Micromanagement and Peer Review

The purpose of peer review is to keep standards high, thus giving reviewers two specific tasks. One is to recommend rejection of work that reflects an author's poor command of the literature, lack of methodological competence, and inattention to literary precision and clarity, while bearing in mind that a lively and dynamic scientific discipline must encourage diversity and avoid an excessive orthodoxy. The other is to offer instructive advice to authors who submit their papers while avoiding the temptation of telling others how to do their research.

The implication here is that reviewers must not try to impose their idiosyncratic notions on colleagues; within the bounds of basic competence, flexibility should be the norm. From this, it follows that reviewers should simply recommend acceptance or rejection of a manuscript, and should not impose conditions. If a reviewer thinks a piece is competently prepared, interesting, and relevant, he need not hesitate to offer suggestions, but once he insists on certain revisions he has exceeded his responsibility. Reviewers should be helpful and constructive critics, not uninvited coauthors.

Once a reviewer oversteps that boundary--and some journal editors encourage or tolerate such overreaches--all sorts of undesirable consequences ensue. First, authors lose control of their scholarly work. Second, the review process takes too long, because the author and reviewers can go back and forth for several iterations. Worse yet, reviewers often disagree with one another, and the author can go slightly nuts trying to satisfy the divergent demands of separate reviewers, not all of whom are equally competent or modest.

In sum, political scientists need a "sanity code" which allows editors to maintain high scientific standards and discourages the serious costs of micromanagement by reviewers.

Such a sanity code of editorial restraint would have serious implications for tenure and promotion, in addition to changing the rules of scholarly exchange. Assistant professors, understandably eager to publish in "flagship journals" often go much too far, and spend too much time, trying to satisfy tyrannical reviewers, who themselves often are very junior. It is unfair to inflict these additional burdens on young faculty members who are already laboring under a system that is far from conducive to conducting creative and vigorous scholarship and, at the same time, teaching well.

J. David Singer
University of Michigan

A Committee on Retired Political Scientists

Several years ago, in the early years of my retirement, I wrote to the Executive Director of APSA with the suggestion that a "committee of retired political scientists" be established. My rationale for the recommendation was (and remains) that the number of retirees from the academic and other career venues would increase as the professional entry cohorts of the late 1950s and the1960s move into retirement. Many of them would wish to remain a part of the political science community, and therefore some attention should appropriately and profitably be given to their interests and needs. While I received a response that this was an interesting idea and would be considered by the Council, I am not aware of any discussion or action.

I have just read the report of the Strategic Planning Committee. The report expresses concern about the APSA's declining revenue base, and it notes the growth in the 1990s of "retired memberships." That growth, given the demographics of the profession, is unlikely to pass away, and, given advances in the geriatric health sciences and the resulting active lives and longevity of retirees, it is likely that more and more retirees will be around for more and more years (I sure hope so!).

The SPC report does not make even passing reference to this phenomenon, its impact on the APSA's future, or the opportunities it offers. I would urge that this matter be addressed. Attention should be given in planning the annual meeting and other services and activities of the APSA to the interests and needs of political scientists retired from their institutions of employment but still wishing to remain active in the discipline. The APSA should continue the retired membership category, and to this I would add two recommendations. Again, there should be a "committee of retired political scientists" to represent this constituency and advise the officers and Council. Second, there should be a seat on the Council for a representative of the retirees.

It is in the interest of the APSA as it plans for its second one hundred years to maintain the membership, interest and active participation of its senior members. Not only do they offer the benefit of talents and experiences to be tapped, but their continued involvement also can contribute to the revenue base of the Association.

Herbert Waltzer
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Changes Needed to Hold "Foreign" Members

I have read with great interest the letters published in the December 2000 issue of PS; the report of the strategic planning committee; and the statement 'APSR Editor Responds' available on the APSA web site. I am writing as a 'foreign' member of the APSA. (This, to me, rather odd term is used in report of the Strategic Planning Committee). I appreciate that the principal constituency of the APSA must be within the United States. Nevertheless, foreign members pay their dues. Their participation in APSA activities may add something distinctive. I turn up fairly regularly at the annual meetings of the APSA because I acknowledge and salute the intellectual leadership provided by American political science. I have had the privilege of teaching in an American university and nothing of what follows is written from an 'anti-American' stance.

I do not wish to question what the outgoing APSR editor calls its 'submission and review process'. What I am concerned about is the outcome. Every time APSR arrives I go through the book reviews, reading many of them, and then hand the journal over to a member of our department who specialises in public choice. I think that the editor's response misses the point that many people have made about method dominating substance. Do political scientists have anything interesting to say about the great issues of the day? One wouldn't think so from looking at the APSR. PS, by contrast, is an interesting and lively publication.

