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⁴ William Stanley's *The Protection Racket State: Elite Politics, Military Extortion, and Civil War in El Salvador* (Temple University Press, 1966) proved to be especially helpful here.

⁵ Thomas Carothers refers to the volume *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* in "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 2002.

⁶ See Daniel W. Drezner, "Chicago School Democracy by America," *The New Republic*, March 12, 2003, then compare this to the evidence in the O'Donnell, Schmitter, Whitehead volumes, works by Thomas Carothers, and the recent study of Minxin Pei and Sara Kasper, "Lessons from the Past: The American Record in Nation-Building," forthcoming.

⁷ Ido Oren, *Our Enemies and Us: America's Rivalries and the Making of Political Science*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁸ Thus, it is no accident that Latin America has lately been characterized by presidents and ministers who are well-known and well-trained academic social scientists; countries that are not rich do not have the resources to support a political science that is not relevant for public affairs.

⁹ Albert Hirschman, "Morality and the Social Sciences: A Durable Tension," in *Essays in Trespassing: Economics to Politics and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press: 1981), p. 306.

Engagements in Comparative Politics: Kant, Machiavelli, the Webbs & Us.

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These three individuals [the man of affairs, the statesman, and the man of the world or cosmopolitan] are united in attacking the academic, who works for them all, for their own good, on matters of theory. Since they fancy that they understand this better than he does, they seek to relegate him to his classroom (*illa se iactet in aula!*) as a pedant who, unfitted for practical affairs, merely stands in the way of their experienced wisdom.¹

Kant was the academic's academic. Wordsworth's concluding couplet in an "Ode to a Skylark" was dedicated to him, at least according to my Irish grammar school teacher: 'Type of the wise who soar, but never roam/True to the kindred points of Heaven and home!' If my teacher was right these lines stereotype the academic, the philosopher of the Enlightenment, the theorist and stargazer who, by repute, never traveled more than 30 miles from Königsberg. Kant may have been a dull and asexual bourgeois bachelor, but he vigorously argued against leaving experience and practice to the anti-academics, insisting that everything 'in morals which is true in theory must also be valid in practice'.²

It is a curious feature of American

political science that one of its recent reigning prejudices, now undergoing a well-deserved assault from many angles of vision, embraced the stereotype which Kant himself rejected. That is, some of its leading exponents divorced theory from practice, and wished solely to lord over the confines of the department, the sub-field journal, and the occasional conference. For them life within the campus - and its inter-networked extensions - is professionalism. Professing to the rest of the world is, if not condemned, condoned only among the lesser-ranked IQs. Politics in this vision is, at best, data to be collected or explained; at worst, it is corruption; to participate is to be partisan, and lost to the higher calls of reason. These prejudices, of course, never stopped its exponents from intra-mural political conduct.

There may be institutional reasons why the inward, retreatist, quietist and pseudo-Kantian aspiration has recently been so vigorous in American political science. The European immediately sees the repercussions of leaving to lawyers most of public law (and of a thriving legal profession which, at its best, embraces the best social science); and of the less-noticed, but equally curious, American divorce between organized political science and public administration. And, since behaviorists and survey specialists may have been paid off with their own centers and consultancies, many political science departments may be left with cores comprised of rational choice theorists with non-empirical and non-prescriptive ambitions, or of political theorists who glory in scepticism about reason, science and enlightenment. (Two cores in some cases live together in an undeclared state of divorce). These rivals for powerlessness, be they 'rat-

choosers' or an internally divided coalition of post-structuralists, post-modernists, postcolonialists, and hermeneuticists, usually make no splash beyond the academy - fortunately, say some. Instead, it is that professionally doubted (though sometimes envied) figure, the public intellectual, who makes waves, talks on TV or radio, writes op-eds, and who spends too much time in Washington - according to the chair. The reasons why that figure is doubted within the profession are clear: s/he cannot have omniscience; s/he necessarily speaks mostly as a citizen rather than as an expert.

There are, indeed, good reasons why much political science research, theory-driven or evidence-based for policy-making, has less impact than it might. It may be bureaucratically and politically marginalized: politicians may want policies or pork that are hostile to research. The relevance of political science to politicians may neither be obvious nor accepted (especially since we have a healthy scepticism about the virtues of the political class). Cultural norms beyond the academy may be vulgarly empiricist: political science may be understood as mere data-gathering. These obstacles to social science in policy-making, implementation and evaluation have been spelled out by Martin Bulmer,³ and the limits to professional social inquiry were articulated by Charles Lindblom nearly a quarter of a century ago,⁴ in a still telling and astringent review of social scientific imperialism.

