

# Political Power and Social Classes

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In the beginning there was the *American Political Science Review*.

The first issue of the *APSR* appeared in 1906—exactly 110 years ago. The early issues of the journal make interesting reading today. The journal was in so many ways very different, in format, style, and substance, than it is today. It contained articles and essays, book reviews, professional news, and also a special section called “Notes on Current Legislation.”

In preparing to write this Introduction, I decided to peruse the journal’s first few issues, to see if any of the themes covered in this issue of *Perspectives* received any attention there. Three items in the “Current Legislation” section of issue 3, published in May 1907, caught my eye. They are worth quoting:

“Labor of Women and Children. During the closing days of the last session, congress appropriated \$150,000 for an investigation into the industrial, social, moral, educational, and physical conditions of woman and child workers in the United States. Special attention is to be given in this investigation to hours of labor, terms of employment, health, illiteracy, sanitary and other conditions surrounding their occupation, as well as the means employed for the protection of their health, person, and morals. The inquiry will be conducted under the supervision of the commissioner of labor (p. 450).”

“Workmen’s Compensation. In December, 1906, the British parliament passed an act to amend and consolidate the law of workmen’s compensation. The act extends the benefits of the law to over six million persons not included under the provisions of preceding acts (p. 467).”

“Social Democratic Program in the Wisconsin Legislature. It is frequently held that the socialists do not have a constructive program. The six social-democratic members of the State legislature of Wisconsin, however, have advanced about seventy carefully drawn measures, which indicate the lines along which they intend to carry out their ideas . . . It should be noted that some of the measures which the socialists have advanced heretofore, are now being taken up by representatives of other parties. . .

The socialist legislators naturally give special attention to the requirements of labor . . . They have a bill providing for an eight hour day for all [public] employees . . . in the State or by any contractor or subcontractor thereof upon any public works. Another measure requires every corporation doing business in the State, to make full payment in money to its employees at least twice in every calendar month . . . Several measures intended to limit child labor are advanced . . . In order to insure better

conditions of labor, the socialists have introduced a bill to increase the number of factory inspectors. . . . Another labor measure provides for thirty-six consecutive hours rest in every seven days. Another seeks to protect the health of employees . . . Finally, a measure has been introduced to protect the trade unions. It provides that it shall be lawful for trade unions and other associations peacefully to obtain or communicate information to other persons, to persuade them to work or abstain from working . . . The socialists demand that justice shall be free. They are anxious to make it as easy for the poor man and the laborer to have the benefit of legal protection, as for the rich man, and the employer (pp. 457–465).”

Regulation of workplace safety and health, and of timely and regular payment of wages. Restrictions on child labor. Limits to the work week, i.e., a “weekend.” Subjection of workplaces to the rule of law. The right to organize unions. Such aspirations and goals of political struggle in 1906 are now deeply embedded in public policy, and indeed help to define the meaning of citizenship for millions of workers, in the U.S. and even more in the other “advanced” democratic and capitalist states. It is sobering to be reminded just how recent these historical achievements are. It is also sobering to realize, as Suzanne Mettler notes in “The Polyscape and the Challenges of Contemporary Politics to Policy Maintenance,” that “lack of policy maintenance undermines laws’ ability to achieve the purposes for which they were created. . . . Landmark laws created in the past constitute what might be termed a ‘public trust’: citizens likely assume them to be safeguarded by those in public office. The failure to maintain adequately these existing policies, particularly those that align with policy priorities held by majorities of Americans across party lines, may be promoting the decay of democratic governance itself.”

In this respect, the situation facing many of our institutions, especially though not only in the United States, mirrors the situation confronting our roads, bridges, and infrastructure, widely acknowledged to be “crumbling” through lack of proper maintenance and renovation. To be clear: these achievements, like all achievements, were both limited and, I think most readers of our journal would agree, flawed. The call to limit wage labor for children and women, in the interests of both safety and “morals,” clearly articulated a gendered, and indeed patriarchal, conception of the division of labor that

continues to sustain inequality—a point made powerfully in Elizabeth Markovits and Susan Bickford’s “Constructing Freedom: Institutional Pathways to Changing the Division of Labor,” published in the March 2014 issue of *Perspectives*. And the Wisconsin Socialist demand for workers’ rights was linked to “other memorials to congress urg(ing) the establishment of postal savings banks, parcels post, the exclusion of Asiatic labor . . .” Both the call for the “Asiatic” exclusion, and the matter-of-fact way in which it is linked to other measures framed as logistical rather than matters of right involving “Asiatic” human beings, marks another limit of many of these earlier achievements—they were often infused with nativist and racist sentiments. These limits helped to shape the development of “varieties of capitalism” in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and remain ongoing topics of contestation and of scholarly analysis.

