
The Ethnic and Cultural Pluralism Award*

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The action of the Council in authorizing the Ethnic and Cultural Pluralism Award is notable. In a way, one might say that the meeting, which authorized the James Madison Award, also implicitly paid tribute to his collaborator John Jay who in *Federalist* No. 2, spoke of the United States as "one connected country" with "one united people—a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs."

Jay recognized, I think, the problematic character of political order, the ever-recurring problem of faction, the uncertainty of political community (shared moral order), and the order-disturbing character of ethnic conflict.

Racial, religious, nationality, or linguistic groups may function more or less as "total life groups," to take a phrase from Charles Hyneman. While they may exist in a common institutional framework with other groups (e.g., a national economy or a national state), they function to a large degree as separated (or surely separable) peoples between whom there is little or no sense of shared moral order, community, or citizenship. Between them there may be reciprocal advantages, but little or no sense of reciprocal obligations or rights. To the extent that such a situation exists, one has an approximation of what (borrowing from J. S. Furnivall and M. G. Smith) may be called a *plural society*.

Twentieth century political science has a major intellectual task in seeking to elucidate this phenomenon that affects nearly every country in the world, the more so because the phenomenon is so productive of bitter conflict. Hence, the Committee on the Status of Chicanos, by precipitating the matter in one form, gave the Council an opportunity which, fortunately, it has taken to encourage colleagues to give the whole matter serious attention.

Allow me to make a suggestion or two:

As the committees evaluate publications, I hope they will be encompassing and thoughtful about the criteria, and not merely recede to the approval of the research that fits the most obvious and comfortable categories already. In particular, our discipline is appropriately oriented toward generalization. But *premature* generalization is deadening and I hope the Committees can avoid the temptation to seek out and approve only the research that purports *now* to offer cosmic statements.

My original conception was that the Award should be limited to research on the United

States. But reflection convinces me that the Council was wise to avoid that restriction. Certainly, research on Chicano politics may, arguably, be made poorer by an exclusion of Mexico proper. At the same time, I should also hope the Committees will not fail to note the truly unique proportions of the American institutional system: a *large-scale, constitutional-democratic, market-oriented, polity with important elements of the welfare state*, and with continuing elements of ethnic stratification.

I should particularly like to stress, also, the importance of proper and subtle attention to the internal politics (the quasi-governance, as it were) of separated and separable peoples. There is power *within* groups, as well as power *between* groups, and this is not easy to study. But it is important *not to avoid* empirically significant reality, however difficult the *methodological* problem may be.

Specifically, I would personally hope the Committee could avoid the temptation to approve only research that tends to "find" the same phenomena in the same form in every ethnic group, or the temptation to impose upon little-studied groups behaviors that are (or are thought to be) characteristic of "predecessor" groups.

There are several major ethnic clusters with *organizationally* different features, and it would be intellectually wrong (I think) to ignore that. These affect and express power *within* groups.

(a) The Chicanos are the only *large* population in the present generation with extensive familial ties into another country, and the only large population where there is a possibility that the dependent children may have a legal status (citizenship) that the parents do not have.

(b) My own concept of blacks, as a different group, and their organizational and cultural structure has been stated elsewhere and should not be repeated here.

(c) The Native American population is probably the only population that is encompassed within the system of governance but has, historically, been separate and regarded as unassimilable, even more than blacks, and where separation is vigorously defended by many within the population (but not all) and, so far as I know, the only population to whose concern a specific administrative agency has been permanently established over a long time past.

(d) Whether one can legitimately regard the Asian-Americans as one group or several, for analytical purposes, I am not now well enough informed to comment. I do note the obvious. The Japanese-Americans are the only body of *citizens* to have been interned by categoric definition. There is a new oral history on this including long and fascinating interviews with some who were involved.

If what I read in the papers is correct, there is some kind of *demographic process* involved in the urban Chinese populations leading to vari-

*This piece was prepared originally as a memo to President John Wahlke.

ous social changes—including some severe conflict.

These are some of the matters that I believe merit Committee reflection as the ground rules are established.

