editorial comment

The evolving identity of political science is a core concern of this issue of *EPS*. Simon Hix's ranking of European political science departments and assessment of their 'global' impact raises important questions, not just about the method of measurement and evaluation, some of which he addresses, but about the kind of political science that is judged to be 'excellent' and the relative strength of the discipline, thus evaluated, across Europe. There will – we hope – be much debate about this issue (letters to the editors on this, and other subjects, are welcome and will be published by us in future editions of *EPS*).

But while controversial in approach, Hix's survey indisputably reveals for different European countries the extent to which political science has established itself, first, as an autonomous and professionalised domain of intellectual endeavour; and second how far that activity is also connected to a transnational sphere of academic exchange.

As we have written in these pages in the past, we believe there is little to be feared from a strengthening of academic independence, professional status and cross-border connections in the discipline. Distinguished contributors to this journal in the past have disagreed: Philippe Schmitter in *EPS* 1:2 and the late Paul Hirst in *EPS* 3:1 warned, respectively, of the dangers of 'transatlanticisation' under American hegemony and the 'depoliticised professionalism' that may result. But as suggested by numerous pieces in this issue, the benefits of a professionalised and transnational political science may well outweigh the costs.

Hix's article reveals that a rise in national research standards is closely connected to an increase in the impact of research beyond national borders. The mechanism that links the two is the institutional strength of the national discipline and its achievement of a high level of professional status. This was clearly illustrated by 'Survival of the Most Cited', the analysis of Sweden's small political science community and international influence by Angstrom *et al*. in *EPS* 2:3. In this issue, the history of the discipline in Turkey, as recounted by Boğaç Erozan, shows the gradual transition over time of political science in that country from being a sub-field of law to achieving autonomy, in terms of methods, epistemology, and self-awareness – all essential preliminary steps towards the achievement of professional recognition, initially at home and eventually abroad.

However, as revealed by Jean Leca's conversation with Christophe Roux, this process can be a long one, as the discipline gradually emerges from its origins (as in many continental European countries, in law), slowly builds an institutional presence (still surprisingly limited in France) and

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strengthens its autonomy from competing and critical disciplines. As for links between the national and international arenas, Leca points to the great difficulties of integrating French political science with the European mainstream, concluding that 'without seeking for a harmful standardisation that could ruin the creativity of research', this 'is probably one of the main tasks of the generation of young researchers'.

The benefits of cross-national communication between political science communities are most clearly revealed in this issue's symposium on Feminist Methodologies, guest-edited by Judith Squires. Neither depoliticised nor 'Americanised', but highly professional and international nonetheless (see the contribution of Amy Mazur), the symposium shows that feminist political science leads the way in transcending boundaries, both disciplinary and national. For as Birte Siim remarks, its 'knowledge of the interplay between different political histories, legal traditions, family models, discourses and institutions helps to transcend Anglo-Americanism and Ethno-centrism'. May other political scientists, still subject to the 'national idiosyncrasies' and 'country parochialisms' that 'get in the way of... [a] professionalised curriculum across all political science departments in Europe' (Mazur), take note.

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