The themes in question were not simply topics of public discourse; at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they were considered sufficiently relevant to be featured on the pages of our discipline’s official journal. In this regard, it is important to recognize both the distance we have traveled as a discipline and the extent to which we still confront many of the same issues that helped to shape the development of the social sciences at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Is it happenstance that the Social Democratic Program that is summarized in the May 1907 *APSR* is the program of the *Wisconsin* socialists? Perhaps. At the same time, the so-called “Wisconsin school of industrial relations” played a crucial role in the formation of the social sciences in the United States. Its founder, John R. Commons, is widely viewed as a pioneer in the development of labor economics, institutional economics, theories of collective bargaining, and the study of class conflict and class compromise. Commons founded the American Association for Labor Legislation in 1907; he drafted the 1911 legislation establishing Wisconsin’s workmen’s compensation program, the first of its kind in the United States; and he participated in the Pittsburgh Survey, perhaps the first major collaborative sociological study of an American city, funded by the Russell Sage Foundation in 1907–08.

And indeed, the “Wisconsin idea” of a public university that combined teaching and research in the service of “the public good” played a crucial role in the development of higher education in the United States. Wisconsin was not only the site of publicly engaged social scientific research. It was also the site of important struggles over the purpose of higher education and the autonomy of educational institutions. A landmark case in the development of academic freedom in the United States was the failed 1894 effort of conservative politicians to fire University of Wisconsin Professor Richard T. Ely—a seminal figure in the development of the disciplines of both sociology and economics—for his socialist sympathies. The university administration supported Ely, and subsequently drafted

a statement, endorsed by the Board of Regents, that remains emblazoned on the wall of a prominent university building. It reads: “Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe that the great State University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found.” [For a fine discussion of the controversial 1917 resignation of future APSA President Charles Beard from Columbia University to protest the firings of colleagues who opposed WWI, see Clyde Barrow’s “Realpolitik in the American University: Charles Beard and the Problem of Academic Repression.” *New Political Science*, vol. 36, no. 4 (2014)].

As Katherine J. Cramer writes in her Praxis essay, “The Turn Away from Government and the Need to Revive the Civic Purpose of Higher Education”: if 100 years ago “the Wisconsin Idea” symbolized the promise of social science as a means of public education, today Wisconsin under the governorship of Scott Walker is pioneering the attack on this very idea, challenging the values of academic autonomy and academic freedom, and with it the idea of public sector unions and labor unions more generally as representatives of the interests of workers. The past is thus prologue, and we currently face many of the same issues that our colleagues a century ago faced during the so-called “First Gilded Age.”

At least since the rise of the Occupy movements in 2011, public discourse in the so-called advanced democracies has been suffused with talk of a “Second Gilded Age.” If the politics of post-WWII United States, Western Europe, and Japan saw the development of a “variety of capitalisms” centered on “social security,” “social markets,” and “class compromise,” we currently inhabit a moment in which these developments have broken down in a big way. And this has been registered both by social movements and by social scientists. We have featured work on related topics before—especially in our March 2013 issue on “The Politics of Inequality in the Face of Financial Crisis” and our September 2014 issue on “Rethinking American Democracy,” featuring Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page’s “Testing Theories of American Politics,” which is surely one of the most widely cited and discussed pieces of political science research published in the past decade. At the same time, we have not explicitly featured the themes of the politics of labor and work, insecurity and “precarity,” and the ways these themes are sites of political contestation. Such themes occupy the attention of a great many political scientists across all of the discipline’s subfields. And so we have decided to feature them here and now, in a special book review section devoted to this theme, including a range of Critical Dialogues, a symposium on Sanford F. Schram’s *The Return of Ordinary Capitalism: Neoliberalism, Precarity, Occupy*, and in the articles and essays below.

Our first article, Daniel Galvin's "Deterring Wage Theft: Alt-Labor, State Politics, and the Policy Determinants of Minimum Wage Compliance," centers on one of those objects of contention back in 1907 that remains problematic—the right of workers to be paid in an accurate and timely manner for their wage labor. Galvin begins with the more recent history of an important piece of New Deal legislation: the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which he describes as "a watershed in the development of workers' rights in the United States. To insure 'a fair day's pay for a fair day's work,' the act put a national floor under wages, a ceiling on hours, restrictions on child labor, and established a new regulatory apparatus to enforce the law. . . . The FLSA, by establishing *national* labor standards and equipping the federal government to protect workers in all states equally, thus sought to reduce the 'price of federalism' and stabilize employment relations across the nation." Galvin points out that in recent decades this legislation has been eroded by a combination of factors: the "fissuring" of the workplace, whereby employers increasingly embraced subcontracting, franchising, and supply chain models in order to cut labor costs and emphasize core competencies"; political inertia and "policy drift," which have left the original legislation ill-equipped to deal with new labor conditions; and, "most pernicious of all . . . the declining enforcement capacity of the Wage and Hour Division (WHD), the regulatory agency created by the FLSA to enforce all of the law's provisions. Growth in the size of the covered workforce, without commensurate increases in the WHD's staff and funding, has undercut its ability to fulfill its mandate."

