Editorial

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As Editors, we are pleased to introduce the first issue of *French Politics*, an exciting forum for the presentation and discussion of political science research and ideas relating to France. The journal aims to be a disciplinary-based periodical, appearing three times a year, that will publish the latest research on France and French Politics from plural theoretical and methodological perspectives. The intent of the journal and the editorial team is to help bring research on France to a wide comparative audience and, equally, incorporate advances in comparative methods and techniques into the study of French politics.

For many years, the knowledge of the French case among many political scientists was limited to the notion of 'French exceptionalism'. While France has an undeniably particular historical and cultural trajectory, many things have occurred that call into question this paradigm. In particular, a trio of 'isms' — modernism, Europeanism, globalism — have called into question the autonomy of the French state and challenged established patterns of political behaviour. The exigencies of the modern global political economy have had and continue to have a profound impact on the French polity, and a range of issues — from competitiveness in trade to immigration and social identity — faces France just as they do its neighbours and competitors. Equally, questions of European Union enlargement, military intervention in other regions, and peacekeeping have engaged the French state in a complex web of international processes that surmount the old conception of fortress France.

These changes have been mirrored by theoretical advances in the political science community. Some scholars emphasise path-dependent models, in which seemingly singular patterns of political action may be largely explained by unique sets of antecedent conditions. Others are swayed by theories of structural convergence, in which data are marshalled to demonstrate the similarities and differences between the politics of advanced industrial societies. Still others have extended agent-based rational choice models into the comparative study of institutions, arguing for a parsimonious approach to the study of political systems built on a limited set of core assumptions. Debates about methodological strategies for research abound, with attempts both to extend the range of quantitative analysis and also to formalise qualitative approaches in a rigorous pseudo-scientific framework. In all this the

study of ideas has not been forgotten, with normative theory retaining a capacity to excite and to pose the provocative questions of values and preferences.

The field of comparative political science is a stimulating place and nowhere is this more true than in the study of France. As the French case becomes better known among comparative scholars, and as France is included in more and more comparative and cross-national research projects, we believe the journal will provide a necessary and vital forum for the presentation and debate of this research. Our intention is to encourage the submission of original articles from either a case study, a focused comparison, or a cross-national perspective to the extent that they bring added knowledge and meaning to the French case. Equally so, the journal has no theoretical or methodological orthodoxy; we simply aim to achieve the highest disciplinary standards through a rigorous peer review process, and hope that these pages will provide a forum where issues of theory, methodology, and paradigms may be debated.

Against this background, the journal will include four main types of contributions. There are research articles on French politics. In this issue, these articles clearly demonstrate the ethos of the journal as a whole. Two of the articles published in these pages are single case studies. Karen Bird looks at the question of parity and traces the effects of the parity law on the presumed transformation of the political elite. Using both qualitative and quantitative data, she demonstrates that the parity law has not produced an equality of outcomes for women as they enter the political arena. In their article on the evolution of values and cleavages in modern France, Robert Andersen and Jocelyn Evans question some of the more deeply held assumptions about the partisan distribution of the French electorate. Their analysis is formal and quantitative, and will provoke debate among scholars of French elections and political sociology particularly in the context of what would appear to be a dramatic rise in support for the extreme right at the most recent presidential election. In addition, two of the articles are explicitly comparative in scope. Comparing party conventions in France and Britain, Florence Faucher-King and Eric Treille elucidate the conference management strategies of modern political parties. Their conclusions will appeal to a broad range of scholars interested in political campaigning and the dynamics of party organisation. In a qualitative treatment of the construction of political identity, Chris Soper and Joel Fetzer examine the experience of Muslim immigrants in France, Britain, and Germany, and compare and contrast their social and structural conditions. This article will no doubt solicit attention from those who work on questions of immigration and religion in any one of these countries, particularly in this period of heightened awareness of such issues.

In addition to research articles, the journal will regularly feature review essays dealing with major works that bear upon the study of France. In this

first issue, we are delighted to publish a provocative treatment of the relative merits of Duverger's majoritarian and Lijphart's consensus models of democracy, authored by Jan-Erik Lane and Svante Ersson. Their analytical essay clearly expresses a preference for one of those models, using a range of institutional data drawn from their own work. Future review essays are planned that cover France and globalization, citizenship, and political parties. We welcome submissions and proposals for review essays which should be sent to the Review Editor, Catherine Fieschi, at the address provided elsewhere in the journal.

The journal will also feature an innovative Data, Measures and Methods section, edited by Michael Lewis-Beck. The section will provide a place where questions of interest relating to empirical research in France will be addressed. In addition to regular essays pertaining to methodological and measurement issues, readers of the journal will find information about the collection, storage, and availability of data on France. One key element of the Data, Measures, and Methods section is that subscribers to the journal will be able to access a pass-worded website that will contain resources and links that do not appear in the hard copy of the journal. This blending of textual and electronic forms of information is an innovative development that is designed to provide a highly useful research tool for both comparativists and students of French politics alike. In his introductory note in this issue, Michael Lewis-Beck explores the shape and direction of the Data, Methods and Measures section more fully.

Finally, the journal will periodically host debates on research and ideas that have been recently published. In this issue, Gérard Grunberg and Étienne Schweisguth respond to Robert Andersen and Jocelyn Evans on the tripartite political space. In an upcoming issue, Arend Lijphart will reply to Jan-Erik Lane and Svante Ersson's treatment of the consensus model of democracy. In short, the journal will become, we hope, a place for lively scholarly debate and we will attempt to accommodate requests for replies and responses.

To date, we have been delighted at the range and quantity of submissions and we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has already been willing to send manuscripts to a new journal. We are also very grateful to the people who have helped us by agreeing to review manuscripts. A full list of reviewers will be printed annually. Overall, we believe that the ethos of the journal and the quality of the contributions are clearly evident throughout the pages of this first issue. However, the success of the journal will depend upon the activity of its readership and we invite all of you to consider our pages for your work.