



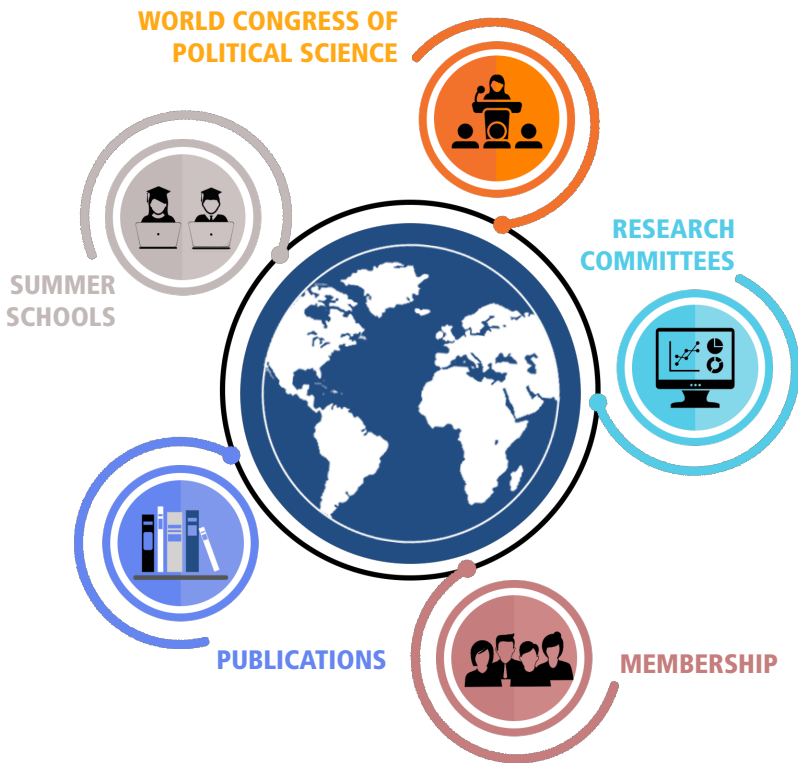
IPSA Academic Freedom Report 2021

Marianne Kneuer



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Marianne Kneuer

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Dépôt légal - Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2021
Dépôt légal - Bibliothèque et Archives Canada, 2021
ISBN (Online): 978-2-924444-12-2

Université Concordia
1590, av. Docteur-Penfield
Bureau 331
Montréal (QC), Canada H3G 1C5

Tel: +1 514 848-8717
Fax: +1 514 848-4095

email: info@ipsa.org

www.ipsa.org

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Introduction: IPSA's Focus on Academic Freedom

International professional organizations in the scholarly community are increasingly confronted with incidents of infringements on Academic Freedom (AF) or with complaints on violations of AF by individual scholars or by institutions. Thus, AF has become a crucial issue for these associations and their work. This also, and especially, applies to the International Political Science Association (IPSA) as a global professional organization. Even though AF is not a new problem, AF issues have not been confronted in a systematic way and did not lead to institutionalized bodies and procedures until recently. In 2016, President Ilter Turan formed an ad hoc Committee on Academic Freedom comprised of EC Members as well as external advisers from all regions.¹ In 2018, President Marianne Kneuer transformed this ad hoc Committee into a permanent body. Moreover, she suggested conducting a survey with the collective members in order to identify problems and issues of academic freedom as well as practices to tackle these problems.

The AF Committee considered it relevant to define in a more concrete way which specific service IPSA could render to the national associations in the realm of AF. As an international professional organization, IPSA includes a heterogenous membership consisting - besides the individual members - of national and regional associations around the globe with potentially very different experiences. Which forms of support from IPSA could be needed in those associations? And how could IPSA contribute to a better network between the collective members in this regard? Could both sides learn from each other? And how could learning within the national associations be fostered?

Hence, the Committee considered it important to a) get an overview of the nature and scope of AF infringements in the national and regional political science associations being collective members of IPSA, b) get an understanding of how national associations deal with such infringements, and c) determine how IPSA can contribute and what services the national associations would welcome in terms of AF issues. The AF Committee envisaged the overall goal of increasing the possible exchange and joint efforts between IPSA and its collective member to find ways of dealing with AF Committee issues.