Galvin argues that "one of the most troubling consequences of these developments is what workers' rights advocates have termed 'wage theft,' or the failure of employers to pay their employees the full amount they have earned and to which they are legally entitled." He notes that "workers' rights advocates have responded to resistance and inaction at the national level with campaigns to enact stronger protections for workers at the state level," and he undertakes an empirical analysis of the relationship between the strength of state employment laws and the incidence of minimum wage violations, finding that stronger state laws are "statistically significantly related to a lower incidence of minimum wage violations . . . and appear to make a substantial difference for workers in those states." Galvin then proceeds to analyze the political coalitions and the new forms of "alt labor" organizing—community-based "worker centers" such as Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, "workers' alliances" like the National Domestic Workers' Alliance, and a range of local minimum wage and worker rights "coalitions"—behind such state labor law reforms. And he concludes that such efforts continue to face profound obstacles: "State agencies are overburdened and

under-resourced, and fundamental changes in the nature of employment poses the same kinds of difficulties at both levels. The rise of the 'gig economy' and 'contingent work'—including the growing use of 'freelance contractors' (at businesses like Uber and TaskRabbit), temporary workers, day laborers, and interns—has caused more and more workers to lose both their wage and hour protections and their collective bargaining rights. Much of the onus thus remains on workers to find new ways to assert their rights, combat their exploitation, and develop collective identities in an increasingly fragmented work environment."

Our second article, Alex Gourevitch's "Quitting Work But Not the Job: Liberty and the Right to Strike," proceeds from a fascinating observation: while the right to strike is an important historical achievement, its distinctive normative underpinnings have received very little attention from political theorists and its practical importance has received relatively little attention from students of comparative political economy, who tend to focus their attention on distributive questions. Gourevitch combines political theory, legal analysis, and institutional analysis, arguing that the right to strike is "justified as a way of resisting intertwined forms of structural and personal domination associated with the modern labor market." He likens the strike to "the plebeian secessions" of ancient Rome, popular uprisings combining an act of withdrawal (from the city) with demands for a more authentic form of inclusion, and promoting class conflict and social crisis as a way of abetting "the birth of a new liberty." Gourevitch argues that the right to strike is a form of coercion, potentially exercised against the coercive organization of labor relations in a capitalist society, that is legitimated and enforced—when it is so enforced—by the state. At the same time, like Galvin, Gourevitch notes that in the United States the legislation grounding this right—the 1935 National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), one of the centerpieces of the New Deal—recognizes the rights of workers to organize, to strike, and to collectively bargain in only a halting and limited way, and suffers as well from "policy drift." And he concludes: "If, however, we take the right to strike to be a distinct kind of right, protecting an independent interest, in which workers *do* legitimately have a right to the job over which they strike, then we would have to reject many existing restrictions on strike activity."

It is worth noting that New Deal legislative initiatives such as the NLRA and the FLSA were the object of bitter contestation in the streets and factories, in Congress, and also in the courts, where such regulations were repeatedly challenged and often overturned by appeal to the Fourteenth Amendment and to the precedent established by the U.S. Supreme Court's famous 1905 *Lochner v. New York* decision, which had rendered most labor legislation unconstitutional. In "Judicial Review as a Limit on Government Domination: Reframing, Resolving, and Replacing the (Counter)Majoritarian Difficulty,"

Matthew E.K. Hall presents an elaborate defense of an “acquittal theory” of judicial review centering on the idea that “the imposition of fewer government sanctions tends to promote democratic values.” At the same time, he notes that “republican theories of democratic freedom call for freedom from dominium (domination by private actors), as well as imperium (domination by the state),” and he concedes that “the *Lochner* problem—that is, the possibility that judicial review will tend to thwart governmental attempts to limit private domination”—presents a real challenge to his argument. Hall’s article is usefully read alongside the articles by Gourevitch and Galvin. In its consideration of *Lochner*, it is also usefully read alongside Victoria Hattam’s review essay, “The Right to Work: Rethinking Labor and Politics in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries.” Proceeding from a discussion of historian Cedric de Leon’s *The Origins of Right to Work: Antilabor Democracy in Nineteenth Century Chicago*, Hattam notes that “The right to work . . . was not a 20<sup>th</sup> century invention developed to dismantle long established New Deal accomplishments. On the contrary, right to work politics have much deeper and more interesting antecedents reaching back to the anti-slavery politics of the mid-nineteenth century.” Hattam insists that resistance to the right to strike, and to the collective bargaining rights of unions, that is justified by the discourse of “right to work,” is deeply rooted in American conceptions of individual liberty. She links this discourse to the deeply contentious history of U.S. labor relations and raises questions about whether the current situation is likely to see a resurgence of such contention (See also Alex Gourevitch’s essay in our September 2015 issue, “Police Work: The Centrality of Labor Repression in American Political History.”)