But we in comparative politics, wherever we happen to be, and wherever we happen to have come from (by origin or higher education), have always had two comparative advantages amongst our peers when we

profess beyond the academy. First, knowledge of other countries is usually valued inside the country within which one works. This expertise may be low down the food-chain of theory, but it provides exponents of comparative politics with a steady supply of

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resources in the form of students, readers and external consumers (be they the CIA, the State Department or NGOs). Second, since part of our business is to conquer ethnocentrism in explanation (and prescription) we may be useful both to the domestic political class where we work, and to outsiders who may wish to avail of our services. We have two additional (perhaps temporary) advantages. At our best we can explain why and when economists are wrong in their universalist prescriptions. And, in my own sub-field, we have some, albeit limited, usable knowledge of the workings and malfunctioning of ethnically, communally and nationally divided territories - knowledge more usable than that of our siblings in international relations, and some of our other cousins in other social sciences.

We have pathologies, of course. We have missionaries - though very few (successful) mercenaries. The mis-

sionaries are programmatically committed to certain packages of institutional solutions, our equivalent of IMF economists; and our missionaries can be just as dangerous as economists. (It is an interesting paradox that economists, who probably cause more harm than any other social scientists, have the most public and intra-academic prestige). So, it is one of our professional tasks - inside and outside the academy - to show the merits and defects of the dogmatic positions taken by some of our own enthusiasts for certain political remedies. Consider how much better the knowledge base is now on controversies over presidentialism and parliamentarism than it was twenty years ago - partly because of engagements with the latest waves of democratization and re-democratization.

I have done some political advisory work in three locales - in Northern Ireland, in Somalia, and in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa. (I have also worked elsewhere, confidentially - and working confidentially may, reasonably, be as much part of our professional domain as the lawyer's or the doctor's). I make no claims to having been a key player in assisting the varied political and constitutional reconstructions that have and may be taking place in these three regions, but I do claim that comparative politics, as a discipline, has mattered in all three locales. It has mattered both in peace processes - in mutual learning (and mis-readings) about negotiations - and in the actual and attempted political settlements made by multiple parties. Comparative politics, sometimes spoken by political scientists, sometimes by constitutional lawyers, has helped structure useful debates, and improved arguments about political institutions - by expanding choices and sometimes by

inhibiting some infeasible preferences from being pursued. In all three regions there has been interest in the debate between exponents of integration or of temporary or durable consociation, proponents of centralism or autonomy, champions of different electoral systems, and of rival approaches to organizing the judiciary and the police. When politicians themselves talk comparative politics - as they have done in Northern Ireland and South Africa⁵ - comparative political science matters. And political scientists can make it matter. How? In at least three ways:

(i) *By placing sleeper-ideas into the political domain*, i.e. stretching the idea of what is possible - not the same as the cliché about thinking the unthinkable. With my regular co-author John McGarry and others I participated in debates about how to structure power-sharing arrangements in and over Northern Ireland.⁶ In 1993, adapting ideas from others, we proposed a power-sharing executive that never came into being, but perhaps had a sleeper effect. We tried to design an executive that could be formed without too much difficulty, but not easily be brought down by a legislature. We also applied thinking about the allocation of committee places in the European parliament - commending the d'Hondt or Sainte-Laguë rules (or the Jefferson and Webster rules as they are known here) for any new Northern Ireland assembly. Though we claim no direct responsibility, and regard our own contributions as one part of a marketplace of ideas, versions of these arguments were used by politicians and civil servants in making the Good Friday Agreement - generating a cabinet in which both the numbers and the choices of ministerial portfolios amongst political parties were deter-

mined by an algorithm (d'Hondt) that inhibited protracted bargaining. Time will tell whether this device - and the numerous variants on it that are possible - is desirable, durable and exportable. No doubt it has its own defects,⁷ but it shows that institutional innovations are not solely the product of clever politicians or of Kant's *men of affairs*: they may be partly inspired by academics. This is, of course, the public enlightenment role: it may not happen very often, or very successfully, but it is surely part of our profession.

(ii) *By direct submissions to commissions, committees and executives, in which proposals are framed, in the light of comparative experience, for institutional change.* In Northern Ireland academics informed by comparative politics, especially political scientists and lawyers, partly shaped debates on restructuring the police, constructing a new human rights regime, and proposals for a new administration of justice. Effective submissions avoid straying outside specified terms of reference; they, of course, explore the full possibilities within such terms of reference; and they draw upon field experience, interviews and comparative data analysis. That does not mean there is no place for the dissenting submission, counter-proposals, or rebuttals of a newly emerging conventional wisdom - all of which reject the given terms of reference. To the contrary. But, dissenters are akin to the planters of sleeper-ideas; they do not and cannot expect immediate impact - though a well-timed rebuttal can occasionally be devastating.

