



Discourse

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From the Chair

David Cameron

I am not quite sure how or when, but at some point Linda White, our undergraduate director, got the idea of organizing a big event for our undergraduate students that would have several mayors talking about progressive politics at the local level. Linda started putting this together months ago, working closely with Morgan Wheaton and her colleagues in the Undergraduate Association of Political Science Students.

As it turned out, the timing of the event itself could not have been better. The Public Conversation Event, on the topic of “Cities of Tomorrow: Is Progressive Politics Alive?” took place in Convocation Hall on January 26 before a rapt audience of almost a thousand students, faculty, and members of the community. This was just a week after the inauguration of Barack Obama, which seemed to put a bounce in the step of each of our participating mayors. David Crombie moderated the evening’s discussion between Ken Livingstone, mayor of London from 2000 to 2008, David Miller, the mayor of Toronto,

and Denise Simmons, the first African-American female mayor of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Remember Sarah Palin? In these pages, you will read an interesting take on the Palin moment, written by Renan Levine. Ed Schatz reflects on the phenomenon of

international relations from the bottom up, through the study of concrete practices in IR. Then we get a first-hand report on the Beijing Olympics, from Alanna Krolikowski, one of our fine graduate students. And last but not least, a Q&A with Wendy



anti-Americanism. Harald Bathelt and Rachael Gibson will persuade you, I think, that international trade fairs are more important than you thought, while Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot report on the growing interest in understanding

Wong. Wendy has just recently joined the department, and I believe it will be the first time that you will have seen Ágaetis byrjun cited in these pages. Now that’s a good beginning...

Sarah, Trig, Piper, Willow, and I

Renan Levine

For months, I've been obsessed with the Governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin. In the guise of conducting "research" during the campaign, I trolled the web. I can't name half of her gubernatorial colleagues, but I can rattle off the names of her children in reverse birth order — Trig, Piper, Willow, Bristol, and Track.

At dinner parties, I bore my wife with trivia about Todd Palin's hobbies, defend Sarah's intelligence ("there's a difference between unintelligent and inarticulate; when was the last time you attended a talk at the Munk Centre?"), and arbitrate between fair and unfair attacks on her character (in case you were wondering, Bristol's unwed pregnancy and the father's decision to drop out of high school are fair game; the sexist criticism of Sarah's Neiman-Marcus shopping bills is not). I even restarted my long neglected regular date with Saturday Night Live to laugh at Tina Fey's imitation of Governor Palin.

I am not alone. According to Google Trends, during September 2008, the average daily Google search volume in the US for Sarah Palin was 3.8 times higher than the average Google search volume for either of the Presidential candidates, John McCain, and Barack Obama.

To put this in perspective, the volume of American searches for Palin during September was 7.6 times larger than that of American teen idol Miley Cyrus. Several Hollywood publicists nearly lost their jobs after interest in Palin exceeded the interest shown Britney Spears (most searched celebrity on the web in 2008) by ten times, and there were nearly 20 times the searches on Palin as there were for both Madonnas combined.

There's Something About Sarah

Finding out that I am a lot like My Fellow Americans is strangely comforting for a geeky academic like me, but puzzling. What explains the obsession with this hockey mom?

Surprisingly, the tail is not wagging the dog. Although I bought three magazines and one tabloid at the supermarket check-out aisle with Palin on the cover, Google Trends calculates that the total number of news stories about Palin during this period did not greatly exceed the number about McCain. After the two Presidential candidates held their first debate in late September, and Congress reluctantly passed a bailout package for Wall Street, coverage of the Presidential candidates was far more common than coverage of Sarah Palin.

While media editors may have been focused on the top of the ticket, citizens continued to show interest in Palin. In October, the volume of Google searches for Palin remained two- to three-times higher than the volume of searches for Obama or McCain.

This behavior is surprising because political interest typically follows preferences and beliefs. But Palin was not very popular. Half of all Americans disapproved of her by early October, especially non-Republicans who do not own guns. Yet the obsession with the Alaskan Governor seemingly knew no partisan boundaries, fueling the blogosphere and chit-chat around the corporate water cooler.

Measuring the Palin Effect

Since the election, I have been investigating how America's obsession with Palin affected McCain's now-failed shot at the Oval Office.

Recently released survey data provides some insights into the strategic dilemma faced by McCain at the end of the summer. Going into the Democratic National Convention, McCain enjoyed almost as much support as Obama in some polls, but McCain's support was soft. A *Time* magazine poll conducted in the first week in August found that over half of Barack Obama's supporters reported being "very enthusiastic" about his candidacy. Almost all other Obama supporters said they were "somewhat enthusiastic" about their candidate.

McCain, though, was experiencing real problems with his base of support. A majority of McCain supporters described themselves as only "somewhat enthusiastic." More than a quarter expressed even less enthusiasm about his candidacy.