If the above pieces deal directly with questions of labor rights in historical and comparative perspective, William W. Franko, Nathan J. Kelly, and Christopher Witko’s “Class Bias in Voter Turnout, Representation, and Income Inequality” discusses the political linkages between class, political parties, and voters in the wake of the demise of the post-WWII class compromise and the “great compression” of inequality that it promoted. Franko, Kelly and Whitko advance and then test the following hypothesis: “that when there is more electoral class bias—that is, the affluent are overrepresented among voters compared with the population at large—governments and economic policies will be more right-leaning and inequality will be higher.” Analyzing electoral results and public policies in the fifty U.S. states from 1976 to 2006, they find that “class bias has real, empirically-verifiable policy consequences. States with less ‘class-biased’ electorates have more liberal governments and economic policies. And these outcomes, in turn, produce less economic inequality.” Though their analysis focuses on the United States, their findings have implications for long-running debates in comparative politics about the “connections between democracy and inequality.” In considering the sources of such “class biased

electorates,” they focus on state variation in election laws and voter ID requirements, but also on the changing forms of political mobilization. As they note: “In the United States, unions have played a critical role in mobilizing lower- and middle-income groups, historically alongside the Democratic Party. Of course, unions have declined dramatically in recent decades, which is in itself partly a result of attempts by business and the wealthy to weaken labor. As unions have declined, business and the wealthy have rushed in to fill the resource vacuum created by the decline of organized labor. Mass parties that once mobilized lower-class voters now increasingly focus their mobilization activities on upper income voters, exacerbating existing resource disparities among citizens.” [The declining political power of organized labor in the U.S. and Western Europe is a theme also discussed in our December 2014 symposium on John S. Alquist and Margaret Levi’s *In the Interests of Others: Organizations and Social Activism*, and in our March 2015 Critical Dialogue between Kathleen Thelen, author of *Varieties of Liberalization and the New Politics of Social Solidarity*, and Jake Rosenfeld, author of *What Unions No Longer Do*.]

With Alexander Hertel-Fernandez’s Reflection essay, “How American Employers Recruit Their Workers into Politics—And Why Political Scientists Should Care,” we turn from labor mobilization and its limits to employer mobilization of workers in the workplace. Hertel-Fernandez begins by noting that: “Given the degree to which political scientists have studied citizen mobilization in other contexts, like churches, unions, or civic associations, we know surprisingly little about recruitment that happens between employers and their workers.” Drawing on national surveys of workers and top corporate managers, he shows that managers of nearly half of the firms surveyed reported attempting to recruit workers into politics and about one in four employees recalled ever being contacted by their employer about politics in some way. Hertel-Fernandez notes the tentative and preliminary character of these findings, and argues that this really ought to receive a lot more attention from political scientists: “Just as scholars of political participation focus on unions or political parties as sources of mobilization, this essay argues that so too should those scholars consider the top management at companies as political recruiters.”

In our September 2014 issue we published an important essay by Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, “After the ‘Master Theory’: Downs, Schattschneider, and the Rebirth of Policy-Focused Analysis.” This issue includes pieces by two scholars who have made major contributions to this “rebirth”—Suzanne Mettler’s article “The Policy-scape and the Challenges of Contemporary Politics to Policy Maintenance” and Frank R. Baumgartner’s review essay “Agenda Setting in Comparative Perspective,” as well as a symposium centered on Baumgartner and

Bryan D. Jones's *The Politics of Information: Problem Definition and the Course of Public Policy in America* (the latest entry in Baumgartner and Jones's long-standing "Policy Agendas Project). As Baumgartner writes, recent work "has the potential to draw us back to the core issues of political science posed by Bachrach and Baratz and Schattschneider. . . [and] may reveal a paradox not recognized by Bachrach and Baratz, who wrote of agenda denial as an active strategy or one based on expected reactions. This is undoubtedly true. But a more important reason for the lack of consideration of most policy proposals is not an Oz-like process by which unseen elites keep issues from public debate. Rather, it is the crush of other issues, the never-ending stream running like a torrent over the political system: more social problems than we have time to confront."

Mettler underscores the ways that the web of instituted public policies—what she calls a "policyscape"—enables and constrains the realization of democratic political demands and locks into place policies that may be inadequate to their purposes. As she writes: "Far from being static, policies often develop over time in ways that could not have been foreseen by their creators, due to dynamics they themselves generate, including design effects, unintended consequences, and lateral effects. Owing to such dynamics, existing policies require upkeep and maintenance if they are to continue to function well. . . . A cursory overview of policies associated with Americans' top 20 policy priorities reveals that more than half are subject to deferred maintenance. The mismatch between the demands of the policyscape and the character of contemporary politics imperils effective democratic governance . . . The lack of policy maintenance undermines laws' ability to achieve the purposes for which they were created."