In order to get this overview of the different problems, circumstances, experiences and models tackling AF violations, the AF Committee decided to do a survey among IPSA's collective members.

¹ The external advisers are: Yolanda Sadie, Maryam Ben Salem, Catalina Smulovitz, Alexander Sungurov.

The questionnaire (see appendix) was elaborated by the Committee on AF and sent to the collective members in November 2020². In the following sections, the results of the survey are presented and analyzed. The final section reflects on conclusions to be drawn.

We offer this report to all our members – collective, institutional and individual – hoping that it can serve them as much as it can serve IPSA in order to get a better picture of the situation of AF violations in their national community or other regions.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 14 closed as well as open questions. The questions were divided into three categories: a) *institutional framework and formal procedures*, b) *real cases* and c) *cooperation and best practice models*.

With the category *institutional framework and formal procedures*, we strove to learn about the already existing sets of codified rules or installed bodies dealing with AF that associations have developed (or not). The questions inquired about provisions and statements on AF, designated officials and bodies, etc., dealing with AF, as well as about formal procedures in case of an allegation of AF violation and its main features.

The category *real cases* targeted situations in which the association had addressed cases of AF violations and about the number of such cases. Moreover, the responders were invited to list the kinds of violations or issues that the association was confronted with, and the actions taken.

The last category of questions related to the possible *cooperation* that the association initiated on dealing with AF, and inquired if there are procedures, activities or initiatives of other organizations that have been considered *good examples* for fighting AF violations. Finally, we asked for the kind of support that IPSA could provide, while the last question offered the possibility to share issues and topics on AF that the survey so far had not touched upon.

² The survey was elaborated by the members of the Academic Freedom Committee (Rodney Hero, Christopher Isike, Yuko Kasuya, Marianne Kneuer, Pablo Oñate/Chair, Hilmar Rommetvedt, Ilter Turan, Arkadiusz Zukowski). The analysis of the survey and the report were realized with the support of Anne-Friederike Golchert (University of Hildesheim).

In all, the questionnaire consisted of six closed-ended questions (to be answered with yes or no) and eight open-ended questions.

Participation

Out of 59 collective members (national and regional associations), 44 responded to the online questionnaire, which corresponds to the remarkable response rate of 74,6%. The regional distribution of the responders is reflected below. For the sake of simplifying, the country names are listed as proxies for the national political science associations:

Africa: Angola, Nigeria, South Africa

Americas: ALACIP (Latin American Political Science Association), Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Uruguay, USA

Asia: Japan, Nepal, South Korea

Europe: Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Nordic Political Science Association, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom

Pacific States: New Zealand and the Philippines

Analysis

Starting with the occurrence of AF violations experienced within our collective membership, interestingly, **only nine out of the 44 respondents** report ever having addressed a case, which appears to be a low number. These nine associations then sum up to **60 reported cases** of AF violations in the last decade. Thus, only 20% of the respondents had been confronted with cases of AF violations, but obviously these few associations account for a relatively high number of cases. One association reported 30 cases (corresponding to half of all reported cases), while another association faced 10 cases in the last decade. The remaining seven associations encountered between one and five cases in the same time span.

Institutional Framework and Formal Procedures - Regional Distribution -

	Providing statements on AF in the associations' documents	Existing official or body to combat AF violations	Existing formal procedures to counter AF violations
Africa	1	0	0
Americas	4	2	1
Asia	1	1	1
Europe	7	1	0
Pacific States	0	1	0

Counting Yes-Answers of the respective respondent association

The results on institutional and procedural frameworks show that the associations with statements, institutions or procedures in regard to AF violations are the minority. Around 30% of the respondents do provide statements, but only 11% dispose of any institution and even less of any procedures. This certainly has to be considered on the basis of the experience with the occurrence of AF violations in the national or regional association. Taken into consideration that only nine associations had such an experience, one explanation could be that the 'real' demand or pressure might still be low in most of the associations.