The combination of Palin's nomination and the Republican National Convention successfully rallied the Republican base. After the convention, a second survey by *Time* magazine found that enthusiasm for McCain surged to nearly the same levels enjoyed by Obama. Conservative commentators credited Palin with propelling McCain's surge in the polls after she delivered a well-received convention speech and survived her first interview with ABC News' Charlie Gibson. Preliminary reports of McCain's fundraising and other anecdotal evidence support the explanation that Palin's nomination mobilized the evangelical base.

A Narrow Convention Bump

The problem with this narrative is that my analysis of the *Time* polls indicates that evangelical pro-life McCain supporters were no less enthusiastic than pro-

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choice Catholic and mainstream Protestant supporters. Both social and economic conservatives, men and women, embraced the McCain-Palin ticket with equal enthusiasm after the convention. This suggests that McCain enjoyed a rather typical "convention bump" rather than a game-changing "Palin Effect." I expect that at least one other short-listed vice presidential candidate, Governor Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota, would have had a similar effect on the electorate.

While Palin may have helped mobilize the Republican base, there is scant evidence that Palin extended the Republican ticket's appeal. All the attention Palin attracted simply did not translate into votes. The McCain campaign likely erred by shielding her from the national media. Denying media access to Palin fueled the national fascination with her, her family, and her moose stew. Worse, shielding Palin gave credence to a counter-narrative that defined her as a bumbling neophyte with neither the experience nor the

knowledge to be President. Fair or not, this image was reinforced by her second national interview with CBS News' Katie Couric. During the interview, Palin looked like a nervous candidate fumbling to remember her scripted talking points rather than thoughtfully considering Couric's questions. As a result, the interview was an unmitigated disaster parodied by Tina Fey and widely disseminated on the web.

In its aftermath, the Republican campaign should have immediately granted other national outlets extensive interviews with Palin. If the odds of a misstatement during an interview are constant, the total number of missteps will increase, but they may become balanced by extensive clips of Palin deftly handling interviewers. For example, President Bush is famous for his verbal gaffes. Yet in 2000 and 2004, Bush managed to convey savvy and charm despite some legendary campaign trail "Bushisms." Obama's running mate, Senator Joe Biden, has a similar penchant for malapropism

(and worse, a history of plagiarism), but this propensity did not dominate his public image. Instead, Palin's perceived inexperience undermined one of McCain's most persuasive messages: that only the Republicans possessed the experience to lead America during these tough times.

All Quiet on the Wasillan Front?

Palin is not going to disappear from the national political scene. Palin's active campaigning in Georgia after Obama's national victory is credited with helping the Republicans win a run-off election for Georgia's senate seat in early December. She is widely expected to campaign for Republican candidates all over the US in 2010. We will see whether she will also learn how to meet the press. These future media appearances will determine whether we will view the Couric interview as typical of her lack of knowledge or readiness, or just one really awful interview. Will I be watching? You betcha'!

Why Do They Hate Us?

Thinking Theoretically About Anti-Americanism

Ed Schatz

The phrase "why do they hate us?" resounded across the United States after the September 11 attacks. While some US citizens were stunned to learn that their government and society aroused intense feelings beyond US borders, few outside the US would have been surprised by the simple fact that not everything about the United States was loved. Indeed, not everything about the United States was *lovable*. What was surprising was, of course, the scope, intensity, and tragedy of the 9/11 attacks.

As with many surprising, tragic events, 9/11 and its aftermath

spurred a mad scramble to make sense of world regions that were largely opaque. This rapid sense-making was not always productive. At best, analysts supplied sometimes fragmentary knowledge about the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the circumstances that made a 9/11 possible, presenting this information to a knowledge-hungry public. At worst, pundits perpetuated biases and stereotypes about parts of the world they deemed exotic and assumed threatening. Combined with the quickly polarizing domestic political climate in the US over US-Iraq relations, these public

discussions produced much more heat than light about the sources and dynamics of anti-Americanism.

How can we think theoretically about anti-Americanism? What *is* anti-Americanism in the first place? Is it a psycho-pathology? Is it a social movement? Is it mass-based or elite-based? Is it a reasonable, rational response to US foreign policy actions or an irrational, deep-seated cultural bias against the United States? There is no easy way to resolve these definitional issues and the analytic minefield they imply, but I find all of the above definitions wanting. For a project I am developing on the topic,

I define anti-Americanism as a kind of interpretive schema by means of which publics understand politics (especially, though not exclusively, global politics); it is a lens through which they view the world. It represents one fairly extreme point on a continuum represented at the other end by pro-Americanism.