Mettler develops this theme in her recent book, *Degrees of Inequality: How Higher Education Politics Sabotaged the American Dream*, which traces the way that higher education in the United States has evolved from a being a means of opportunity for a growing middle class to being an engine of inequality in the current period. Our symposium on this book features contributions by Romand Coles, Nannerl O. Keohane, Paula D. McClain, Timothy Kaufman-Osborn, and Joseph M. Schwartz, who situate Mettler's political analysis in a range of broader contexts, including the subjection of education policy to neoliberal conceptions of accountability and efficiency, and the growing "casualization" of the academic labor market over the past thirty years.

Nicholas Tampio's essay on "Democracy, Federal Power, and Education Reform" develops similar themes via a critical discussion of two of the leading public intellectuals in the debate about democracy, federal power, and education reform. "Michael Barber, author of *How to Run a Government*, argues that the federal government should promote education reform because it leads to

a more skilled and prosperous democratic citizenry. Zephyr Teachout, author of *Corruption in America*, posits that private interests have undue influence on federal education policy and, in the case of *Race to the Top*, have distorted the democratic process and good educational practice." Tampio argues on behalf of an "agonistic" educational politics, in which a one-size-fits-all approach to educational reform gives way to a more pluralistic experimental approach. [His agonistic perspective is usefully compared to the conception of "relational politics" in Peter Levine's "Saving Relational Politics."] As he writes: "For agonistic democrats, the American educational system should be envisioned as a garden that has space for many kinds of schools: Montessori, Waldorf, Jesuit, progressive, vocational, foreign language immersion, as well as public schools that have diverse curricular options, including theater programs, calculus and physics classes, internships, and so forth. Right now, American public education is moving towards a model where children spend their days preparing for the online, high-stakes Common Core tests . . . According to Deborah Meier, 'What is missing is balance—some power in the hands of those whose agenda is first and foremost the feelings of particular kids, their particular families, their perceived local values and needs.' The idea of a garden of schools may give democrats a goal for which to strive."

Mettler and Tampio both combine analytic and normative concerns in discussing the way that educational institutions function in our society, and in highlighting the tensions, if not contradictions, between a conception of education centered on market rationality and one centered on effective democratic citizenship. It is important to emphasize that these matters are not only of theoretical importance to us as political science researchers "standing back" from and seeking to understand the social world. For they implicate questions of *our own praxis*, as people who study, and teach, and work, and perform "professional service" in academic institutions that are very much part of the world that we analyze.

Joseph M. Schwartz raises this issue in his discussion of Mettler's book, pointing to what he calls "the radical casualization of the academic labor market" in recent years, and noting "At close to 1.5 million individuals, there are more university faculty today than ever before; but only 30 percent of them have tenured jobs or positions eligible for tenure, versus 70 percent in the early 1970s." Schwartz discusses what each of us knows through practical experience: that there are fewer and fewer secure and well-paid full-time academic positions, and increasing numbers of our profession's PhD students spend years, if not entire careers, in a series of one-or-two-year visiting positions or as more or less-permanent adjunct professors seeking short-term employment contracts wherever they can find them. Along with this growing *proletarianization* of academic labor has come a surge of unionization drives

across many college and university campuses in the United States. Labor politics, then, plays an increasingly important role in our lives as teachers and as scholars.

The issue is also raised in our Critical Dialogue featuring Richard Locke, author of *The Promise and Limits of Power: Promoting Labor Standards in a Global Economy*, and Dietlind Stolle, author of *Political Consumerism: Global Responsibility in Action*. For both books center their accounts on the role of largely informal practices and institutions in monitoring exploitative labor practices in the global South and influencing global labor standards, and both acknowledge that college and university campuses are important sites where these issues are politicized, and a variety of consumer boycotts and labor rights campaigns are initiated. The “No Sweat” campaign begun by United Students Against Sweatshops in 1998, which has established chapters at over 250 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada, is perhaps the best example of such activities.

Closer to home for many researchers and readers of this journal, the issue of scholarly labor is vividly raised by Dani Marinova in her essay on “Crowd-Sourced Labor and Social Research.” I can do no better than to quote her: “Crowdsourcing platforms offer a source of inexpensive data for research. At their fingertips, researchers have a round-the-clock workforce to fill out surveys, participate in experiments and content-analyze text, among other tasks that generate social science data and help support research. Thanks to its low cost and convenience, crowd-labor has quickly and uncritically become a mainstream tool in our discipline. While such platforms have been evaluated on their aptness to generate high-quality data, surprisingly little has been said about the economic or political implications of their usage. . . . The use of crowdlabor platforms for recruiting subjects nevertheless capitalizes on digital labor markets where unregulated employment is the norm . . . The crowdlabor market currently falls outside the scope of federal and state laws. Crowdworkers are not covered by minimum wage, overtime laws, OSHA (health and safety), Title VIII (employment discrimination), FMLA (family leave), or the NLRA (union organizing). Taking advantage of the legal grey zone between statutory employees and independent contractors, crowdlabor platforms like AMT explicitly prevent permanent contracts between crowdworkers and requesters and prohibit collective bargaining, thus stripping workers of employment security and labor representation. AMT operates in ‘a state of legal exception.’” Ironically, it may well be that the most economically “precarious” among us—graduate students and Assistant Professors without research support—are those most drawn to the use of crowdsourced academic labor precisely because it is relatively easy and inexpensive to procure. Marinova does not furnish any easy answers to the challenges presented by this growing practice. But she forces us to see that even