Following up with a question on what is the title of the official or body dealing with AF violations, it became apparent that generally, no specific bodies or officials are installed and that the existing Executive Committee or Board would deal with these issues. Regarding possible formal procedures, the table shows that there are only two associations which set

up such rules. In one case, the main feature consists in a formal discussion, the other case presents an interesting element, namely an agreement with a state ministry which assures appropriate legal treatment to allegations of AF violations.

Collaboration With and Consideration of Good Examples of Other Associations - Regional Distribution -

	Collaborating with other associations in dealing with AF violations	Considering good examples of other organizations fighting AF violations in your country
Africa	1	2
Americas	2	3
Asia	2	3
Europe	5	9
Pacific States	0	0

Counting Yes-Answers of the respective respondent association

These results demonstrate that so far, on the one hand, collaboration with other associations is limited, but, on the other hand, more than a third of the respondents would indeed consider best practices and good examples from other organizations.

What Type of Academic Freedom Violation?

As exposed above, only nine of our respondents reported that they addressed cases of AF violations. On the other hand (and *prima vista* in contradiction), twelve associations have answered the open question on the kind of violation or issues associations encountered.

The question was *“If we consider academic freedom is concerned with a wide variety of activities, including -among others- obtaining and holding academic positions; conducting research; developing, disseminating, and publishing research; teaching; institutional autonomy; participation in campus, and freedom from political interventions into university and/or other research bodies... which kind(s) of violations or issues did your association encounter?”* 32 organizations replied that they were not aware of any violations or problems. The others stated the following issues: problems with holding academic positions, social media bullying of academics, teachers being victims of censure or political violence, pressure for self-censorship, threats and intimidation against professors who are critical of the far-right government or, sometimes, the embassy pressuring critical academics. Another important aspect is the discrimination of feminist scholars and, at the same time, the direct and indirect threats against gender studies and intellectuals studying gender.

General problems with political interventions into research bodies and the everyday work of universities were also mentioned.

Now, the reason why we have more answers in this open question on the type of AF than occurrences reported is that some associations relate to other aspects than domestic AF breaches; e.g. that they are *“facing requests from our members to take positions on international challenges to academic freedom.”* They point to other ethical problems such as plagiarism or informal influence or manipulation of recruitment processes; the latter can be related to AF issues, but not necessarily so.

What Potential Measures?

Another open question inquired about the following: *“If your Association encounters cases of violations of academic freedom, what actions or steps would your association take?”* Here, only five organizations did not specify any measures or steps. The other answers point to the following measures: Most organizations would inform members and the public, and publicly protest and issue a press release. Likewise, seeking solidarity among the scientific community was also an action taken. Moreover, associations would create a special committee for the investigation of the particular case. Some would initiate a discussion by the board of directors and/or engage the ethical commission. Other steps refer to contacting state institutions and writing letters to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Finally, it is also mentioned that, in some cases, it is useful to contact international organizations (including IPSA) and support campaigns internationally and locally.

What Can IPSA Do?

As already mentioned, IPSA was driven by the interest to learn which services our collective members might expect or welcome in the context of fighting AF issues. Therefore, we wanted to know *“What kind of support, if any, could IPSA provide your Association to counter violations of academic freedom?”* We consider it highly helpful that most of the respondents (38 out of 44) answered this question, which enables us to get a good overview on possible future collaboration in this realm.

The answers are listed here on the basis of the frequency of their mentions:

- Having an international framework as a reference text, code of conduct or a template text (11);
- Publishing public statements (9);
- Sharing best practices and lessons (7);
- Information sharing (6);

- Expertise and suggestions for the creation of specific bodies and procedures (4);
- Supporting international networks (2);
- Sharing lessons (1);
- Cooperating with national/regional associations in this matter (1);
- Institutional support (1);
- Financial support (1);
- Support regarding legal procedures (1);
- Regional workshops on AF (inviting national government officials) (1);
- Comparative projects focusing on the current patterns of violations of academic freedom (1);
- Survey within individual members (1).