How can we understand the political impact of these schemata? In the first serious scholarly attempt to grapple with anti-Americanism, Peter Katzenstein and Robert Keohane concluded that its immediate political impact is negligible. That is, they found in their study little evidence that anti-Americanism hampers the United States' ability to pursue its foreign policy objectives. Saudi oil still flows to the US, in spite of negative public feelings about America in that country. Egypt still cooperates with the US and receives much US financial and military support, in spite of clear public criticism of this relationship. Elsewhere, countries like Canada continue to have vibrant commercial, cultural, and political relations with the United States, in spite of societal voices critical of these relations.

None of this is surprising, since we know that most governments usually seek to avoid the costs of alienating the United States. In this sense, Katzenstein and Keohane's study is a hard test of anti-Americanism's impact. By thinking of anti-Americanism as a schema or interpretive template, we can get a theoretical handle on how its impact may be diffuse and indirect, but nonetheless significant.

Since 2002, I have been working on anti- and pro-Americanism as schemata within the context of ex-Soviet Central Asia. What impact do changing interpretive templates have on domestic politics in these contexts? I have examined images

of the United States in the domestic press, as well as depictions in history and social science textbooks, of four Central Asian states: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. I found, overall, that depictions of the US began to change in the mid-1990s, when press coverage began showing a rising ambivalence about the United States as an actor and a symbol. This ambivalence continued throughout the decade, dissolved temporarily with 9/11 and its immediate aftermath when images of the US turned notably positive, and then heightened as the Iraq War began.

Why study Central Asia? In short, the region is a fascinating context for studying anti-Americanism. First, these are majority-Muslim states that had extremely little direct contact with the United States before the mid-to-late 1990s. This is analytically significant; they experienced the US's symbolic presence more than they experienced the US's physical presence.

Nonetheless, Central Asia's perception of the US changed during this period. Why? Rising ambivalence toward the US in the early 1990s suggests that America had developed a genuine "image problem" separate from any identifiable foreign relations with the region. And this "image problem" was refracted and apprehended through the prism of domestic political concerns. Thus, blaming the Uzbekistani regime as " beholden to American interests" was a vocabulary for domestic opponents to criticize the regime's brutal authoritarianism and to express grievances about plummeting living standards.

A second reason Central Asia makes an interesting study is because its political development in the late 1990s was, in turn, shaped by anti-American schemata. To be sure, the region's political elites remained

willing to forge economic, strategic, and cultural ties with the United States. But the region's non-state actors proceeded differently. Human rights activists, for example, found it increasingly difficult to frame their goals as "universal"; instead, their goals were coded as "American" and therefore treated as suspect. This was true even before the Iraq War cast doubt on the "American" approach to democracy promotion.

Islamists, to take another example, increasingly were able to link their recruitment rhetoric to criticism of the United States. This was especially true for radical groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, a group that professes non-violence, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a militant terrorist group which claimed the mantle of global Islam against the United States. Even moderate Islamist groups that had no inherent reason to criticize the United States, such as the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, explicitly embraced *European* models of religious accommodation in an effort to distance themselves from the United States and its symbolic baggage.

Third, Central Asia is interesting because it lies at the crossroads of, among other things, ideological currents in liberalism and Islam. Most Central Asians most of the time harbor generally positive images of the United States, but the emergence of anti-American schemata among some segments of the population suggests a trend that could make it harder for those whose agendas are rhetorically linked to the West (such as political liberals) and easier for those whose agendas are rhetorically pitched in opposition to the West (such as Islamists or economic nationalists) to affect the trajectory of the region's regimes.

Central Asia is in this sense like other parts of the world. Barack

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Obama's new administration has some serious work to do if the President-Elect seeks to shore up America's global standing. Reputation may

not have a direct impact on state-to-state relations in the near term, but it nonetheless affects domestic political developments that, in turn,

present novel political challenges for the states of Central Asia—and, likely, for states elsewhere as well.

The Practice Turn in International Relations

Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot

The following text, which outlines a new direction of International Relations research being undertaken by Emanuel Adler, among other scholars, is adapted from a workshop organized by Dr. Adler and Vincent Pouliot (McGill) and held at the Munk Centre for International Studies in November 2008. It is expected that the results of that workshop will be published later this year by Cambridge University Press.

What is the “practice turn” in International Relations (IR)? At the most basic level, “taking the practice turn” entices scholars to approach social and political life through the study of action and interaction within the practices of world politics. It is in and through practices — defined as deeds that embody shared intersubjective knowledge — that social life is organized, that subjectivities are constituted, and that history unfolds. The diplomatic practice, for instance, in many ways upholds contemporary international society, informs its past and future evolution, and helps explain the choices and policies defended by its actors. One can think of dozens of different practices, from balancing to banking through networking, which constitute the social fabric of world politics. A turn to practice promises to bring effective new tools through which we can better understand the pressing matters of our globalizing era.

