

introduction; diversity and inclusion in political science

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How to provide an accommodating culture that can include people, regardless of sex, disability, sexual orientations or socio-economic classes is one of the most pressing questions of the 21st century. We as political scientists are at the centre of this debate both inside and outside our discipline. In fact, promoting diversity and inclusion in the profession is a goal shared by many, but actually achieving this goal is often hard to do. A report labelled "Political Science in the 21st Century", which was published in 2011 by the American Political Science Association, provides a rather dire picture of the state of diversity and inclusion in American political science. According to the report, the discipline lacks teachers and researchers "with backgrounds from the full range of

positionalities, including race, class, gender and sexual orientation that are most often marginalized in societies". The report also laments that questions of race, gender, inequality and diversity are not frequently discussed in disciplinary journals. How is the state of diversity of the discipline of political science? What does the field, including political science associations, departments and journals, do to value and promote diversity? What initiatives have been taken in the profession to promote diversity and inclusion and how successful have they been? What data are there to measure diversity in the profession? Is diversity or a lack thereof sufficiently discussed in scientific publications? What can and should be done to achieve greater inclusion?

It is with these issues in mind that this symposium provides a timely intervention by opening up a discussion regarding diversity in the profession. The seven articles provide an account of the challenges of diversity and inclusion within the profession and what is being done to remedy the situation. While the articles do not present an overly rosy picture, they do set out important issues and chronicle responses to these challenges which we believe will provide a platform for further discussion as well as action at both a local, national and international level.

The discussion starts with Kate Mattocks and Shardia Briscoe-Palmer's account of the challenges facing PhD students in the United Kingdom (UK). Drawing on their own experiences and the results of an online survey, the article is situated within broader debates regarding the fragility of labour that have broadly fallen under the discussion surrounding the precariat. But whereas this has often been regarded as a concern of those in short-term, low paid and low-skilled employment, this article highlights that precariousness has become a defining feature of academic life. The research findings point to the struggles and difficulties that black, minority and students of different ethnicities, as well as women research students, often experience in terms of gaining the necessary support from academic staff. What is particularly apparent here is the complexities that surround tacit knowledge about access to funding, jobs and in general the need for guidance to ensure that they can succeed. These are concerns that are followed-up in the contribution from Anil Awesti, Matthew Flinders and Heather Savigny, who report on the work that the UK Political Studies Association (PSA) has undertaken to tackle inclusion within the profession. In a thought-provoking article, they list a number of helpful strategies that PSA has undertaken to tackle issues relating to equality and

diversity such as the inclusion of equality concerns in funding schemes, the holding of diversity events and the creation of a post within the Political Studies Association, whose job is to foster inclusion.

Moving away from a focus on the UK, and looking more at scholarship, Monica Rodrigues de Luna asks the question whether area studies foster diversity within the discipline. The article highlights the contested nature of these claims. Through interviews that were undertaken with area studies and non-area studies researchers in Germany and Portugal, the article highlights that area studies can bring the voices of rather marginalised groups and methods to the fore. They are a bulwark against the uniformisation of political science. The article is followed by Yasmeen Abu-Laban's account of the political science profession in Canada. Abu-Laban illustrates that the history and development of Canada as a bilingual nation and in particular its legacy as a settler-colony has shaped the nature of the Canadian political science profession in a distinct fashion that is rooted in particular institutional, regional and linguistic differences. Despite these differences, Abu-Laban acknowledges that with a changing student population, course offerings and research possibilities, the discipline has become more numerically diverse. However, she cautions that despite this greater inclusion, the discipline nevertheless continues to be shaped by a recurring masculine identity.

Reviewing the case of women and diversity in Latin American political science, Cecilia Rocha Carpiuc comes to similar conclusions. She highlights that despite women accounting for a considerable proportion of scholars in Latin America with some 44 per cent of all researchers, they are nonetheless a marginalised group in a profession that continues to be dominated by men. For example, Carpiuc points out that female

researchers are less likely to have access to publishing in top journals, which are in turn used as the basis for promotion and professional recognition. In a similar, but at the same time quite different, way Jackie Steele's account of the profession in Japan is one that points to the marginalisation of women both in numbers and discourse. More than anything else, her study portrays Japanese political science as a discipline that has traditionally avoided discussions relating to diversity and gender. Only in more recent years has Prime Minister Abe made noises regarding the need to engage in a stronger debate regarding the role of women, both in society and in professional fields such as political science. Yet, as Steele highlights, this has in many ways more to do with appearance as opposed to signifying a structural change. Nevertheless, Steele also records a note of optimism; since 2011, there have been notable improvements with regard to the success of the Politics and Gender Section of the Japan Political Science Association (JPSA).

Taken as a whole, this special issue provides an opportune moment for reflection regarding the commitment towards diversity within the profession. It is evident from the seven articles that there is considerable difference in terms of the level of support, mentoring and career progression of marginalised groups and individuals between and within different countries. Professional associations such as the UK PSA have made notable inroads through making public commitments on the importance of, and the responsibility of the association towards, equality and diversity. Along with similar approaches from other professional associations, this could form an important template for others to follow. Yet, there is surely more that can be done in terms of building positive

relationships and role model agreements between professional associations at an international level as well as to look to other disciplines and associations to gain insights and understanding as to the approaches that they have undertaken. Among others, conference keynotes and plenary debates are surely one of many important initiatives that require full consideration to be given to matters relating to equality and diversity.

The symposium shows that we need to continue to provide support for women, black and minority ethnic (BME) and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) colleagues, as well as colleagues with disabilities. However, it is not enough to hire and support these still underrepresented groups; it is also important to create a discipline which embraces a climate of equality and diversity; a situation that does not discriminate against a particular discourse, method, approach or way of thinking. This implies that there is much to be done at an everyday level, whether that be in terms of scholars challenging themselves to consider the articles and books that they are reading or reflecting on, the reading lists that underpin their courses, how they teach the subject matter and how they think about the discipline and the society in which we operate. Indeed, as the study of our discipline has shown, change often comes from these everyday moments that in turn create the momentum for significant change. It is clear that there is much more that can be done to ensure that the profession is more equal. As editors of EPS, we hope that this symposium will provide a starting point for a more vigorous debate as well as the journal being a platform where scholars will submit articles that both challenge convention and tackle critical matters relating to equality and diversity.

Reference

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