(iii) *By working with other internationally diverse social scientists, learning from them, and disseminating and debating proposals jointly.* My work

for the European Union and the United Nations in Somalia involved teamwork, based at the LSE, with an anthropologist, a lawyer, a development economist and international relations specialists, of multiple nationalities.⁸ The project, inspired by an EU official, helped structure local debates about constitutional reconstruction in Somalia, and led me to be involved with three constitutional lawyers in assisting some Somalis in situ, in the hottest place on earth, in drafting a constitutional charter for the region of Puntland.⁹ No one can claim that project has been a great success beyond the paper it produced, but we avoided doing harm, and arguably marginally improved the local political environment: it is just too early to tell. The internationality of the team was important (two Italians, an American, and an Irishman). The Somalis, in seminars and outside them, did not see us as homogeneous: and they saw me, rightly, as the least imperial! We were 'resource-persons' in the language of the NGOs, and learned to be just that. We saw our cultural biases better by being an international team, and checked and balanced them: the Italian constitutional lawyers wanted to solve the Italian constitution's problems abroad; they thought I saw Northern Ireland everywhere; we all ganged up on the American.

Whether my own contributions have mattered much is not for me to say - but they have made me a better comparative political scientist. Working in strongly antagonistic political environments is worth many monographs. Working with others on political projects expands your range, and makes you ransack the thoughts of your peers with greater urgency. I may, I hope, be able to develop refinements of consociational theory that might

otherwise not have occurred to me. And, I think it has made me a better teacher - at least I have a wider repertoire of telling stories.

These three sketches of how comparative politics may usefully matter are deliberately low key. They do not envision political science as a master

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science, or as a simple and unreflective repertoire of technologies. They should cause no terror about scientism or loss of scientific standards. Comparative political scientists are, of course, no more virtuous than other academics or citizens. We may abuse our skills and roles. That is why professional evaluation of our contributions is highly desirable. Trying to build evaluation into our interventions - however piecemeal or grandiose they may be - should become a professional norm. But what makes political scientists everywhere, and not just in the United States, worry about direct engagements are two related dangers that I shall stereotype as the individual Machiavelli and the institutional Webb.

Machiavelli's *The Prince* was a handbook for gangsters; and no matter how many times one may re-read the text through Quentin Skinner's or Isaiah Berlin's mesmeric words, most of us still recoil from the role of 'realist' advisor to princes. But we are unlikely to have that unpleasant task given to us by fortune. In contempo-

rary democracies at least we occasionally choose our prince; we need not be servile towards aspirant despots; and, importantly, those of us who have tenure need not be sycophants. The other stereotype, illustrated by the Webbs, is a more pertinent portent. The co-founders of the LSE, Sidney and Beatrice, betrayed the mission of their institution in their appallingly naïve assessment of the Soviet Union as a new civilization - at the very peak of the great purges.¹⁰ The Webbs remind us how bad social scientists can be --- especially those who are least accountable --- at the top of our own autonomous hierarchies. But that some may want to be Machiavelli, and that others may corrupt themselves as the Webbs did, is not an argument for keeping comparative politics in purdah. We cannot, in any case, be pure, either inside or outside; and without external engagements we are unlikely to keep our field either intellectually or morally fascinating.

Notes

¹ Kant, Immanuel. "On the Common Saying: 'This May Be True in Theory, but It Does Not Apply in Practice'." In *Political Writings*, edited by Hans Reiss. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 63.

² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

³ *Social Science Research and Government: Comparative Essays on Britain and the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁴ Lindblom, Charles E, and David K Cohen. *Usable Knowledge: Social Science and Social Problem Solving*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.

⁵ McGarry, John. "Political Settlements in Northern Ireland and South Africa." *Political Studies* 46, no. 5 (1998): 853-70.

⁶ O'Leary, Brendan, Tom Lyne, Jim Marshall, and Bob Rowthorn. *Northern Ireland: Sharing Authority*. London: Institute of Public Policy Research, 1993; O'Leary, Brendan, and John McGarry. *The Politics of Antagonism: Understanding Northern Ireland*. London & Atlantic Heights, N.J.: Athlone, 1993.

⁷ For an initial exploration see O'Leary, Brendan, Bernard Grofman, and Jorgen Elklit. "The Use of Divisor Mechanisms to Allocate and Sequence Ministerial Portfolio Allocations: Theory and Evidence from Northern Ireland." Paper presented at the European Public Choice conference in Paris, April 2001, presently being re-worked for publication.

⁸ Lewis, Ioan, James Mayall, John Barker, Teddy Brett, Peter Dawson, Patrick McAuslan, Brendan O'Leary, and Karin Von Hippel. "Decentralized Political Structures for Somalia: A Menu of Options." (London: London School of Economics, 1995).

⁹ Guadani, Marco, Ugo Matteo, John Murray, and Brendan O'Leary (eds.). "A Draft Constitutional Charter for the State of Puntland." (Garowe, Somalia: UNDOS Consultants' Report, 1998).

¹⁰ See Gellner, Ernest A. "'No School for Scandal', A Review Essay on Ralf Dahrendorf, LSE: A History of the London School of Economics and Political Science." *The Times Literary Supplement*, 26 May 1995, 3-4.