

Internationalization of APSA: Why? How?

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In a meeting of APSA's international committee in September 2003, Susanne Rudolph, APSA's current President, suggested the need for a "mutual de-parochialization" in our knowledge practices. She meant a closer interaction between American and non-American political scientists and a greater cross-fertilization of their substantive and methodological concerns. Margaret Levi, the next President of APSA, also emphasized the need for a greater internationalization of American political science, with special emphasis paid to the so-called international public realm.

This note is a response to their concerns. It incorporates the comments made by International Committee in its meeting on January 23, 2004, held at the national office of APSA in Washington¹, as also the subsequent suggestions made by Susanne Rudolph and Margaret Levi. Our aim at this point is to submit this draft to the Administrative Committee for its feedback -- before a formal document is placed for the consideration of the Council in its meeting on April 17. The final document, if approved by the Council, will constitute a new mandate for the international committee.

In the discussion below, I first discuss *why* internationalization of APSA is desirable. It is followed the international committee's understanding of *how* it might best be carried out.

¹ The current members of the International Committee are: Karen Beckwith, John Odell, Allan Rosenbaum, Richard Simeon, and Toni-Michelle Travis. Rosenbaum was unable to participate in the January meeting, but commented later on our ideas; and Timothy Colton, the previous chair of the International Committee, as especially invited. On behalf of APSA, Michael Brintnall, Bahram Rajaei, Sylvia Bronson, and Linda Lopez also participated in the discussion. I thank them all, as well as Susanne Rudolph and Margaret Levi, for their comments on earlier draft of this memo.

APSA International Committee Statement to the APSA Council

Why Internationalization?

Should APSA be concerned only with our US/North American colleagues, or should it go wider in search of ideas, methods, concerns, collaborations? Will American political science and American political scientists be better off, if we pursue internationalization more vigorously? These questions require thought and reflection.

It should first be noted that international members already constitute as many as 1400 of APSA members, about 10 per cent of the total. Predictably, the proportions are higher in some subfields, especially comparative politics, than in others. As explained by Michael Brintnall at the January meeting of the International Committee, legally speaking, APSA is not a national, but a dues-based, organization, responsible to its members wherever they might exist. Thanks to a new survey conducted by APSA last fall, we now have a better sense of the needs and aspirations of our international members.

Opinions are likely to differ on whether an association should, or can, pay special attention to every particular group of its membership. That, therefore, is not our main argument in favor of greater internationalization. In our view, a more compelling argument -- and one that we advance below -- is that internationalization would be mutually beneficial. Whatever its benefits to political scientists outside the US/North America, a more internationalized APSA will be rewarding for political scientists based in the US/North America as well.

As a way to illustrate this latter point, let us recall what greater sensitivity to non-American political materials and intellectual interventions of political scientists with non-American backgrounds have already done to theory building in our discipline. Many examples can be cited from the last few decades. Consider just a few, necessarily selective, instances.

Democratic Theory: In the 1950s and 1960s, after the influential arguments of Seymour Martin Lipset, democratic theorists used to argue that democracies were possible only in wealthy countries. The stability of democracy in poorer countries (India, Botswana, Costa Rica, Trinidad, Papua New Guinea, Mauritius, to name a few) has seriously challenged this orthodoxy. The major new formulation, developed by Adam Przeworski et al (*Democracy and Development*, Cambridge, 2000), is based on a global dataset, including developing countries. It rests on a distinction between emergence and survival: democracies can emerge at any level of income, but the odds that they will survive at low levels of income are low. Other scholars of democracy, such as Arend Lijphart, have also used non-American materials extensively. In fact, Lijphart's consociational theory was originally based on the Dutch experience, and was only later extended further.

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Theories of Nationalism: One of the most influential works in the field of ethnicity and nationalism is *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1983) by Benedict Anderson, a Southeast Asia specialist, whose basic ideas emerged from Asia and Latin America (“Creole Pioneers”). Emphasizing the role of technology and vernacular forms of communication in the formation of nations, Anderson showed how all nations were imagined and constructed in modern times. This argument has led to a dramatic reordering of the literature on nationalism in Europe as well, where scholarly discussions of nationalism, untouched by these ideas, had first emerged. Linda Colley’s *Britons* (Yale, 1992) is a good example of the latter.

More instances can be cited. The recent emphasis on the role of civil society in democracies was spurred by Robert Putnam’s examination of Italian materials in the 1970s and 1980s. The theory of developmental state had its roots in the East Asian government-business relations of the 1970s and 1980s, highlighted in the works, among others, of non-American scholars such as Robert Wade. The idea of bureaucratic authoritarianism was born in Latin America and noticed first in Guillermo O’Donnell’s writings. Making a major impact on the work on rationality and politics, the rational-moral debate on peasant behavior between Samuel Popkin and James Scott in the late 1970s was based on Southeast Asian empirical materials.

