundaries of ethnicity nor the nation-state can control the spread of the AIDS contagion, a point made strongly by Andrew T. Price-Smith in his *Contagion and Chaos: Disease, Ecology, and National Security in the Era of Globalization*, reviewed here by Zaryab Iqbal (Mark Galeotti develops a similar point about the permeability of borders in his September 2011 review essay on "Global Crime: Political Challenges and Responses").

Boundaries clearly matter greatly in politics. They also clearly matter in the *study* of politics. Which is *not* to say that the ways that we scholars map and structure our inquiries best serve the value of political understanding.

With these questions in mind, I invited Alfred Stepan and Juan J. Linz—whose long-standing contributions to the comparative politics of democratization were featured in Gerardo Munck's review essay in our last issue—to reflect on two recent books about the boundaries differentiating American politics from the politics of other advanced industrial democracies, and the corresponding boundaries separating the study of US politics from the study of the rest of the world: Lawrence Jacobs and Desmond King's *The Unsustainable American State* and Desmond King, Robert C. Lieberman and Laurence Whitehead's *Democratization in America: A Comparative-Historical Analysis*. Their review essay, "Comparative Perspectives on Inequality and the Quality of Democracy in the United States," goes far beyond the discussion of the books, to critique the "exceptionalism" of both American politics and the study of American politics by American political scientists. Stepan and Linz insist that "the current distancing of the study of America from the analysis of other democracies impoverishes modern political science." "Now is the time," they hold, "for a new look at the US using the wealth of new data and research currently available. Such studies should fully incorporate the fact that the US, by many of the standard indicators of inequality, is now the most unequal long-standing democracy in a developed country in the world . . . And yet the preoccupation of many Americanists with America's distinctive governmental institutions—Congress, the Presidency, the Court—obscures this inequality and what it means for the US political system. It thus seems to us that Americanists' ability to analyze American politics would be enhanced by locating these problems in a larger, comparative context . . . future Americanists would do well to take a comparative perspective and pay more attention to how and why how other advanced democracies have avoided many of the problems these books document so convincingly." Stepan and Linz's review essay is the most article-like review essay we ever have run in terms of its argumentation and evidentiary support, and it is certain to generate much fruitful discussion in the discipline.

Archon Fung's review essay on "Reinventing Democracy in Latin America" beautifully complements Stepan and Linz's piece. But whereas Stepan and Linz look primarily to Europe, Fung looks to the global South and especially to Latin America for new and interesting perspectives on the revitalization of democracy (a theme also central to Leonardo Avritzer's triple review on Brazil). "Given the challenges that face the political practices of the older North Atlantic representative democracies," Fung writes, "understanding democratic innovations from Brazil and other developing countries is especially urgent." Proceeding from a group of exciting new books on Latin American experiments with "participatory budgeting," Fung argues that such innovations "that fuse participatory and representative democracy merit special attention precisely because they deploy institutionalized mechanisms

to address deficits of equality, accountability, and legitimacy." Attendees of the 2011 APSA Conference in Seattle who heard Carole Pateman's Presidential Address, "Participatory Democracy Revisited"—which will soon appear in our pages—will know that the innovations Fung discusses are already receiving growing attention, something that is likely to be further encouraged by the recent publication of "Democratic Imperatives: Innovations in Rights, Participation, and Economic Citizenship," the report of the Pateman-appointed Task Force on Democracy, Economic Security, and Social Justice in a Volatile World headed by Michael Goodhart (and including Archon Fung).

The "conversation" between Stepan and Linz and Fung highlights the ways that scholarship that is richly empirical and robustly *comparative* can open up new perspectives on some of the most pressing challenges facing citizens of our world. It also makes clear that US political science, and especially that branch of it that studies US politics, stands to benefit from a more serious engagement with debates and policies taking place elsewhere in the global North and the global South, featuring both state-centered social democratic solutions of the sort discussed by Stepan and Linz, and more localized and participatory solutions like those considered by Fung.