Foreign members must make up a fairly substantial proportion of the APSA membership, but when I look at the list of APSA Officers and Council, I can find only one person from outside the United States and he is from just over the border in Canada. Surely in the 21st century there must, as a number of members have urged, be a more open and transparent method of election? Competitive elections might help to revive interest in the APSA. Provided it is fairly held and properly run, no one can complaint about defeat in a competitive election, but 'slates' of candidates might be seen as less than fully democratic.

If APSA doesn't start to address some of those issues, members from abroad will have no option but to cease renewing their subscriptions and opt out of APSA's activities. I honestly believe that APSA would lose as a result. May I appeal to those who hold power in the organisation to continue the process that has apparently begun of trying to listen more to the membership?

Wyn P. Grant
University of Warwick

Woe are the Social Sciences!

The recent Association Reports in *PS* regarding the vitality of the discipline and weak NSF support reflect similar causes. A good political analysis can give a deeper understanding of the issues and our (possibly, more hopeful) options.

1. Our NSF budget suggests the explanation that APSA may be an ineffective lobbyist. (Even the snail-darter has done better.) Perhaps the study group could run simple regression estimates and test our hypothesis about the share of the pie that we deserve, given APSA's modest organizing and lobbying budget?

Thus perhaps the better policy recommendation is to fire our lobbyists (or double their budget)? Or to ask the chairs of our leading fifteen departments to be in Washington more frequently and work the Congress as the natural sciences have done? [Clarification: As a non-profit, educational institution, APSA is classified as a 501 (c)(3) organization under the federal tax code. As such, it is unlawful for APSA to engage in "substantial" lobbying. APSA has joined with other scholarly societies to educate and, to a lesser degree, to lobby public officials concerning the need to take into account the needs of social science in legislation and regulations and to provide funding for research and education in our field.]

2. A political analysis: the more revealing unit of analysis is not political science per se but the social sciences, which have been marginalized and have suffered institutional decline across several decades, to the point of today's alarm.

Looking back, we might have predicted otherwise—that is, continued vitality and growth. Many readers of *PS* will recall the 1960s when liberal assumptions and programs energized inquiry. The election of Ronald Reagan might have engaged an even more energized period of intellectual ferment, as contrasting truth claims were made by the political Right.

For example, President Reagan was an intuitive psychologist who preferred motivational ideas for economic policy to the rational-choice assumptions of academic economics. He perceived an idealized government and an emerging welfare state that were so powerful in their induced dependency and erosion of individual responsibility that new policies to cut back the size and prominence of government were needed to change national psychology. And he had a clinician-like faith that a restored and healthier national modal personality would increase private-sector entrepreneurship and sustained economic growth. It is hard to imagine a better opportunity for political science: competing paradigms and a naturally-occurring critical experiment. And, moreover, a competing paradigm of political economy that - if true - would have rewritten economics textbooks and also (by contrast with the conventional Michigan model of the American voter as an individual with a personality exogenous to political life) have rewritten American politics textbooks. And

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there would have been enough pro- and/or con- conclusions about zealots of the Political Right to assure lively battles and the civic relevance that critics claim has been missing.

So, what happened to the future of scientific vitality, larger research budgets, and progress via critical examination of reigning orthodoxy? It is a political story. In the most consequential, early years it began with the successful preemptive strike by David Stockman, President Reagan's first OMB Director, who threatened to zero-out all behavioral science in the federal budget and sent a (now, permanent) message to our national science Establishment. Subsequently, the National Academy of Sciences created an agenda-setting panel (the Luce-Smelser Commission, partly funded by NSF) that endorsed noncontroversial enthusiasms and quietly institutionalized the accommodations. (Duncan Luce later wrote a letter claiming that it was inconceivable for an institution that aspired to the political neutrality [*sic*] of our National Academy ever to endorse tests of ideological assumptions of Reaganomics and related policies, but his panel did not disclose such biases in a report that purported to give agenda-setting scientific advice).

The nervousness was not Luce-Smelser's alone. The story has not been publicly discussed in *PS*, but our national science Establishment has continued to defer Big Picture progress via tests of ideological assumptions that shape public policy. In the Clinton years, the prestigious President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) quietly debated a proposal to restart progress but made a political judgment that in the realm of "belief-based" versus "empirically-based" public policy it was not convinced of the degree of support from the American people and/or national elites for empirically-based policy.

Put it another way: Humpty Dumpty was pushed.

There are heroes of the quiet inter-elite battles of recent decades, but few. David Hamburg's Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology, and Government held an off-the-record meeting with senior members of our national science Establishment and several of the bad actors. Our colleague Jack Peltason, as head of the University of California system, attempted to persuade the Clinton White House to deal more effectively with the issue of ideological testing. Far fewer Presidents of major research universities spoke out than one might have hoped, even when, as today, many subfields represented on their campuses have fallen almost below a critical mass needed for vitality, and undergraduates have grown-up only with policy-argument television and have no textbooks or datasets that structure major ideological claims (e.g., the efforts to alter national modal personality) as testable, competing theories.