Taking a practice turn in IR also bears fruit for inter-paradigmatic conversations. In effect, the concept of practice has unparalleled potential in providing a conceptual intersection for IR theories to cluster. As an entry point to the study of world politics, it accommodates, and speaks to, a variety of perspectives in a coherent yet flexible fashion. Equally important, the notion of practice opens the door to much

needed interdisciplinary research in IR. Subfields like security studies, international political economy, and global governance too often become watertight compartments with no knowledge transfers. Against this tendency, our project gathers scholars in different IR subfields and seeks to bridge empirical issues. On that account, it is worth noting that the variety of practices that scholars research will allow us to put together a product that exhibits greater insight and garners higher interest than previous works.

The practice turn in IR faces many theoretical and logistical challenges, many of which were discussed at our Munk Centre workshop and will be further highlighted in our forthcoming edited volume. Nonetheless, we feel the practice turn has great potential to explore both debates in International Relations and questions concerning the discipline's relationship with social science at large.

Four of our objectives in this regard are worth considering. First, scholars exploring the practice theme will need to develop new analytical tools that focus specifically on action and interactions within practices on the global stage. In order to enhance the policy relevance of the discipline, we need frameworks that focus on what it is that practitioners actually *do* in and through their interactions. While ideas, material structures, or

other traditional variables in IR theory certainly matter, the social content of international practices has yet to receive the full attention it deserves. It will be all the easier for theories to travel to the world of practice if they specifically address the content and matter of international actions and interactions as woven into practices and their intersubjective meanings.

Second, we plan to approach interparadigmatic debates in IR with a conceptual focal point around which different theories can cluster. Instead of combining different theoretical perspectives into one single framework, our objective is for different perspectives to meet around a conceptual focal point while keeping their distinctiveness. Practice is the “glue” of IR — the ontological entity that cuts across paradigms under different names but with a related substance. Whether one speaks of balancing, “othering,” deterrence or self-restraint, these practices have been theorized in isolation from one another in IR. We seek to illuminate the commonality of international practices thanks to a structured and enriching dialogue across traditional boundaries.

Third, we seek to bridge, at the metatheoretical level, a number of conventional divides such as structure and agency, ideas and matter, and theory and practice. This speaks to the larger scholarly significance of our project. Among

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the many substantive innovations that will go into the framing of the book, the promise that a practice turn holds in bridging conventional divides in social theory is the most striking. First, practices are both material and meaningful; second, practices are both individual and structural; and third, practices are shot through with power.

Finally, our fourth objective relates to the timeliness of our project. Although the notion of a practice turn has attained maturity in a number of social sciences, there has been no concerted effort yet to reap its fruits in IR. The practice turn takes sociological theorizing in IR in new directions, including the complex workings of power

(symbolic and material, agency-oriented and structural); the intricate connections between subjective and intersubjective knowledge, on the one hand, and practical and representational knowledge, on the other; and the mechanisms whereby 'ideas' become 'things,' both material and intersubjective.

Global Buzz and Global Pipelines

International Fairs as the Glue of the Global Political Economy

Harald Bathelt and Rachael Gibson

In a global political economy characterized by the increasing integration of economic linkages on an international scale, firms are faced with an abundance of information — to the point of overflow. This complex reality creates new challenges for firms when they attempt to decide which market segments to focus on, which trends to follow or lead in innovation, and which partners to interact with. For young small and medium-sized firms, in particular, these challenges raise a number of questions that may be critical to achieve business success. How, for example, do firms in industries that have traditionally focused on their home base, or that are located in peripheral regions, become involved in global production chains? How can firms in industry clusters, benefiting from regional transaction networks and knowledge flows, remain successful and expand their market range?

There is a growing consensus in the literature that individual firms benefit from collective action and knowledge spillovers in clusters. More recent work, however, has emphasized the importance of *both* local and non-local relations and knowledge flows within and across clusters. From this

perspective, the collective success of cluster-based firms depends upon the interdependent relationship between two sets of forces: (i) strong local knowledge flows, or "local buzz," which is based on regular face-to-face contact and allows for nearly automatic access to all sorts of information and updates regarding an industry; and (ii) trans-local linkages, or "global pipelines," which offer access to markets and technologies outside the cluster. A critical question that remains, however, is how the agents in such clusters select partners and develop pipelines in potentially costly, time-intensive, and risky processes. Our research in this area, outlined here, suggests that the answer to all of these questions may be remarkably similar. More specifically, we have found that major international trade fairs have become core drivers of the global political economy — because they bring together agents from many parts of the world, if only for a short period of time, and thereby enable processes of knowledge circulation regarding the global state of an entire industry in an extremely dense and intensified form. But how significant are these events in understanding recent and emerging trends in the global economy?

