

THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Published on *The National Interest* (<http://nationalinterest.org>)

Source URL (retrieved on Sep 10, 2010): <http://nationalinterest.org/node/4051>

APSA Annual Meeting Wrap-up Report

| [More](#)^[1]

|
September 9, 2010

[Justin Logan](#)^[2]

A final note on my takeaways from the 2010 APSA annual meeting:

1. Following on the heels of [a panel on political science and journalism](#)^[3], there has been lots of bloggy back-and-forth ([Robert Farley](#)^[4], [Matt Yglesias](#)^[5], [Kindred Winecoff](#)^[6], [Daniel Drezner](#)^[7]) on the relationship—or lack thereof—between what I might call “serious IR scholarship” and the Washington foreign-policy elite.
2. I scrambled to fill in as discussant on a panel featuring a range of theoretical perspectives—realist, liberal, and constructivist—applying IR theory to American foreign policy problems as they stand today.
3. I made it very late to what looked like a terrifically stimulating panel of heavy hitters—John Mearsheimer, [Randall Schweller](#)^[8], Robert Jervis, and James Fearon—discussing Charles Glaser’s new book, *Theory of Rational International Politics*^[9]. I have been a Glaser fan for a long time and the panel made me want to read the book more than I did already. The panel was videotaped, so hopefully it will appear on the web sooner or later.

The one broader point I would make is that there’s something a bit absurd about the premises of the meeting itself. Officially, scholars are to have submitted their papers a month before the conference, and they are supposed to upload them so that attendees can read them before the panels take place. This is a sound instinct, because there are a lot of complicated subjects being discussed at the panels, but the de facto norm is almost never followed. So with a very few exceptions, nobody has seen the papers by the time the panel takes place.

Moreover, it appears that few presenters have prepared talks that conform to the general 10-12 minute time frame allotted for the each presentation. So what winds up happening is that the scholar is forced to amend on-the-fly a much longer talk, at times skipping over whole sections of empirics or theory. And all this pertaining to papers that nobody in attendance has read.

The norm that no one submits their paper to the online database beforehand seems to be very strong and rooted in a variety of factors, so it seems unlikely to be overturned. Still, not seeing the papers beforehand and being swamped by abruptly truncated, too-long talks from 8:00am

until 6:00pm seriously limits the utility of the conference. (Unless, of course, one believes the whole point of the APSA meeting is to meet your friends and drink [10].)

More by

Source URL (retrieved on Sep 10, 2010): <http://nationalinterest.org/node/4051>

Links:

[1] <http://www.addthis.com/bookmark.php?v=250&username=nationalinterest>

[2] <http://nationalinterest.org/profile/justin-logan>

[3] http://apsanet.org/mtgs/program_2010/program.cfm?event=1491361

[4] <http://www.lawyersgunsmoneyblog.com/2010/09/apsa-panel-on-political-science-and-journalism>

[5] <http://yglesias.thinkprogress.org/2010/09/why-doesnt-anyone-care-about-serious-international-relations-scholarship>

[6] <http://ipeatunc.blogspot.com/2010/09/why-dont-journalists-care-about-ir.html>

[7] <http://drezner.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/09>

[/06/on_the_matter_of_international_relations_theory_and_american_political_journalism](http://drezner.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/09/06/on_the_matter_of_international_relations_theory_and_american_political_journalism)

[8] <http://nationalinterest.org/article/ennui-becomes-us-3330>

[9] <http://www.amazon.com/Rational-Theory-International-Politics-Competition/dp/0691143722>

[10] <http://duckofminerva.blogspot.com/2010/09/apsa-drinking-game.html>