2. May I advance a comment on selection committee composition? Possibly, the issue of “representation” will arise and will be rebutted by reference to “quality” or “competence.” It would be unfortunate if this got out of focus, or if the *intellectual* grounds for diversity were allowed to be overrun by the *political*. A total stranger, studying a subject, may arrive at formulations which shake us all loose from preconceptions and so improve the workings of our minds. An initiate, saturated in the experience, may do similarly. But, in my view, it would be rather remarkable if the total stranger and the initiate arrived at the same conceptions of social reality without a good deal of common effort.

This principle is recognized (though not so explicitly declared) in a review article by your colleague Samuel Patterson concerning studies of the House of Commons. I assume that it was more than social grace which led Pat to take note of sensitivities that he, not bring British, might not have about British politics (although that was not the main point of his article). Nelson Polsby's review article in the same journal (“The British Science of American Politics,” *BJPS*, 1972) has somewhat the reverse emphasis (or should I say reverse English?). Nelson somewhat gently criticizes British writers about American politics who lack “first-hand knowledge of the institutions and practices” that they purport to describe (p. 499). He is not, of course, arguing anything as shallow as the idea that British scholars “can't understand” American politics, for he knows better and would (presumably) be rather impatient with any such claim. But his criticism does indicate, in my view, the calculated effort that sometimes has to be made to get into the frame of reference of the subject (something that, I assume, we are willing to take from cultural anthropology or from Alfred Schuetz).

Part of the means of assessing data is that form of firsthand knowledge which comes from some prior immersion in the social experience, leading to a refinement of intellectual *judgment* about what really are the “right questions” that, ultimately, may sometimes yield “right answers.” I do not know if the students of comparative politics will accept this, but they may find some lessons from their counterparts in economics. (See Whitehill and Takezawa, *The Other Worker*, at p. 380 on the problems of formulating and executing cross-cultural research, in their case research in industrial relations.)

Albert Hirschman has stated the point very well, and I cite him without reference to the merit of the foreign policy issue involved, from a book he edited 16 years ago.

We have frequently been told over the past two years or so that the United States has ‘ne-

glected’ Latin America in the post-war period. The meaning generally given to this term is that Latin America has not shared equitably in the bounty of grants and loans which has flowed from our shores to numerous countries in Western Europe and Asia. But neglect has been Latin America's lot in a perhaps more fundamental sense: *over the past years little fresh effort has been taken on our part to understand Latin America, to explore its economic, social and political problems, to begin a dialogue with its intellectuals and social scientists.* (From Hirschman, ed., *Latin American Issues*, emphasis added.)

On page 4 of the same volume, Hirschman returns to the point in an essay reviewing “the principal ideas of the character of Latin Americans' development problems which [were being] put forward by Latin American writers and social scientists.” In this paper, Hirschman asserts:

We are far better informed about the changes in the balance of payments, terms of trade, capital formation, etc., of foreign countries than about the climate of opinion, the alignment of contending economic theories on policy issues, or about the emergence of new reform proposals. When we are called upon to advise a Latin American country on economic policy it is only natural that, hard pressed, we should first of all attempt to get at the ‘facts,’ a difficult enough undertaking. But frequently our advice will be futile unless we have also gained an *understanding of the understanding* Latin Americans have of their own reality. (Emphasis is in original.)

Perhaps I have over-argued the point, or inundated you with more citation than you care for. But I think the principle runs throughout, and implies that the committee should be constructed, *calculatedly*, to encompass ethnic and cultural pluralism within itself. The reason is not for any temporary phenomenon of Association politics, but for the intellectual merit that diversification may reasonably be expected to yield, if we believe that differential social experience will lead people to be alert to different variables or to give different weight to them, at least in the stages of discovery.

3. It would be wrong, I think, to have this stand as the sole award to be uncompensated—if the other awards are to be compensated. (Personally, I am opposed to compensated awards, except if they should be available to very junior colleagues for very distinctive work. But the principle is accepted by most of the profession, so on that point I am overruled, and there is no possible basis for treating this award differently.) I think a serious fund-raising effort should be undertaken, and I would even be willing to help, though I am not notably a successful fundraiser. Indeed, I suspect that the income of \$5000 would support an annual award.