Existing Research

Trade fairs and trade shows are, of course, well-known and have been studied for a long time in different disciplines. This research has, however, focused on a limited range of issues. In historical studies, for example, interesting research has been conducted on the rise of trade fairs as important places for cultural exchange in Europe since medieval times. Studies in business administration have mostly viewed trade fairs as events where products are sold and contracts negotiated. In the field of economic geography, research has focused on the effects of trade fairs on local business and the regional labor market through the use of input-output models.

Trade fairs have received relatively little attention in the field of political science. In the political economy literature, trade fairs are usually given only passing reference. Although some studies point to a growth in the number of international trade fairs as one of the many symptoms of economic globalization, or recognize trade fairs as part of a nation's broader economic development strategy to promote both exports and internal investment, this work has focused more on explaining variation

in the practices and processes adopted by different countries than on understanding the potential influence of trade fairs in the global political economy. In short, none of these disciplines has attempted to systematically conceptualize the role of trade fairs in processes of globalization, networking, and knowledge transmission.

The Architecture of "Global Buzz"

Of particular importance to our research are the main international flagship fairs of each industry, which take place every two to three years and open up many possibilities for global knowledge creation, networking, and market development. Face-to-face meetings with participants at these fairs enable firms to systematically acquire information and knowledge about competitors, suppliers, customers, and technological and strategic choices. Although such face-to-face contact is temporary, it provides a sufficient basis for ongoing interaction. On different occasions, global information concerning industry trends and ideas, as well as related news and gossip, flow back and forth between the participants.

Firms benefit particularly from integrating and informational cues, communicated by repeated face-to-face encounters, which lead to a specific communication and information ecology referred to as "global buzz."

International fairs attract both leading and less well-known agents from an entire value chain or technology for the primary purpose of exchanging industry knowledge. This enables agents to get an overview of differentiated trends in the world market, and provides myriad opportunities to make contact, ask questions, and engage in face-to-face communication with other agents from the same value chain. Participants benefit from access to a wide range of informal and formal

meetings with different agents, and from opportunities to inspect the exhibits of other firms and the visualizations of their strategies.

During international trade fairs, focused communities with shared technical traditions and educational backgrounds are brought together. Participation in these discussions helps firms reduce uncertainties and complexity in fast-changing markets. Within their contact networks, agents are linked in different ways and exchange facts, impressions, gossip, as well as small talk. This helps transmit experiences with existing products and ideas about new developments in understandable ways. Mixing different types of information also helps participants see how easy it is to engage in business with other agents and establish initial communication and latent networks which can be continued later on. Through regular attendance at international trade fairs, firms are able to find suitable partners to complement their needs, establish trust ties with distant partners, and begin taking steps toward the development of durable inter-firm networks.

Bringing Order to Chaos

Despite the lack of attention given to international trade fairs in the literature, the structure and characteristics of these events correspond to theoretical developments in the field of public policy and public administration. Of particular interest are approaches based on the so-called *garbage-can model* of behaviour, which challenges rational theories of organization by focusing on the ambiguous nature of individual and organizational decision-making. This model provides a useful framework for analyzing decision-making processes in *organized anarchies* — organizations characterized by problematic preferences, unclear processes or technologies, and fluid

participation. Although this model has been modified and applied in a variety of contexts such as educational institutions, governmental agencies, and agenda-setting processes in the federal government, it has not been applied to international trade fairs. Nevertheless, its emphasis on the ambiguity of individual and organizational objectives, the indeterminacy of knowledge and technologies needed to achieve goals, and the fluid nature of participation offers important tools for analyzing firm behaviour in the global economy. The garbage-can model also suggests ways of bringing order to organized anarchies through processes by which agents develop and institutionalize shared understandings and beliefs. In this respect, trade fairs may be conceptualized as a critical mechanism through which order is brought to the anarchy of the global political economy.

A Way Forward?

International trade fairs have been largely neglected in the academic political science literature, and their role in economic globalization greatly underestimated. Many of the processes through which trade fairs connect businesses on a global scale and drive technological progress are still poorly understood. It might also be interesting to ask how these global events could be put into practice in a context where supranational institutions governing global economic interaction are lacking. We have suggested here that such events have become important expressions of new geographies through which knowledge is created and exchanged at a distance. Indeed, they may represent much of the glue that connects the global political economy.

China's Rise Reconsidered

Armchair Geopolitics by a Casual Observer of the Beijing Olympic Games

Alanna Krolkowski

Woven into virtually all press coverage of the 2008 Beijing Olympics preparations was foreign anxiety about the rise of China. Journalists found a way to make every Olympic story tell the same geopolitical story. Correspondents cast China as nationalistic (the crash medal-winning program), domestically aggressive (the Tibetan crackdown, mass evictions in Beijing), unfriendly to foreigners (harsh visa restrictions), and vain (opening fireworks digitally tweaked, a little singer denied public appearance because of her looks). 'More and more powerful but missing a moral compass' was the implicit judgment of China that viewers encountered time and again.