Finally, Samuel Barnes and Max Kaase’s cross-national study of mass participation (*Political Action*, Sage, 1979), Barbara Nelson and Najma Chowdhury’s collection, *Women and Politics Worldwide* (Yale, 1994), involving 61 scholars from 43 different countries, and Russell Dalton and Manfred Kuechler’s volume *Challenging the Political Order* (Oxford, 1990) are products of international collaborative efforts that have provided a foundation for cross-national research on citizen-state linkages across a wide range of political systems, and on the interaction between conventional and unconventional citizen participation in electoral politics and social movements

These examples should make it clear that a systematic engagement with non-American materials makes our discipline, our political understandings and our theories better. If any thing, the era of globalization and its concomitant communication revolution, by producing a remarkable flow of ideas, people, technology, arms, goods and capital across geographical borders, and the post-9/11 shocks to the international system, are making the need to understand the larger political world still more urgent and desirable. Even US politics can no longer remain untouched by some rather distant questions, such as why the Taliban and Al Qaeda prospered in Afghanistan and Pakistan and whether those conditions can re-emerge, there or elsewhere. Left in recent years on the margins of the discipline, such questions have become all too significantly global in their political implications and can only be ignored at our peril. The remarkable political and economic rise of China, with India increasingly not far behind, and the steps towards democracy and market-oriented economies in Eastern Europe and Russia are also matters of great international political significance. Despite the global thrust of the last two decades, the empirical possibility of a thoroughly Americanized world is not a serious one.

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Do we need a fuller engagement with non-US/North American scholars to make a better sense of how these developments are changing our political universe? Will a better political science, responding to changes in the real world, develop more easily, if *scholarly experiences*, not simply *research concerns*, are systematically broadened and globalized?

All scholars, to a substantial extent, are shaped by their training. As arguments within the philosophy and methodology of the social sciences show, inherited or institutionally practiced methods, perspectives and approaches make one more naturally inclined towards a certain regime of facts, towards a specific mode of reasoning, towards a particular style of argumentation. Systematic encounters, exposures, collaborations across trainings, methods and perspectives not only present exciting intellectual challenges, worth undertaking on their own, but also bring greater depth, authenticity and relevance to knowledge and theory-building.²

But why should APSA be burdened with the task of encouraging border-crossings? Why can't such endeavors be left to individual scholars or universities? Individuals and institutions, after all, can form partnerships, if they so choose.

Two arguments come to mind. When it comes to collaborations with foreign scholars, not all individuals and institutions may be equally well-placed. Second, after 9/11, movement of individual scholars across borders is becoming increasingly difficult. An organization like APSA can attack both problems more effectively than individual scholars can. It represents a broader constituency.

Let me summarize. The following arguments support the idea and desirability of a more internationalized APSA.

1. Greater internationalization will benefit APSA members and their scholarship by enriching our theories and research intuitions and by broadening our perspectives. More international collaboration is desirable, as is the freer movement of scholars.
2. APSA's approval of this idea would be a good signaling device, with important implications for the profession.

² Humility is an additional -- and not an entirely insignificant -- intellectual gain. It should also be noted that several scholars cited above explicitly acknowledge the contribution of the more locally rooted scholars and/or knowledge to the evolution of their theories. Putnam mentions Leonardi and Nanetti; Anderson and Scott's works repeatedly cite Asian scholars; Pzeworski's team was multinational; Lijphart has a Dutch background; O'Donnell lived in Argentina for much of his life, Argentinean experiences in the 1960s shaping his theories enormously.

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3. Individuals can strike collaborative exchanges, but such opportunities are not accessible to everyone equally, and even those who benefit from particular exchanges would benefit from more generalized opportunities. An APSA-mediated crossing of borders will be more effective and beneficial than leaving such partnerships solely up to individuals or departments.

4. Post-9/11, crossing borders has become increasingly difficult, thus further hindering the ability of individual scholars to form fruitful international exchanges. APSA's role will be highly significant in the new international atmosphere.

How Should We Promote Internationalization?