At first glance it might appear that an article on sex workers in the Bay area of California was participating in a very different, more geographically and thematically localized, discussion. But appearances can be deceiving. Samantha Ann Majic's "Serving Sex Workers and Promoting Democratic Engagement: Re-thinking Nonprofits' Role in American Civic and Political Life" offers a careful ethnographic account of a very important innovation in rights, participation, and economic citizenship—the ways that nonprofit organizations offering health and social services, often through partnerships with government agencies, can serve as sites of civic engagement, political empowerment, and sometimes even social movement politics. As Majic reports, such NGOs are an increasingly important part of the American civic landscape. By 2008, the US had approximately 1.5 million tax-exempt nonprofit organizations employing nearly 8.6 million paid persons full-time and 7.2 million volunteers. Majic's article draws on a mixed-method study of two service organizations formed by sex workers involved in Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics (COYOTE), the nation's first prostitutes' rights group; the California Prostitutes' Education Project (CAL-PEP), which conducts HIV/AIDS prevention outreach to sex workers and other street-based populations in Oakland, CA; and the St. James Infirmary (SJI), a sex worker clinic in San Francisco. Majic argues that "social movement-borne nonprofits engage in political activities through a process of radical institutionalization, whereby they incorporate and advance activist goals through their organizational practices, and thus serve as sites of both service provision and civil association." The

point is not, of course, that all or even most non-profit social service organizations operate in this way. It is that some do, and that these experiments speak to important challenges of human security and well-being facing a great many US citizens and indeed most citizens of our volatile world.

Majic's article underscores an important point about boundaries brought out in many of this issue's contributions: that boundaries—separating public and private, male and female, “normal” and “abnormal” (“sex workers?”), and separating nations, states, classes, religions, and ethnicities from each other—are very real, at the same time that their meanings are highly variable, contestable, and alterable. As political scientists we analyze precisely these complexities, variations, and alterations. It could only

enhance our work if we further incorporate complexity, pluralism, eclecticism, and pragmatism into the ways we think about and do this work of ours. The boundaries that define our profession—four or six or eight subfields, thirty-eight organized sections, qualitative vs. quantitative vs. formal vs. interpretive methods, etc.—serve important purposes. They also limit as much as they empower and obscure as much as they illuminate. One of our goals at *Perspectives* is to serve as a place for excellent research and writing that is free of obsessive disciplinary boundary-drawing, and that encourages the kind of serious analysis of politics that is accessible and relevant to the many different kinds of scholars whose profession is the careful and sensitive understanding of politics.

Statement of Mission and Procedures

Perspectives on Politics seeks to provide a space for broad and synthetic discussion within the political science profession and between the profession and the broader scholarly and reading publics. Such discussion necessarily draws on and contributes to the scholarship published in the more specialized journals that dominate our discipline. At the same time, *Perspectives* seeks to promote a complementary form of broad public discussion and synergistic understanding within the profession that is essential to advancing scholarship and promoting academic community.

Perspectives seeks to nurture a **political science public sphere**, publicizing important scholarly topics, ideas, and innovations, linking scholarly authors and readers, and promoting broad reflexive discussion among political scientists about the work that we do and why this work matters.

Perspectives publishes work in a number of formats that mirror the ways that political scientists actually write:

Research articles: As a top-tier journal of political science, *Perspectives* accepts scholarly research article submissions and publishes the very best submissions that make it through our double-blind system of peer review and revision. The only thing that differentiates *Perspectives* research articles from other peer-reviewed articles at top journals is that we focus our attention only on work that in some way bridges subfield and methodological divides, and tries to address a broad readership of political scientists about matters of consequence. This typically means that the excellent articles we publish have been extensively revised in sustained dialogue with the editor—me—to

address not simply questions of scholarship but questions of intellectual breadth and readability.

“Reflections” are more reflexive, provocative, or programmatic essays that address important political science questions in interesting ways but are not necessarily as systematic and focused as research articles. These essays often originate as research article submissions, though sometimes they derive from proposals developed in consultation with the editor in chief. Unlike research articles, these essays are not evaluated according to a strict, double-blind peer review process. But they are typically vetted informally with editorial board members or other colleagues, and they are always subjected to critical assessment and careful line-editing by the editor and editorial staff.

Scholarly symposia, critical book dialogues, book review essays, and conventional book reviews are developed and commissioned by the editor in chief, based on authorial queries and ideas, editorial board suggestions, and staff conversations.

Everything published in *Perspectives* is carefully vetted and edited. Given our distinctive mission, we work hard to use our range of formats to organize interesting conversations about important issues and events, and to call attention to certain broad themes beyond our profession’s normal subfield categories.

For further details on writing formats and submission guidelines, see our website at <http://www.apsanet.org/perspectives/>