I went to Beijing for the 2008 Olympics and got a slightly different impression. True, there was much about the Games to worry the assiduously repressed China sceptic within me. The unlimited budget, the heightened censorship, and even the opening ceremony inspired by North Korea's mass gymnastic spectacles all showed a slightly new and unsettling side of China.

But other things about the Olympics were surprising. First, the Games did not go off flawlessly, despite their authoritarian implementation and huge budget. Most striking, however, were the sacrifices made by ordinary Chinese in their effort to ensure the success of the Games.

In the Trenches

No one failed to note the budget China dedicated to hosting its first Games. The Chinese regime came remarkably close to achieving a total mobilization of social resources toward its Olympic hosting effort. A beautification campaign revamped Beijing, from its subway system to



its skyscrapers. Students volunteered in the hundreds of thousands. Working class Beijingers complied with stringent restrictions on local businesses and private automobile use for over a month. Grandmothers took English classes so they could better greet tourists and, during the Games, cheered in squads dispatched to poorly attended events. A neighbourhood "snitch" network, arguably the most organized (and overt) since the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), was set up using pensioners who reported on suspicious activities all over the city. With no expense spared or task overlooked, the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) orchestrated virtually all aspects of life in the capital for two very important weeks.

Though the North American press noted the vast resources dedicated to the Games, less attention was paid to those problems that could not be overcome by mere spending. An important and all-too-evident problem area involved the Olympic volunteers. Secrecy surrounding Olympic venue details and widespread disorganization interfered with efforts to adequately train the volunteers. Throughout the Games they were put in position

without preparation and left to stand idle in large groups, unable to answer questions or direct spectators to their destinations. No doubt frustrated, the volunteers eventually began making up answers to satisfy anxious tourists, who in turn were misdirected and often missed their events. (The China-US handball match, in my case.) Well into the final week of the Games, many volunteers still didn't know which of the four subway stations serving the Olympic Green were open for use and which were still under construction.

How could BOCOG have overlooked adequately preparing its volunteer corps, the lynchpin of Olympic hosting, for interacting with tourists? The answer probably has to do with their record numbers — reportedly over 74,000. They dwarfed the volunteer forces of previous Games. The management of such large numbers in complex projects, from Olympic organization to economic reform, surely poses challenges which outsiders have difficulty imagining. Scale, measured in billions at the national level, is a factor that still sets the Chinese context apart from almost all other countries. And while the mass choreography of the opening



ceremony showcased the strength of China's numbers, much else about the Olympics revealed the challenges they still pose to governance. Ensuring that directives at the top trickle down to the people on the ground is something all states struggle to achieve. In China, although the state's political and economic strength grows, these difficulties are so great that they continue to derail official plans even when all conceivable resources are committed to a project. For all the concern it triggers in the West, China's growing might is checked by perennial domestic challenges to governance and organization often overlooked in the newspapers.

Not Quite the People's Games

Despite hype about tourism revenue, hosting the Olympic Games is usually a money-losing venture for host countries. The Beijing Olympics were no different, except that the economic losses and social costs were larger than ever before. From the moment they first cast the Olympic bid, the leaders of the world's largest developing country decided to subordinate immediate local needs to the goal of making a lasting international impression.

Foreign critics marvelled at the scope and noted the cruelty of the measures taken by the Chinese government to make the 2008 Games smooth and 'safe.' Evictions of local

residents for urban improvement campaigns, conducted ahead of the Olympics, drew international scorn. Official "civilizing" campaigns aimed at inculcating hospitality and polite manners in Beijingers were ridiculed in the foreign press. Less attention was paid to migrant workers, many of whom built the Olympic venues and were reportedly expelled from the city for most of the summer. Small businesses deemed unsightly were, reports said, forced to temporarily shut down. Tours of Beijing normally organized for villagers and other domestic tourists were cancelled because, I was told by a gallery owner, officials did not want country bumpkins spitting and misbehaving while the capital was in the international spotlight. The art district, the Forbidden City, and Mao's Mausoleum, always teeming with people from all over China, were for once almost empty.

The effect of this effort to beautify and control was, of course, the exclusion of local and national participation in the atmosphere and celebration of the Games. Locals unable to obtain tickets to events fumed at the sight of rows and rows of empty spectator seats on TV; most of these seats were lost to scalpers or were offered up as gifts to sponsoring corporations. Large screens showing live coverage of events in public areas drew only small handfuls of viewers, even for popular events like basketball. Most Beijingers stayed home and watched their favourite

events on their own televisions in the evenings. Even taxi drivers, who typically pepper any foreigner who can understand them with questions, were glum or snippy. The mood in Beijing during the Games was not jubilant, but annoyed, bored, and muted.

