SYMPOSIUM

Editor's Note: On Public Intellectuals

Robert J.-P. Hauck, *Editor, PS: Political Science and Politics*

The public relevance of political science research has of late figured prominently in discussions within the profession. The Association's commitment to "public scholarship" has given rise to task forces examining what political science research has to say to policymakers about inequality and American democracy; inequality and difference in the developing world; political violence and terror; religion and American democracy; government indicators; and, most recently, democracy, economic security, and social justice in a volatile world.

In the public arena, the relationship between political science research and policymaking is not always positive, as was the case in Oklahoma Senator Tom Coburn's unsuccessful 2009 effort to end National Science Foundation funding for political science research. Recently, Scott Jaschik, writing in *Inside Higher Ed* (2010), reported a successful effort by Tom Horne, Arizona's Superintendent of Public Instruction, to acquire from the University of Arizona confidential information identifying the participants in nine research projects carried out by *PS* author Gary Orfield and Patricia Gandara's Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles. The handover raises serious questions about the ability of institutional review boards to protect the anonymity of research subjects.

That there is a need to express and defend the public significance of political science within and without the profession would be a surprise to the early members of the APSA. For, as is evident in Frank Goodnow's presidential address, these scholars saw research and practical politics as indispensably serving each other:

> It is particularly desirable that there shall be an opportunity for those whose work savors somewhat of the closet to meet those engaged in the active walks of political life. For whatever may be the advantages of the life of the closet philosopher in securing the attainment of and adherence to lofty ideals, it can hardly be denied that a too great separation from the world of action is apt to conduce to the adoption of impractical and unworkable methods. On the other hand, the man of action, particularly in the field of politics, is apt to acquire distorted views as a result of seeing his problems from too close a view-point, and often loses his ideals in his desire to attain his immediate object. The wise politician should strive to secure the best that is attainable. Now the knowledge of what is best attainable is possible only to him who has both ideals and practical political experience. It would seem, therefore, that the meetings of the Association where it is hoped the ideal and the practical may meet ought to be of benefit to both those classes to whom our political progress must be due. (Goodnow 1904, 45–46)

The same commitment to the cross-fertilization of research and policy is found in the essays in this issue of *PS* by Amitai Etzioni, Jacob Hacker, Gary Orfield, Lorenzo Morris, and Ted Lowi. The authors tackle what it means to be a "public intellectual." Judging from their responses, they are not always comfortable with being labeled a "public intellectual." Despite their reticence, the authors share a keen interest in bringing political science knowledge to bear on topics of public debate and the content of public policy, and they have succeeded in doing so.

This symposium makes it clear that to apply research to practical problems takes considerable individual effort. Ironically, despite the profession's commitment to the public relevance of political science research, the efforts of "activists" are not always valued or rewarded by their peers. It would appear that despite the progress made by past endeavors, bringing research to bear on practice continues to be more easily discussed than accomplished. ■

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