Editorial

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Two years ago, the first issue of *French Politics* appeared in print. In our introductory editorial we wrote, ‘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’. The articles in that first issue reflected these aims; two were explicitly comparative, one quantitative, a review article written by two non-French specialists, and the first Data, Measures and Methods essay on party membership.

Since then, the journal has continued to set the standard for contemporary research on French politics. In the first two volumes, 22 research articles, six review essays, and eight pieces in the Data, Measures and Methods (DMM) section have been published. Of those 22 articles, eight have been explicitly comparative in that they incorporate two or more cases, while three have focused on France in the European and/or global context. Three have included multivariate analysis as an analytical tool, while three others have adopted the approach championed in the public choice literature.

Substantively, public policy (domestic) accounts for six of those articles, parties and interest groups four, and European and international politics three. Two articles have been published each on elections, local politics, and social movements, while the remainder focuses on political institutions and identity politics. The content of the journal has engendered debate; three reply articles have been published thus far, each of them provoking lively response from the original authors and, in the process, moving scholarship forward. We hope to continue this tradition.

The six review essays that we have published, commissioned by the Review Editor, Catherine Fieschi, have ranged from political theory to the analysis of French political institutions. Some have focused on a specific set of books that have had a seminal impact upon the study of French politics, while others have incorporated a more substantive focus, dealing with topics such as political protest or the evolving nature of the Franco-German alliance in the post-cold war era. All provide a guide to any reader wishing to deepen their knowledge of contemporary scholarship, and taken together paint a lively portrait of contemporary France.

The DMM section of the journal, under the guidance of DMM Editor Michael Lewis-Beck, has taken shape as *the* arena for the discussion of technical and methodological issues that face the researcher of French politics. We have published articles that focus on the location and quality of data in certain fields (political popularity, economic indicators, political party membership, defense expenditures); each of these articles presents readers with a comprehensive guide to the composition of those data and some technical considerations. We have published articles that analyze the utility of those data, such as the analysis of electoral results. We have also published articles that deal with methodological considerations, such as the use of quota sampling in most political surveys in France, and the use of computer programs to content analyze political content.

In all of these endeavors, we have been helped by the Executive Board, the Advisory Board, anonymous reviewers, and the editorial staff at Palgrave. The Executive Board has met annually at the American Political Science Association meetings, and has taken an active role in shaping the content and direction of the journal. The Advisory Board continues to spread the message and reputation of *French Politics* across several continents and in many countries. To date we have called upon over 80 individuals to assist us with the peer-review process, and we express our sincere thanks to all who have responded so generously. Their names can be found in the last issue of each volume. Finally, the Palgrave staff has been wonderful to work with, and we want to thank David Bull and Emma Jones for their steadfast support and encouragement and Emma Ross on the production side.

What of the future? As the reputation of the journal continues to expand, we hope to further the work that we have begun in shaping the comparative study of politics in France. In 2005, we will introduce the idea of the *forum* into the pages of the journal, meaning a set of related articles that have a common theme or substantive focus. Articles will appear together in the same issue, having been through the same peer-review process for any other research article. We encourage ideas and proposals for forums to be submitted to us at french-politics@dcu.ie. We are also unveiling access to the new website for the DMM section, which will feature data sets, links, and notes of interest to social scientists working on a variety of topics. The holdings are to be found at <http://www.wsu.edu/frpol>. We call upon authors and readers to consider the submission of data sets to our website, which will help to disseminate usable data to the research community. This may be done at frpol@wsu.edu.

As we pursue these objectives, we do not want to depart from the goal laid out in our inaugural editorial to 'achieve the highest disciplinary standards through a rigorous peer-review process'. When the journal was launched, we were convinced that the better integration of the study of French politics into political science could only be achieved by setting a high bar for the peer-review

process. All published articles, without exception, have been subjected to peer review. We have attempted to have articles reviewed by at least one non-French politics specialist and have not hesitated to call upon some of the most prominent scholars in the discipline. Our acceptance rate to date is approximately 35% of articles submitted, which we would hazard to be rather selective for a new journal.

In adopting these unflinching standards, we will continue to pursue the two aims that we set ourselves at the outset. We will publish articles that appeal to political scientists whose primary focus is France. Indeed, we are confident that specialists on France already consider *French Politics* to be the journal of reference in the area, certainly in the English language. Equally importantly, though, we will strive to bring a new audience for research on French politics into our community, that of the practitioner of comparative and cross-national political science. As with any high-quality, specialist journal, we do not imagine that every reader will read every article in every edition of the journal. However, we do think that there is something in the pages of *French Politics* for every scholar of political science, no matter what their substantive field or methodological proclivity. In short, we will publish work that is at the cutting-edge of political science whatever the topic of inquiry and however that topic is addressed.

Finally, there is room for an expansion of the type of articles that we would consider for publication. To date, we have received fewer articles on foreign policy than we had anticipated. Europeanization is clearly a topical field of study, and we expect to publish more in this area. We would like to consider articles that deal with foreign policy and France's role on the world stage. We would like to see more articles on basic political institutions, the executive, the legislature, the judiciary and so on. We are interested in articles that are explicitly cross-national, that is, which may consider France as one substantively important case in formal, statistical analysis. We are receptive to manuscripts that adopt the language and mathematical tools of formal theory. We hold fast to the principles with which we began, namely that the journal shall represent no orthodoxy, either theoretical or methodological. Our aim is a consistent and comprehensive coverage of politics in France from a comparative perspective.

We hope that you agree that the journal reflects the best of contemporary scholarship on France. We have striven for the highest standards of peer-review and acceptance, and we will continue to push the stated mission. We thank you for your readership and support, and look forward to the next stage in the progress of *French Politics*.