For all this hardship and resentment, Beijingers nevertheless showed themselves to be extraordinarily generous Olympic hosts. Support for and pride in China's hosting of the Games was, by all accounts, virtually unanimous. The autonomous regions of Tibet and Xinjiang are exceptions, but even there the opposition was generally careful not to criticize the international decision to grant China the Games. Compliance with strict measures and programs was, in all but extreme cases, reported as largely voluntary. Across classes and many ethnic lines, Chinese appeared united in their desire to give the world a spectacular Games, even at great cost.

That so many willingly put up with so much for these Games is a general observation the North American press usually failed to make, focusing instead on the strangeness of particular Olympic policies and measures. Dwelling on the Beijing Games' extraordinary budget, the press missed the organizational problems that money could not solve. Drawing parallels with other implementation challenges facing the Chinese government might have helped give international observers a better sense of the practical constraints on the state's growing might and clout. Most importantly, however, foreign reporting on the Games missed an opportunity to show the world a generous and hospitable China whose citizens willingly shouldered great costs and burdens to celebrate international community. Those who worry that China is a relative beneficiary in the current global downturn forget China's softer side, which, had they been looking, would have been revealed this summer.

Wendy Wong: Q&A

Wendy Wong is an Assistant Professor of International Relations at UofT's St. George campus. Born and raised in the suburbs of Los Angeles, Wendy completed her BA at the University of California, Berkeley in 2002 and her PhD at the University of California, San Diego in 2008 under David Lake. Her current research focuses on human rights norms and non-state actors. Associate Editor Chris LaRoche sat down with Wendy to discuss her interest in (among other things) International Relations, Toronto, her cat Orwell, and the NFL.

How and when did you become interested in political science?

I originally wanted to be a historian. I became interested in political science at the end of high school; I had this great civics teacher who really highlighted what I eventually would come to understand as institutions as the structures of power in society. I've always been interested in how things work, and I looked to political science because of how it explains this through institutions, decision-making, path-dependence, power, the distribution of resources, and so on. At first I was most interested in structures of [US] government, so when I went to Berkeley I majored in American

ON SPORTS

I like sports in general. I'm a big fan of pro football and basketball. I've already been to two Buffalo Bills games, so I don't feel like I'm nowhere. Well, except for the fact that the Raptors are not nearly as good a basketball team as the Lakers.

government. At that time I was totally uninterested in International Relations (IR) – I wanted to work on race and civil rights. I started thinking about IR more after taking the introductory course at Berkeley. It coincided with other things in my life, like the women's studies courses I was taking, which were very critical and international in perspective. I started putting things together.

What in IR attracted you to your current research?

My first real interest in IR was ethnic conflict, and I did quite a

bit of research in that area as an undergrad. But once I got to San Diego, I realized that what was really getting me excited were these notions of transnationalism and non-state actors. The emphasis in IR is on states, but we know that there are all these non-state actors. So I began asking, what do they do? How do they function? Themes such



as mechanisms of power, and “how do we know what we know” always came up. What are the structures that shape our perceptions? I wanted to answer these questions.

Were you attracted by any other sub-disciplines?

I sort of stumbled into political theory, by taking several critical theory courses [not in political science] as an undergraduate. At the time, I didn't think of it as political theory, which sounded intimidating. In grad school, however, I took more theory classes than IR classes, because those classes helped answer a lot more of my questions. I wanted to know how ideas form, and part of that entails looking at the history of

ON WINTER

I've never been too concerned with being cold. I'm more concerned with being excessively hot. Obviously I've never spent a lot of time in Winnipeg. But I prefer cold over hot. I think this has made the job [at UofT] less daunting than it could have been — that I don't mind the cold that much, and I like wearing big jackets, big shoes, and scarves.

western thought, and how it is that we have come to think of some concepts as normal and accepted – democracy and sovereignty, for example. A lot of what I explore now, as a result, sits at the intersection of IR and political theory. And in a way it's something that I'd like to get back to in the near future. The focus in my work has been empirical thus far.

Can you outline your current research?

There are two areas I'm interested in; one is how the structure of non-state actors affect their political power. How do the structures of different NGOs, in terms of decentralization versus centralization, affect politics and norms? If you're centralized, it's easier to affect international politics and win your agenda. If you're decentralized, it's the opposite. Is this a pattern that carries across different advocacy areas, like environmentalism, religiosity, humanitarianism? My argument is that it's not issue area that matters.

ON TV

I like a lot of the shows that are on HBO and Showtime: *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Big Love*, and *Weeds*.

Rather, it's how you are organized in terms of centralization and decentralization. That's one part.