- **Changes at the Annual Meetings:** (1) Set up an "international night" on the Thursday night of the Meeting, to facilitate network-building and to promote comparative discussions; (2) Recommend to the Program Committee that an *annual plenary session* be established on a matter of international salience with a major public figure as our featured speaker, or presentation by a major scholar working on an issue of great international importance. Examples are: Nelson Mandela on South African democratic transition; Bill Clinton or Dominique de Villepin (the Foreign Minister of France) on American foreign policy after 9/11; Lee Kuan Yew on whether Asian, or non-Western, democracy must be an illiberal democracy; Amartya Sen on democratic theory for the 21st century (he has started work on the subject and would like to discuss democracy in a "capabilities framework"); Joseph Stiglitz on the right kind of globalization; Jeffrey Sachs on why Sub-Saharan Africa's development problems have serious international implications; Jurgen Habermas on the European Union and the Nation-State; Paul Krugman on the migration of service sector jobs out of the US; Charles Taylor on democracies and multiculturalism, etc.
- **Funding:** The committee supports (1) increasing the "International Scholars" funds with the understanding that non-OECD scholars will be targeted and will receive the substantial proportion of the funding increase; (2) creating a new program for international scholars to stay beyond the four days of the Annual Meeting for research and networking purposes. Under (1), the committee would like to make five grants of \$3,000 each for foreign scholars to attend APSA annual meetings (a total of \$15,000), and under (2), five grants of \$2,000 each (a total of \$10,000). A grand total of \$25,000 for the two programs would not constitute a significant increase in the APSA funding already available for the International Scholars Program, while at the same time symbolically demonstrating that APSA is serious about giving greater preference to its international activities and a stronger mandate to its International Committee. Once some additional funds are available from APSA, the committee will work to attract greater program funding in the future, essentially by approaching

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individuals and foundation for their possible contributions with the help of APSA staff.

- **Public Presence:** To support Margaret Levi's efforts to increase the public presence of the discipline, with which we agree, the committee would (1) work with her to promote policy-relevant research, where and as appropriate; (2) collaborate with APSA's existing Committee on Difference and Equality in Developing Countries; and (3) select from each annual meeting 5 to 10 papers that are important for the international public realm, and send out a press release (as well as use prior contacts) to reach the editors of *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, and *The Financial Times*. These newspapers have been selected for their seriousness and global reach.
- **Website Revisions:** (1) Offer online-only access to APSA journals at a cheaper rate; (2) Ask/Help the Organized Sections to put their section journals online after a 6-month lag. The 6-month lag will ensure that the revenues of organized section do not go down, even as the ideas discussed in section newsletters enjoy wider international access.
- **Formation of partnerships with the British Policy Studies Association, Japanese Political Science Association, and Canadian Political Science Association:** To discuss and create a resource to help other countries strengthen or build national associations, focusing particularly on non-OECD countries. These three associations have been selected due to the longstanding working relationships that APSA has already had with them.
- **Governance:** (1) Ask that at least one representative on the Council come from outside the U.S., (2) recommend to the APSA President and Nominating Committee to use a principle of proportionality regarding the international dimension in all appointments, while ensuring that this does not alter proportionality goals in other forms, such as gender. We certainly do not want a quota for international members on each committee, but we think more international members on APSA committees *on the whole* would bring in international concerns more effectively into our functioning.
- **International Committee Makeup:** Ask that the International Committee always have two international members.
- **Membership:** Examine various options including (1) Allowing departments to be members of Organized Sections; (2) Creating new individual and departmental international membership categories with reduced benefits and lower prices; (3) research impact of eliminating the international postage fee. The idea of departmental membership is based on the fact that individuals *in non-OECD countries* often find it financially hard to make individual subscriptions, even at the lower, income-based subscription rates that APSA allows, but they can benefit from our discussions, and contribute to them, if they can have access to our

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publications through departmental subscriptions. The International Committee will work closely with APSA staff to strike a balance between APSA's revenue needs and its goals of increasing international membership.

- **Organized Sections:** Ask the Sections (1) to put their journals online for easier international access; (2) to allow international departments from non-OECD countries to join Sections; (3) to be more aware of the impact of increases in section dues on international membership; and (4) to help the committee start setting up individual liaisons to IPSA research groups, as well as other national associations.
- **PROL (Political Research Online):** The committee agreed to extend the invitation to other national associations to participate, in order to facilitate research feedback and theme-based international networking.
- **Publications:** The committee supports (1) the bolstering of international submissions to APSA journals; (2) the creation of a "special edition" of *PoP* or *PS* on a specific theme, such as different traditions of studying politics, which is solicited directly from the membership; (3) touching base with *PoP* and *APSR* editors to get their feedback on international participation and possibilities for special editions; and (4) considering and reporting on the international implications of the upcoming review of the APSA publishing agenda.
- **Teaching and Learning:** The committee will look at the possibility of holding the Teaching & Learning Conference overseas in a few years, and perhaps building a connection with EPSnet.