those of us who might otherwise wish to stay clear of “labor politics” often find ourselves implicated in them.

Two of our issue’s “Praxis” essays demonstrate something that we have sought to do fairly regularly with this format: that many of our colleagues work with a mindfulness of the interconnections between their research, their teaching, and their “service,” often participate collaboratively in the building of networks and institutions that promote synergies between political science and politics, and do so in ways that are also mindful of what we might call the “relative autonomy” of academic institutions.

Michael McCann’s “Labor Scholarship and/as Labor Activism” offers his reflections as a participant and Director of the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies at University of Washington. McCann notes that the contemporary scholar interested in doing publicly engaged work “must master multi-tasking, performing in multiple modalities and playing many different roles.” He observes that his well-known book *Rights at Work: Pay Equity Reform and the Politics of Legal Mobilization* emerged from long-standing interests in worker rights and involvement in worker struggles that “did not fit comfortably within the mainstream discipline of political science . . . or so it seemed in the early years of my academic career.” He traces the evolving interplay between his scholarship and a set of practical involvements, in low wage struggles at University of Washington; in the Law and Society Association task force charged with developing a policy dealing with labor tensions in conference hotels; and then as LSA president interested in promoting engaged professional discussion of LGBT rights and immigrant rights.

He then outlines the activities of the Bridges Center that he currently directs, which was founded by a collaboration of labor leaders and UW faculty members, and named after Harry Bridges, the longtime socialist, widely admired labor leader and influential president of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) from 1935 until his retirement in 1977. Here is how he describes the Center’s approach to engaged academic work:

“This mission self-consciously eschews both the overt issue advocacy and the training of labor organizers that some other labor centers embrace. Individual Bridges faculty, staff, and leadership routinely engage in overt advocacy—writings, speeches, event planning, marching, protests—but everyone consciously strives to draw a line between Center-sponsored and individual action. At the same time, we recognize that research and public education are in fact important forms of *indirect* advocacy, in that they aim to redirect public attention to concern about workers, their interests, their rights, and their struggles. Indeed, the Center works hard to elevate labor issues on the agenda and in the purview of many publics—students, faculty colleagues, journalists, politicians, policy makers, ordinary citizens. In this regard, our endeavor aims to

disrupt and challenge dominant business-centric narratives, issue frames, and story lines on and especially beyond our campus by introducing accounts regarding workers and work relations.”

Among the projects that emerge from such a praxis: the formation of a Labor Studies Student Association, spearheaded by an activist group within the UW graduate student union (UAW Local 4121), undergraduates in the United Students Against Sweatshops, and others who have experience or interests in worker-oriented advocacy; the SeaTac-Seattle Minimum Wage Campaign History Project, which aims to construct a digital web archive documenting the history of the influential local campaigns for a \$15 minimum wage in 2013–14 and their ongoing effects throughout the state and the nation; and the organization of public forums on union issues on campus. As McCann notes: “I have had to walk a challenging, sometimes frustrating line between overt advocacy as an engaged faculty member and merely facilitating dialogue, teaching, research, and consciousness raising among colleagues as the Bridges Director.” And he concludes by considering the challenges and the rewards of such an effort.

Katherine J. Cramer offers a similar perspective in the aforementioned piece “The Turn Away from Government and the Need to Revive the Civic Purpose of Higher Education.” Cramer is best known for her scholarship on civic engagement, most especially for her books *Talking about Politics: Informal Groups and Social Identity in American Life* and *Talking about Race: Community Dialogues and the Politics of Difference*. In this essay she reflects on the connections between this research and the institutions to which she is deeply committed—the Morgridge Center, the University of Wisconsin, and the “Wisconsin Idea” that “the boundaries of the university are the boundaries of the state.” Cramer proceeds from a seeming paradox. On the one hand, widespread concerns about the declining civic mission of American universities have been voiced by scholars and public intellectuals, the Kellogg Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education. On the other hand, American public universities are increasingly starved for resources and driven by commercial

imperatives to emphasize the importance of STEM education and new forms of accountability to the logic of the market. As Cramer notes: “It has not always been the case that the needs of the workforce and the needs of democracy were perceived to be at odds. When land grant higher-education institutions were first created by the federal government during the Civil War via the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, the motivation was that an expanding nation needed to equip its citizens (that is, its white male citizens at the time) with the ability to grow their own food, build their own buildings, and build their own communities.” But in the new “lean and mean” economy, there is no strong commitment to this conception of public higher education.

