

THE VIEW FROM SOUTH LAWN

The first half of 2013 has proven to be one of tremendous change. The gridlock in Washington appears to have reached historic heights, as budgetary disputes become a nearly monthly occurrence and ideological polarization becomes a relentless fact of political life. And the United States finds itself in an increasingly precarious position in the world system as developing economies become more autonomous and geopolitical disputes more interdependent. Now, as always, the importance of thought-provoking social science research cannot be understated.

The papers in this issue depict many of the complexities and nuances surrounding political activities, government policies, and social trends and movements. This edition of the *Journal of Politics & Society* begins with a guest essay written by Professor Shamus Khan of Columbia University. He identifies a new form of elitism endemic to the U.S. modern upper-class that values omnivorosity as a sign of cultural capital under the guise of individuality. Such elitism, he claims, seeks to promote a discourse of intellectual openness, even as such a discourse serves to entrench elite exclusivity.

Even as it continues to maintain its strength and influence, the United States faces many challenges. Two of the papers in this edition describe the political and military ramifications of a state adapting to change. Lauren Kobor examines the benefits and drawbacks of eliminating land-based nuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles and makes the case that their removal would not damage U.S. military interests. Noting a similar need to modernize politics, Samuel Wagreich studies the Chinese government's growing efforts to lobby Congress through multinational corporations and notes the inadequacy of existing legislation in providing transparency in the era of globalization.

The issues of corruption and transparency are not unique to the United States. In fact, the United States may actually be a

moderating influence on corruption worldwide. Leticia Ferreras analyzes macro-level trends among international students studying in Western countries and comes to the conclusion that countries with a higher percentage of students receiving higher education abroad experience less corruption, even after controlling for other variables. A lower incidence of corruption does not, however, mitigate the negative impact of politics on public policy. Pooja Yerramilli dissects the politics surrounding microfinance institutions in India and argues that politics is also the predominant factor that led to the demise of the local industry in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Not all public policy efforts, however, are doomed to failure. In this edition's *Peter and Katherine Tomassi Essay*, Jessica Downing evaluates the implications of framing bike-sharing in Philadelphia as a public health initiative. She explores issues of inequality and access among the demographics utilizing the Philadelphia program and offers a statistical snapshot of the need for greater inclusion. Issues of inequality and access also plague the Chinese education system. In the inaugural *Weatherhead East Asian Institute Essay*, Lily Yang observes the existing educational inequity among rural areas and infers that this inequity is the determining factor in migrant workers' decision to bring their children with them to urban areas with better educational systems.

Now in its twenty-fifth year of publication, the *Journal of Politics & Society* remains the country's most significant outlet for world-class undergraduate social science research. As we lay the groundwork for a new era of our publication, we are grateful for the diligence and enthusiasm of each member of the editorial board. We are tremendously inspired by the achievements of our predecessors and strive to leave our own mark on this venerable organization.

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