

## **Report from the President**

**Ofer Feldman, Ph.D.**

**IPSA's World Congress, Madrid, Spain, July 2012**

Greetings from the RC Chair, Ofer Feldman (Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan)

Dear members

We have just concluded a hectic, scholarly stimulated week during IPSA conference in Madrid. It was good to see, listen, chat, and exchange ideas and views with you in person after long correspondence, during the pre-conference season, over issues related to the nature and schedule of the presentations. We are done now, and what a relief that all went just well!

I hope you have also benefited from attending the conference in both the scholarly and the social capacities. On the scholarly front, you were probably able to follow and gain ideas on what other researchers are doing, how to relate their study to yours, and what can you learn from others' experience to advance your own research style or to improve your writing, research methods, and theoretical or survey approaches. On the social side, you probably met old friends, made new ones, and perhaps even discussed and concluded future collaborations in analysis and publications with colleagues from other countries. Personally, I always perceive these international meetings as pressure cookers. One comes to these meetings after long time preparing their presentations and are required to "squeeze" their panel talk to barely 15-20 minutes; then we are given only a few minutes (count sometimes in seconds) to reply to elaborated questions from the audience or to comments from the discussants (which leave us all completely frustrated); we have to rush between panels to grasp the recent ideas in the field, and try to dig hints from plenary sessions on how to locate our study in the broad area of social sciences; within a limited few days we struggle against time to meet old friends and colleagues, to share with them the recent news on work and family, and also make new friends and research partners to get a feedback and sometimes criticism on our own study and presentation; and within this narrow time, "within" this pressure cooker, we all try to explore the city, to get an idea about the culture, the people, and the food. In the case of Madrid I guess we all had an opportunity to learn also about political behavior and participation (recall the late-night street demonstrations against the recent decision of the government regarding the tax-increase), the energetic (and noisy, shooting rubber bullets) reaction of the police to these demonstrations, and the way the media covered these events.

In all, I assume, I hope, we had fruitful presentations, received positive, supporting, feedback and constructive comments to our work, ate well, drank well, and have now some ideas on how to channel our research efforts to perform better in future meetings.

In concluding this last IPSA meeting I want to share with you five important points related to our RC activities:

(1) First, I want to thank all of you again for your support to our Research Committee (RC). In this meeting we had six panels through which members of our group presented their work. One of these panels, entitled Political Leadership: What Are the Explanations for Successes or Fiasco's? was in collaboration with RC 21 on Political Socialization and Education. The panel

explored the limits of political socialization and psycho-politics, with successful leadership as a central theme. Unfortunately and for no good reason, IPSA made a mistake in their schedule and this panel overlapped with another panel of our RC. Resultly, members couldn't attend their colleagues' presentation. I will alert IPSA in this regard with the hope we do not face similar experience in forthcoming meetings.

Another panel, under our hospitality, organized by Ellen Quintelier of Leuven University, Belgium, and was entitled Personality and Politics: A Self-evident Relationship or Irrational Idea? The panel focused on the relationship between personality (as measured using the Big 5 and other measures such as empathy, altruism, etc.) on the one hand, and politics (not only limited to political participation but also included political attitudes, the use of news media, policy preferences etc) on the other.

Four panels were constructed explicitly to accommodate your papers, combining together 19 papers. This were:

1. Talking Politics: Politicians, Journalists, and the Public Debate: The panel detailed selected aspects related to elite discourse in a cross-national, cross-cultural contexts. It focused in particular on the rhetoric of politicians and journalists as both try to affect the nature and the substance of public debate and attention in such countries as the UK, Poland, and Japan. Using variety of research methods and approaches papers in this panel assessed leaders' skill and effectiveness in parliamentary debate by examining the extent to which face-threatening act (FTAs) are performed in Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) in the UK House of Commons; analyzed news media reporters' and politicians' interaction in Poland; provided information on how Japanese leading politicians cope with the communicative problems posed to them during televised political interviews; and tried to evaluate the role played by the news media in general and television in particular during time of election.