The second part is ideational. How did the human rights discourse, for example, become so

ON THE NFL IN TORONTO

I don't like the CFL much, so I think it would be okay if the NFL made franchises in the biggest Canadian cities — but that might mean the death of the CFL. Outside of hockey, I don't think Canadians are as sport-crazy as Americans. As much as people love hockey, you don't see it kind of penetrating culture as much. I think there is a market for an NFL team in Canada. I don't think they should bring the Bills over, because it would be a tragedy for Buffalo. But a new franchise, sure.

prominent in 21st century politics? People often use the terminology of "rights" these days, but it's a very new development. It seems many more things today are "human rights issues" than ever before. I want to know where that came from, and why it is that people think that using this type of discourse is effective. If you look at the practice of human rights, it's not practiced very well. So why use the language if the practical element is deficient?

You were hired at UofT in 2007 to teach in 2008, meaning you are one of the newest faculty members in one of the largest political science departments in North America. Your impressions so far?

I had been here before for a visit before applying, so I had a superficial sense of what I was getting myself into. I am happy to get a great job at a great school and a great department — people-wise, resource-wise, reputation-wise. The saying, "it is what you make of it," I think that's largely true. I'm an outgoing person. I like to know whom I work with. I've met most of

my IR colleagues. Everyone's really busy, and I think that's a good thing, because it motivates you to be busy as well; that's one of the good things about UofT. When you ask for help, it's never far from reach. People do take time to give you advice, check in, make sure you're doing OK. These are things you wouldn't expect because of the size of the university.

It's also very non-doctrinal; we appreciate all approaches. UCSD, like most of the top US universities, probably suffered from a sense of being too good at what they do. UCSD does a lot of rational choice, institutionalism, and quantitative work, and ninety percent of the people there either believe in it when they get there, or they are heavily encouraged to do it. That's what was difficult about my experience there; not that I didn't get good guidance and such, but that it's easier here to find people who use different tools and perspectives. At UofT I am more comfortable with being who I am.

ON CATS VS. DOGS

I like dogs more than I like cats, but I have a cat. I like all animals, especially if they're furry. I'm not so much a fan of snakes.

And the bad?

It's hard to find things to complain about. But I will have to say that UofT as a university is very bureaucratic, and doesn't quite work the way you would expect it to, and that's taken some adjustment.

What are your impressions of Toronto?

Toronto's great. I think it's everything everyone says it is. I'm from California, so I'm used to a lot of things — multiculturalism, accessibility, hustle and bustle. So in a way the transition hasn't been too difficult. Everything in Canada happens in Toronto

first. It's particularly appealing as a city that's always on the move; everything is open.

ON FOOD

I like to go try new places out a lot. I'm definitely a "foodie"; I like a good steak. I've had some good experiences in Toronto, but mostly in unexpected places. One thing this city is missing is good Mexican food.

The hardest part of living here is being an immigrant. It's not an experience I've had before, and I imagine it must have been much harder 40 years ago when my parents emigrated to the US from China. It's made me realize that a lot of the premises of academic transnationalism may be overstated. Canada and the US are really close together, in many ways, but Canada still feels different, even if the differences are not immediately obvious. The banking system, for example, is surprisingly un-integrated and different from US's. As much as we like to think about non-state actors and the idea that we can be stateless because of globalization, it's sort of a false premise. In a lot of ways, IR is right to focus on the state. It's problematic when it's been exclusively about the state, but there is a correctness to thinking about the centrality of states in the lives of individuals. It's there, you just don't feel it until you try to move.

FIVE ALBUMS WENDY WOULD TAKE TO A DESERT ISLAND

Sigur Rós — Ágætis byrjun
Band of Horses — Cease to Begin
Radiohead — Pablo Honey
U2 — The Joshua Tree
Neil Young — After the Goldrush

Announcements

Janice Gross Stein received an Honorary Doctor of Laws from McMaster University on November 21, 2008.

David Cameron was named the Massey College Clarkson Laureate in Public Policy.

Graham White has been named President-elect of the Canadian Political Science Association. His term as President will run from June 2010 to June 2011. This is a wonderful recognition of Graham's long service, and many contributions, to the discipline in Canada.

David Rayside has been selected as the recipient of the 2008-2009 Terry Buckland Award for Diversity and Equity in Education by the Arts and Science Students Union. The award is given to an individual who has outstanding achievements in promoting diversity and equity issues such as race and ethnicity, class, family, gender, age and ability, and in eliminating barriers to diversity and equity at the University of Toronto.

Simone Chambers has been asked to co-chair the American Political Science Association's annual meeting, planned for Toronto this fall, with Bruce Jentelson from Duke University. This fall's APSA, the largest Political Science conference in the world, has been held outside the US.

As of July 1, after 19 years at the University of Toronto, David Welch will be taking up the CIGI Chair of Global Security at the Balsillie School of International Affairs at the University of Waterloo. David has made a wonderful contribution to the department and the university during his time with us, and he will be greatly missed. He is a fine scholar, and has been an unfailingly positive colleague and friend. We wish David great happiness and success at Waterloo.



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