



IPSA (International Political Science Association)

History

It was at the 8th World Congress, held in Munich in 1970, that IPSA decided to institutionalize research activities in political science throughout the world. It did so by officially setting up Research Committees (RC). This move may be regarded as a timely recognition of the need, but also the opportunity for political scientists working in particular sub-fields of the discipline, to associate with colleagues from their own and, from other continents, in the pursuit of their research. Between 1970 and 1976, 14 RCs were established, signaling that IPSA had indeed responded to a growing demand among its members. Between 1976 and 1999, a large number of research groups were established; many of them subsequently moved up to RC status following the 1999 Executive Committee decision. At present, IPSA has recognized 53 RCs. Between World Congresses, the RCs – largely as a result of the rapid growth in both their numbers and in the size of their individual memberships – contribute more than any other body to the activities and achievements of IPSA.

Objectives

In the IPSA statutes, the objectives of RCs are spelled out as follows:

- Develop research in Political Science, especially work based on international cooperation;
- Organize and maintain personal contacts among political scientists with common interests;
- Disseminate information and publish scholarly research;
- Provide a framework between individuals and organizations concerned with teaching and research in political and other social sciences.

Each committee is cross-national in membership and its affairs are managed, subject to general IPSA guidelines, by an executive board consisting of IPSA members. Each RC is required to organize at least one meeting between World Congresses, and also needs to organize a minimum of two panels at each World Congress. One must be an independently organized panel. The second may be a joint session, co-organized with other RCs or sub-sections of national political science associations. Possible further panels are free of rules.

RC41 - Geopolitics

Background

Recognized as study group in 1995; granted research committee status in 1999.



Objectives

Promotes the study of geopolitics, a concept that today includes those variables important for a country's foreign policy options, and which cannot be changed by governmental policy in a short period of time. These variables include, among others, a country's positioning in the international and regional systems, its relationship to the processes of globalisation, and its relative power resources along different dimensions (economic, political, military, cultural etc.).

The research programme includes case studies concerning the reciprocal relationship between geopolitical influences and foreign policy behaviour, and contributions to theorising on the broader relationship between geopolitics and political behaviour.

Website

<http://rc41.ipsa.org/>

RC14 - Politics and Ethnicity

Background

Recognized as research committee in 1976.

Objectives

Focuses on the politics of ethnicity construed very broadly both in terms of methodology and orientation, ranging from broadly historical and deeply descriptive to more theoretical and empirically rigorous approaches. It touches upon such related themes as nationalism and nation-building; the formation and mobilisation of collective identities; cultural pluralism; irredentism; separatism; and the search for autonomy.

It also touches upon questions of race, religion, language, immigration and citizenship, concerns that are reflected in the titles of committee colloquia which deal with specific topics but may include both country-specific case studies as well as comparative analyses.

Website

<http://rc14.ipsa.org/>