

# Our Reflections on our First Months as the New Book Review Editors

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It has been almost a year since we took over the helm as book review editors, and we have been busy commissioning new book reviews, editing Critical Dialogue exchanges, and working with scholars on book review essays that synthesize and critically evaluate exciting new work in the discipline. We are humbled to have been given stewardship of such a vibrant and well-regarded book review platform within political science, especially given that this decision moves the center of gravity from the United States across the Atlantic to Europe. This transition would not have been possible without the careful guidance of the *Perspectives on Politics* editors, the broader American Political Science Association journals team, and the Cambridge University Press staff. Special thanks are due to Ana Arjona and Wendy R. Pearlman, the new(ish) coeditors of *Perspectives*; Jon Gurstelle, APSA's director of publishing; Daniel I. O'Neill, the previous *Perspectives* book review editor; Jennifer Boylan, the *Perspectives* managing editor; Karla Mundim, *Perspectives* interim book review editor; and Tia Gracey, who has kindly stepped in to support us in APSA's Washington DC office, not least by cataloging all the books sent to the APSA office for our review. We are immensely grateful for their support.

*Perspectives on Politics* has long been a journal that is invested in the cultivation of a "political science public sphere," and we very much see the book review section as a core part of that project. Books remain vital to the work that political scientists do, even as the digital spaces in which we interact and share our perspectives continue to change the ways in which we read, write, and encounter new research. In a conjuncture characterized by ever-shortening attention spans and condensed word counts, books make a claim for complexity as well as nuanced and sustained attention to evidence and argument. Many monographs move our discipline forward, whether by asking innovative questions, making methodological interventions, or approaching old problems in new ways. As such, we think it is vital that the journal's book review pages serve as a place where scholars, both established and emerging, can come together to discuss the urgent problems confronting

our discipline today, where conversations reach across the bounds of the different subfields to speak to more inclusive and generalist audiences, both outside political science and outside the academy.

As book review editors, we take seriously the legacy of the previous *Perspectives on Politics* editors, who have made the journal a central site for the scholarly discussion of new books across the discipline. It is a hard act to follow. Daniel O'Neill managed to review thousands of books throughout his tenure, generating vibrant conversations and debates across the different subfields and supporting the careers of many early career scholars in the process. We will continue to publish both single and double book reviews, book review essays, symposia, and Critical Dialogues in the journal's four core areas: comparative politics, international relations, American politics, and political theory. From now on, the journal will also publish book reviews through its FirstView online platform before publishing them in specific print issues. This frees the book review team from organizing its publication schedule exclusively around the print issues and will ensure that reviews will be available to readers more quickly, without sacrificing the curatorial value of the print issue.

We intend to publish more Critical Dialogue exchanges, symposia pieces, and book review essays that take a problem-centered approach to evaluating contemporary scholarship. For example, this issue includes a book review essay from Elizabeth J. Perry on how best to understand Chinese governance under Xi Jinping—and what distinguishes Xi's "New Era" from past iterations of Chinese Communist Party rule. By embracing these formats, we hope that readers will turn to the book review section for broader conversations about where political science stands as a discipline and where it is going. We also plan to introduce book review editorials in each issue in which we draw together book reviews on similar questions or topics across the subfields. (The first of these synthesizing editorials follows this editors' note.)

Like past book review editors, we remain committed to broadening and diversifying the authors who write for *Perspectives on Politics* and whose work is, in turn, reviewed

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by other scholars in our pages. Disciplinary boundaries and narrow subfield distinctions have all too often shut down certain conversations, marginalized certain methodological approaches, and prioritized certain geographies, communities, and problems as appropriately “political” and worthy of scholarly attention. Actively diversifying our contributors and our conception of what counts as a “political science” monograph can introduce productive forms of epistemic friction, thereby forcing the discipline to reflect on both its strengths and limitations and to develop new tools for better grasping emergent problems. We remain firmly committed to the journal’s founding

vision of creating a “broad tent,” and we aim to actively seek out contributions from scholars from a broad range of backgrounds, institutions, methodologies, and career stages in the hope of capturing a plurality of perspectives.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to those reviewers who have already been willing to give their time and their labor to the journal. The work of reviewing new scholarship is, like so many tasks in our discipline, unremunerated, and can go underacknowledged. We know that it is your care and your efforts that keep the wheels of the discipline turning, and we look forward to continuing to work with you over the years to come.