In the ultimate irony, while a century ago Wisconsin was the nation’s primary laboratory for the development of the public mission of the research university, today, under the leadership of Republican Governor Scott Walker, Wisconsin is the pioneer of the effort to reconfigure the university as an instrument of private enterprise.

As a number of the pieces in this issue of *Perspectives* make clear, this transformation of higher education is not unrelated to the transformations associated with a post-industrial, postmodern, and neoliberal capitalism. The 20<sup>th</sup> century expansions of mass higher education and the modern research university were closely linked to the development of “welfare states” that were also “regulatory states.” These developments were powered in large part by strong labor movements demanding both political incorporation and the expansion of what T. H. Marshall called “social rights.” Thus the attention given to the Wisconsin Social Democratic Party’s platform by the *APSR* in 1907. The world today looks very different. At the same time, as I write, a professed “democratic socialist” is making a strong bid for the Democratic party’s nomination for the U.S. Presidency. The forms and terms of political contestation about class inequality may have changed. But the contestation persists, and it continues to motivate some of the best political science scholarship being produced. We at *Perspectives* are happy to feature this work, and to be what the *APSR* was at its inception—a political science public sphere.

# The Centrality of Books to Political Science and to *Perspectives on Politics*

By Jeffrey C. Isaac, Editor in Chief

Almost half of every issue of *Perspectives* is dedicated to our Review section. This structure of the journal is something that we inherited, for when *Perspectives* was created, it was decided to move the APSA book reviews, which had previously been published in the *APSR*, to *Perspectives*, and to open up the new journal to a range of writing formats.

We inherited this structure, but we also embraced it.

Indeed, I assumed the position of Editor in Chief of the entire journal after having served for four years as the Book Review Editor under the editorship of my predecessor, Jim Johnson. During my tenure as Book Review Editor we made a conscious decision to innovate with this section, by creating new formats—Critical Dialogues, Book Symposia, different kinds of thematic review essays, and Review Editor Introductions highlighting common themes—and trying to make the “back end” of *Perspectives* a space for lively conversation across conventional subfield and methodological divides in the discipline. These innovations were announced and explained in my inaugural editorial statement, “A Statement from the Book Review Editor” (*Perspectives on Politics*, March 2006, pp. 3–4), and the approach to the journal’s treatment of books has remained true to the perspective outlined in that public text.

When I was offered the editorship of the entire journal in 2009, I agreed to accept this position on the basis of a clearly defined vision that was grounded in our experience with the Review section, and I was committed to editing the entire journal as a whole. My reason was straightforward: I believed that the journal was a unique and precious intellectual resource, and I was—and am—deeply committed to placing it on the strongest possible footing as a venue that features a wide range of political science perspectives and formats in a genuinely integrated way. It is surely possible for the two “ends” of the journal to be edited by separate individuals, working together in a collaborative fashion. But I was and am strongly committed to the idea that the two ends can and should be integrated into a single whole; that each “end” should in fact have diverse formats, so that in fact the journal would be much more complicated and interesting than a simplistic oppo-

sition of “articles” and “reviews” implies; and that these formats should speak to one another.

This vision was endorsed by the APSA officials—the search committee chaired by Rogers Smith, APSA President Peter Katzenstein, and the APSA Council—who unanimously supported my appointment.

When my editorial team took over the entire journal in 2009, we “branded” the journal as “A Political Science Public Sphere,” and worked hard to nurture synergies between the research articles and essays published in the journal’s “front end” and the reviews and book discussions published in its “back end” (this vision was announced in “*Perspectives on Politics: A Political Science Public Sphere*,” my editorial statement published in the March 2010 issue, and now printed at the beginning of each issue). My staff and I have devoted enormous energy to this approach to the journal, with the strong support of our dedicated Editorial Board and with the support of the APSA Council. These efforts were recognized by the 2011 Performance Review Committee that recommended the extension of our editorial tenure. But in my view the most important “recognition” of this approach is the fact that we continue to enjoy the enthusiastic participation of many hundreds of authors and reviewers every year, and to produce a publication that includes a wide range of excellent contributions across a range of formats.

At the heart of the journal as it has come to be structured, read, and appreciated within the profession, is the deliberate effort of our editorial team to discern, nurture, and publicize complementarities, synergies, and broad thematic interests that might otherwise be insufficiently recognized by our increasingly specialized academic life. Our entire range of formats is dedicated to this end. We have nurtured the production of research articles that are rigorous, rigorously peer-reviewed, and at the same time are written and framed more broadly than conventional research articles. We have nurtured a range of conversations about political science books, and promoted conversations between our articles and our book reviews and essays. These connections have been essential to our vision of “a political science public sphere.”