Where does a good political analysis move the *PS* discussion? It suggests that (1.) if we sum across the policy variables identified in these official APSA reports, they won't get us very far. And that is worth knowing. (2.) There is a virtue to political courage and institutional leadership. In the same period that the social sciences were being steadily pushed off-stage, neutered and (later) hand-wrung about, Surgeon General Koop faced down political pressures to eliminate research on the health effects of smoking and AIDS: he said that he was the Surgeon General of all Americans, and the zealots backed off. In Washington, deterrence works, and a lack of political courage can be a formula for being ignored. (3.) This conclusion is optimistic. Our fate does not have a current, rational justification and is an historical anachronism. The dangerous political forces have changed. The zealots are gone. David Stockman wrote a book to recant. Newt Gingrich has departed. The new President may be personally indifferent to major ideological claims and science alike, but he is not opposed—and has a respected Secretary of the Treasury who was Chairman of the Board of RAND (and a strong civic leader for empirically-based public policy) who might give good advice; and a National Security Adviser who was Provost at Stanford. If there is a well-organized coalition that wants empirically-based and workable public policy, or feels that we need a stronger research base (and professors with funds to travel overseas) to prepare students for careers and American leadership in a globalizing world, there may be plenty of money to go around. APSA can organize an effective lobbying effort.

However, a lot has fallen apart. Revitalization will require political work, and the aforementioned recommendation to get our fifteen leading Department chairs into Washington for a sustained effort may be critical, especially to the closed-door discussions, assurances, and possible institutional reform in the packages to be negotiated.

Lloyd S. Etheredge
Policy Sciences Center

Annual Meeting Trails

In the December 2000 issue of *PS*, Herbert Hirsch expresses concern because he "searched, in vain, through the program for the 2000 APSA Annual Meeting for some indication that the organization was interested in the continuing violation of human rights and commission of genocide around the globe" (p. 747). Without addressing the question of how much of the organization's activities should be devoted to this obviously important topic, I would nevertheless draw attention to an interesting panel I attended at the 2000 Meeting. Panel 18-8, "Partial Solutions: Confronting Ethnic Conflict," included a presentation by John Mueller on "The Banality of 'Ethnic War': The Cases of Yugoslavia and Rwanda" and one by Benjamin Valentino on "Final Solutions: The Causes of Genocide and Mass Killing."

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Criticism Off Mark

Herbert Hirsch's criticism (*PS* 33[4]: 747-48) of my *PS* article, "Linking Public Administration to Political Science (33[3]: 581-88) is not really a "meaningful criticism" of my use of political elasticity theory. We are simply looking at the tragedy going on in Seirra Leone (anarchy, brutal behavior of rebels, and misuse of profits from diamond smuggling) from different points of view. While Hirsch sees this tragedy as resulting from international exploitation of the diamond trade, I see it as resulting from "secondary corruption," where governance is unable to control manifestations of greed.

In my 1998 book *The Mysteries of Development: Studies Using Political Elasticity Theory*, (University Press of America), I point out that foreign aid donors (particularly at the World Bank) could have done more to correct this situation, had they been less oblivious to the underlying political problems. I would certainly agree that the diamond trade needs to be reformed, but that is unlikely to cure the political illness that Sierra Leone suffers.

Herbert Werlin

The Need for Epistemology

It is clear that political science is going through serious soul-searching about its true nature, particularly about appropriate research. The March Issue, 2000, of *PS* presented an impressive series of seven articles defending "The Public Value of Political Science Research," which the editor claimed demonstrated that "over the past 30 years political science has continued to develop as a science as predicted" (3). The editor of the *American Political Science Review* boasted that the *Review* published only 10% of the articles submitted, meaning that the remaining 90% plus all other articles must be published elsewhere (APSR December 2000, viii–xi). Authors of those 10%, according to the editor, constitute the true elite of political science researchers. Furthermore, she doubted that the *Review* could ever appeal to a broad scholarly audience.

At the same time, a report of a committee of the APSA noted that a National Science Foundation administrator said that "research in political science lacked innovation and excitement" (*PS* December 2000, 895). Furthermore, half of all academic political scientists do not even belong to the APSA, and the most common reason is their lack of interest in the *Review*, which they do not read (Editor's Notes, *APSR* December 2000, xi; Planning Our Future, *PS* December 2000, 880). And the current President of APSA said that the *Review* did not represent the range of excellent work done across the discipline (*PS* December 2000, 738). So we have mixed concepts about research.