2. Between Leaders and Followers: Psycho-Political Examination: The panel included papers that presented different features related to political leaders and leadership and the relations between leaders and their followers from a psychological and social psychological viewpoints. Taken as a whole the papers in this panel suggested further assessment on the role and function played by leaders in democratic and non-democratic political regimes; on the socio-cultural and psychological factors that affect the communication style and techniques leaders use when interacting with their supporters in both small and large groups venues, and the outcome of this communication methods; on the 'national trauma' accompanying the assassination of a beloved or a highly respected political leader in five very different societies and the resultant of 'new sense of identity,' among others; and on the effect of personality and character, as well as other aspects of popular leaders, on public opinion and judgment as they try mobilize the vote.

3. Psychological Bases of Political Attitudes and Behavior: A Cross-Cultural, Cross-National Examination: The panel examined various psychological and social psychological characteristics and mechanisms that are associated with political attitudes and behavior in different political, social, and cultural environments. These included aspects of civic involvement, voter obligations, and the socialization agents such as school and the news media in Japan; Latin American citizens' perceptions of the fairness, equality, and trustworthiness of their political institutions and the features that affect their attitudes toward the political establishment; Perception of authority, political leaders, political parties, and the state by citizens of several Russian regions; the complexity of the perception of trust in

Arabic-Speaking Islam; and the way individuals cope with traumatic and stressful events in Israel.

4. Profiling Political Leaders and the Analysis of Political Leadership: Cross-Cultural Study of Personality and Behavior: This panel detailed research on psychological profiling and the analysis of political leadership, including integral components of the political decision-making process. Each paper examined and evaluated the performance of political leaders and the factors that affect their political behavior and attitudes in different societies using a variety of analytical approaches (e.g., MIDC method, analysis of leaders' speeches, interviews with top-echelon officials, and "Risk acceptance index") with theoretical critique and cross-cultural breadth. Authors specifically analyzed cultural context, childhood experiences, belief systems, and other important variables that affect and shape leaders' political performance, their decision-making processes, and policy attitudes, with case studies from the USA (Barack Obama, George W. Bush), Poland (Lech Walesa, Andrzej Lepper, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, Janusz Palikot), Chile (Ricardo Lagos), Romania (Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Nicolae Ceausescu), and Russia (Vladimir V. Putin).

I thank all of you for presenting these papers, to the discussants who have read the papers and detailed their comments during the panel time, and for the chairs who did an excellent work as well guarding the time for panelists and moderating between the audience questions and paper-givers' reactions. I would encourage those up-and-coming new scholars or Ph.D. candidates in our RC to keep the contact with those discussants that discuss their papers, or with others, veteran researchers in our group, to get more feedback and suggestions that might help you to refine and improve your work. Remember, those who are shy to ask, never learn. Create the opportunity and ask!

(2) Second, I want to thank you again for entrusting me with the leadership of the RC. Humbly, I accepted your support. I think this was the largest attendance of our RC' business meeting ever (16 members) with another five people (Peter Bull of the UK, Michael Krasner of the USA, Ilai Alon of Israel, and Helen Shestopal and Tatiana Pishcheva of Russia) showed interest in attending but were not able to attend due to various personal reasons. Eventually our 21 members were from such countries as USA, Israel, UK, Chile, Mexico, Germany, Russia, Hungary, Rumania, Poland, and Japan. What diversity! (Enclosed a photo taken by Henk Dekker, during the business meeting.)

Following IPSA's guidelines and trying to keep a balance between countries and along gender within the officers in our RC, I want to thank you for your cooperation in selecting our Board Members: They are (tenure in office 2012-2015),

Peter Bull (UK),

Michael Krasner (USA),

Robert Gilbert (USA)

Shaul Kimhi (ISRAEL),

Sonja Zmerli (Germany),

Mariana Perry (Chile),

Joseluis Mendez (Mexico),

Alexandra Jolanda (Romania),

Dmitri Lanko (Russia),

& Henk Dekker.