Readers of the journal will be familiar with this range of formats, and with their complementarities:

- Research articles
- “Reflections” essays
- Book Review Essays
- Book Symposia
- Book Critical Dialogues
- “Undisciplined” Reviews and Review Essays (featuring reviews of books from other disciplines)
- A special thematic Book Review section in each issue
- Standard single, double, and triple Book Reviews

Readers will also be familiar with the ways that we have sought to plan our production schedule so we can package writings in these formats together thematically, and highlight these themes in my Editor Introductions. These efforts draw scholarly and public attention to broad and interesting themes. And by promoting broad and relevant scholarly discussion, they also help us reach beyond the discipline, and to gain the attention, and sometimes even the involvement, of journalists, policy intellectuals, and sometimes even a broader reading public. Recent examples include:

- Our June 2012 issue featuring work on violence
- Our September 2012 special 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue on “Post-Katrina New Orleans and the Politics of Reconstruction”
- Our March 2013 issue featuring work on “The Politics of Inequality in the Face of Financial Crisis”
- Our June 2013 issue featuring work on “Nature and Politics”

It is sometimes overlooked how central our Book Review section is to these efforts. But even a casual perusal of any recent issue of *Perspectives* will remind colleagues of the centrality of books.

I have been a professional political scientist for over thirty years. We are all well acquainted with the still widely accepted notion that book review assignments are convenient means of getting a free book that you want to read and of dashing off a thousand-word commentary during one’s breaks from “real” research and writing. For the past eight years we have worked tirelessly, and successfully, to counter this unfortunate notion.

*Books are important, and so serious intellectual attention to them is important.*

While promptly published scholarly articles are also important, the book format remains the only format that allows scholars, in every field and from every perspective, to take the time and space to develop an argument in depth. Books are at the heart of political science. Important books help to create new research agendas. The names Almond or Dahl or Katzenstein or Putnam or Skocpol or Ostrom or Riker or Olson or Fenno or Mansbridge or Aldrich do not evoke journal articles. Each evokes an

important *book*, and typically more than one of them. Every year many hundreds of new political science books containing new political science perspectives are published. We know this. The Book Exhibit at the annual APSA conference is one of the main attractions for almost everyone.

These books seek and deserve more than mere citation and more than glorified “Book Note” type reviews. They deserve serious discussion in a serious scholarly context. They deserve well-written reviews that are carefully edited by editors who work with reviewers, and prompt them to think a bit more broadly, and to view their book reviews as real scholarly engagements. Such reviews do much more than publicize and provide short cuts to books that readers might not otherwise know about. They *engage* the books and make them really a part of serious scholarly dialogue.

But there is something else: these reviews make *their authors* part of seriously scholarly dialogue.

Most of our colleagues do not work at research-intensive universities. Most of them spend most of their time teaching, often with heavy loads, either as tenured or tenure-track professors at teaching institutions, or as adjuncts and part-time academic workers. For many of our colleagues, the chance to write a fine book review, and to have it seriously engaged by an editor, and to have it published in a “flagship research journal,” is one of the only significant opportunities they may have to write and to publish in a given year.

Every year *Perspectives on Politics* publishes hundreds of book reviews written by a very wide range of scholars with a wide range of institutional affiliations. We are very serious about the range and diversity of the contributors to our book review section. One reason is because it allows our journal to reach broadly, and to *include* many of readers as *contributors*. This “community-building” function of *Perspectives* is very important, for a scholarly community ought to be linked by scholarly conversation in which each participant has genuine opportunities to speak as well as to listen and to be an author as well as a reader.

But this kind of inclusion is also important in an *epistemic* sense. For it “enforces” a breadth of scholarly perspective, and brings expert discourses into conversation with more generalist perspectives, to the benefit of the kind of true critical engagement that is the heart of the scientific enterprise. In this sense, every 1500 word book review that we publish is much more than a professional “service”; it is a serious contribution to scholarship and to the development of scholarly research. And the publication of these reviews in a flagship journal of political science, alongside rigorously peer reviewed research articles, essays, symposia, and dialogues, highlights their importance.

We are excited about the range of formats contained within *Perspectives*, and the way that they work together to project a vision of scholarly and intellectual seriousness. We believe that in this age of specialization, “modularity,”

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## From the Editor

and almost costless digital creation and circulation of texts, it is important for an intellectually serious political science discipline to have at least one broad, integrated, and intellectually serious journal that features a range of perspectives, formats, and scholars.

We believe, in short, that it is important for there to be *a political science public sphere*.

We are also grateful to the many colleagues who support us in these efforts, and who embrace the chance to be active participants in and contributors to the journal and its many formats. We continue to receive a growing number of article submissions, and we have many exciting book review special features planned in the coming issues. As we move forward, we welcome your ideas and suggestions.