When I first became a member of APSA 48 years ago, there was already great ferment to find appropriate bases for research. In our early search, we moved from institutionalism to structuralism, functionalism, behavioralism, post-behavioralism, and finally to rational choice, none of which united us. We were overwhelmingly seized with the Lockean concept of tabula rasa, which meant we did not have to be aware of human nature, cognitive psychology, or even the origins of culture. Yet, as James Q. Wilson reminded us, modern science has destroyed the view that the human mind is a tabula rasa; some "prosocial behavior is not learned" (Wilson 1993, 3, 7). But in mainstream research, it appears that only the already socialized individual is all we need to study. The concept of the human mind at birth as a blank slate so permeates our discipline that our research never requires us to ask whence comes our sociality, our identification of in-groups, our strong ties to kin, how and why the state formed, the strength of ethnicity, the universality of warfare, the constant increase over the last 10,000 years in the size of states and the concomitant reduction in the number of states, etc. Blandly, we say these are due to culture, which surely explains much of human behavior, but not all of it. Culture itself evolved, and we need to be aware of how it did so, and how that evolution of human characteristics provided us with a series of human universals, which we ignore (see Brown, 1991).

Furthermore, none of the present soul-searching moves us any nearer to a concept of political science that embeds our studies in the totality of what a human is—an animal, a cultured being, a product of primate evolution. I am not the first to note the narrowness of our focus.

In 1991, the Wahlke Committee on the Undergraduate Major noted that at that time there had already been six major efforts by the APSA to define political scientists. In 1912, our subject was divided into four fields (American Government, Elements of Law, Comparative Government, and Political Theory). By 1973, it was divided into eight fields with sixty subfields (Wahlke 1991, 58–59). And still, we wonder what a political scientist is.

Our history tells us that we are a loose confederation of specialists without any underlying paradigm of what unites us. The Wahlke Committee alerted us to our greatest weakness: we lack "consensus on basic epistemological assumptions" (Wahlke 1991, 51). That committee dared to ask us to do what we have so far been unable to do: to establish a curriculum that "entails sequential learning" (Wahlke 1991, 49, 51). Basically, we have no concept of a hierarchy of knowledge. One datum at any level of our curricula is as meaningful as any other. Our research is filled with discrete data, which I suspect is one explanation of why so many

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political scientists do not find the *APSR* meaningful.

Boldly, the Wahlke committee asserted that we must become aware of other disciplines, not only other social sciences, but of cognitive psychology and even biology *as these affect behavior*. Furthermore, the committee informed us that: "A 'new' evolutionary biology has revolutionized thinking about the formation of social aggregates by primates and hominid ancestors of modern humans. It is already being applied in important ways to study human social and political evolution, but is ignored in political science" (Wahlke 1991, 52).

Ironically, at the same time the Wahlke Committee made its report, the APSA officially demanded that the social sciences be given a directorate of their own in the National Science Foundation. The objective was to dissociate us completely from any relation with biology and/or evolution, as stated bluntly by Warren Miller, who led the assault on NSF (Miller 1991, 7; Hauck 1991, 3). Rather than embracing the need for a hierarchy of knowledge, or interdisciplinarity, political science was denouncing it.

The resistance to biopolitics continued when the Strategic Planning Committee issued its report to the Association in September 2000: "Planning our Future" (*PS* December 2000, 877–94). Although it acknowledged the Wahlke committee of 1991, the SPC made no suggestions for implementing its recommendations. Instead, the committee proposed 10 key objectives of the Association. Among these were the obvious ones of "promoting scholarly research," promoting "high quality teaching," and "diversifying the profession and representing its diversity," as well as strengthening the professional environment for political scientists, defending the legitimacy of scholarly research into politics and government, recognizing ethical and intellectual standards, and serving the public. Almost any political scientist would approve of these standards, although much debate would occur over implementation. Unfortunately, there was no recognition of other possible objectives that seem warranted at this time, such as:

- examining the roots of political behavior in the nature of humans, particularly their inherited characteristics, i.e., the biocomplexity that the National Science Foundation now supports;
- determining the relationship of political science to other disciplines interested in human behavior, i.e., interdisciplinarity as called for by the NSF; and
- understanding the position of political and social sciences in the hierarchy of knowledge, i.e., consilience.

This is not a plea to diminish empirical research, but to ground our research in a profound, rigorous theoretical approach that seeks to explain human behavior in its totality, from prehuman and primate evolution, to human evolution, to cultural evolution. As long as our epistemology ignores any part of what a human is, then we are escaping real explanations. What indeed might be the payoff if we recognized that the social sciences are subfields of the biological sciences, since all are dealing with living systems? There is nothing wrong with reductionism as long as we recognize that a level of knowledge can be studied even after acknowledging its foundation in some lower field.

Would this approach unite us so that the quantifiers and the qualifiers would both see themselves as sharing equally the discipline of political science? I don't know, but it seems to me to offer more hope than repeatedly appointing committees whose reports are read and then filed away.

Claude S. Phillips

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