I look forward to fruitful working with all of you as we try to promote the activities of our group.

Mariana Perry will serve as our Secretary General and Newsletter Editor.

In the coming weeks I will send her information on old and new members so you will hear directly from her. Please forward her information on your activity, publication, travels, research interests, funds etc., so we will be able to follow what our members are doing and where they travel to, and perhaps even invite each other to seminars and other small group discussions in our institutions.

Our Webmaster continues to be Hongna Miao (of China) and you are also invited to look at our Website and to add to it relevant information and updates. The site address is

<http://rc29.ipsa.org/>

Please contact Hongna on related issues at <[hnmiao@gmail.com](mailto:hnmiao@gmail.com)>

Last but not least, Paul Dekker (of the Netherlands), who agreed to assume the position of Vice-Chair, will join me in managing the administrative and the logistic work related to our RC. Above and beyond being a long time friend (sharing with me even KLM flights albeit in different decks), Paul is a long-time RC 29 board member serving in such positions as Website master, newsletter editor, Vice-Chair, and most recently the Chair of our RC. His experience, knowledge, and skills in various position in the RC for many years are most valuable, and from my perspective he is the most suitable (and always available) person to consult with on issues related to our activities and personnel. I am sure I will be able to perform better with him along my side. THANK YOU, PAUL!

(3) Third, please recall that we are closely cooperating with RC 21. That is, as you see in our Website, we organize common meetings this year in Moscow and next year in China. Look at the Website for more information. You can also check at RC 21 Website for more details (<http://www.politicalsocialization.org/>). We also cooperate in "handling" the Journal "Politics, Culture and Socialization." Christ'l de Landtsheer is the editor of the Journal, we all met her in our business meeting and recall her encouragement to send her your papers and book reviews. (Christ'l was elected to serve as the IPSA's RC liaison officer, and we all congratulate her and wish her all the best, GOOD LUCK! in this time-consuming position at the helm of IPSA).

Recall also that Henk Dekker mentioned the Palgrave book series and on the likelihood to publish monographs about political psychology. I hope we will hear more in this regard from Henk or from one of his colleagues working on this project.

In this regard, on future conferences: Recall that beside IPSA (Montreal 2014) we can also propose our panels to other societies such as the International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP) that plans to have next year's meeting in Herzelia, Israel. I would definitely think that we can propose at least three panels for this meeting: On political leadership, political communication, and political behavior and attitudes in a cross-national, cross-cultural contexts. I would like to hear more concrete suggestions from you when the call for papers is out from ISPP, around this year-end. I will let you know more on deadlines for this meeting as soon as I am informed.

(4) Fourth, I want to thank on your behalf to our colleague Paul Dekker for the dedicated work he did in leading our group in the last years as the Chair. And a special thank is extended to our former Secretary-General Bill Bostock (Tasmania University, Australia), for the serious and devoted efforts he invested in the last few years in handling communication among members also as our Newsletter Editing. We all wished he would have come to Madrid and we all wish him all the best upon retiring from the University (but not from academic life, I hope).

(5) Last, I wish to increase the membership of our group and I will take measures in this sense in the coming few weeks. Please help me in this regard, if you can, or advice me on the direction you think the group should head to. Don't hesitate to contact me in this or any other regard whenever you want. Your arriving mail wouldn't wake me up so don't worry about the time even though I am most likely after lunch (in Japan) when most of you just wake up.

I look forward to meeting you all again at the latest in the Montreal meeting in July 2014, and if possible before in ISPP meeting in Herzelia, Israel, July of next year.

Lets keep the contact.

All the best, Ofer

Professor Ofer Feldman, Ph.D.

Professor of Political Psychology & Behavior

Faculty of Policy Studies,

Doshisha University,

Keisukan 228, Kamigyo-ku, Imadegawa, Kyoto,

Japan 602-8580

Telephone/Fax: +81 (0) 75-251-3502

E-mail: [ofeldman@mail.doshisha.ac.jp](mailto:ofeldman@mail.doshisha.ac.jp)