The relatively high number of associations welcoming some reference of template text indicates that there is indeed a demand for instruction and/or models for how to deal with AF violations. Regarding the expectation of publishing public statements, IPSA can feel confident by its already existing practice (see our homepage and our AF statements). At the same time, it is not clear if the IPSA statements are always reaching our members and achieving sufficient attention among them. All responses pinpoint, in general terms, that collaboration in fighting AF violations with IPSA is welcome. This is also well illustrated by this response: *“IPSA is very important in this issue because it is the only global PSA, and it has members where this issue is problematic.”*

Ways to Protect and Advance Academic Freedom

The last open question, *“Is there any other issue or topic you would like to share with us regarding ways to protect and advance academic freedom?”*, invited associations to elaborate more on the topic. Around half of the respondents did so. Their statements display very clearly that there is a need for exchange on the topic of AF and a growing awareness of the implications.

Several associations stated that they observe the gradual erosion of the democratic space, by both subtle and overt attacks on free expression and the media. Moreover, there is a notable increase in a lack of tolerance for opposing opinions. Thus, limitation of academic freedom often goes along with the curbing of other freedoms. *“It is expected that this trend will soon also be felt in academia. It is important for the PSA to be ready for this possibility and it would be helpful if IPSA can assist in this regard.”* Interestingly, one association relates to certain limitations that national political science associations face: *“Most of the international solidarity requests that we face require expertise on other countries and*

events before we can respond. National associations may not really have these skills at the time when they face such solidarity requests." This indication emphasizes that confronting AF issues, in fact, is demanding as it needs well-based knowledge not only of the case, but of the contextual conditions as well as considered action.

Conclusion

This survey provides the first ever overview on AF violations in the IPSA community and thus offers a broad perspective of the occurrence and the nature of violations as well as of the policies of national and regional associations across all regions. We thank all national and regional associations that participated in this survey, as it made possible a remarkable response rate and thus, a good basis on which to work on.

Not surprisingly, the survey clearly conveys that there is a bias between those countries which are less affected by the threat of AF violations, and those which are highly affected. But independently from this, the results also show the heterogeneity of the type of violations, measures and responses, as well as demands.

What is remarkable is that some responses reflected that associations that do not face the problem itself felt motivated by the survey to raise AF issues at their national board level. Likewise, during the Regional Dialogues that IPSA initiated in November 2020 with its collective members, representatives of national associations indicated that they appreciated this initiative in general and that in some cases, it actually achieved to raise or strengthen awareness of the topic but, also, of related aspects like building entities and establishing rules and procedures to deal with AF.

The survey not only provides a thorough picture of the situation of AF violations and the institutional and procedural context in the national and regional communities of political science, but it is also an important contribution for the future work of IPSA on the topic of AF. The results of the survey give a clear indication that the collective members welcome or even expect support by IPSA. Hence and finally, it will help to identify the grievances and demands of our members and thus to reflect on designing specific and meaningful offers in cooperation with national members. In some regards, while IPSA already relies on useful formats for addressing the AF issue – such as the Regional Dialogues and other networks –, other measures might be developed and designed together with our members. For this, the survey provides a meaningful basis.

Appendix I

Associations Responding to the 2021 IPSA Survey on Academic Freedom

Africa

Angolan Political Science Association
Nigerian Political Science Association
South African Association of Political Studies

Asia and Pacific

Chinese Association of Political Science (Taipei)
Israel Political Science Association
Japanese Political Science Association
Korean Political Science Association
New Zealand Political Studies Association
Philippines Political Science Association
Political Science Association of Nepal
Spanish Association of Political and Administrative Science

Europe

Association française de science politique
Croatian Political Science Association
Czech Political Science Association
Danish Political Science Association
Dutch Political Science Association
Finnish Political Science Association
Georgia Political Science Association
German Political Science Association
Hellenic Political Science Association
Hungarian Political Science Association
Icelandic Political Science Association
Italian Political Science Association
Lithuanian Political Science Association
Nordic Political Science Association
Norwegian Political Science Association
Polish Association of Political Science

Political Studies Association (UK)
Portuguese Political Science Association
Romanian Association of Political Science
Romanian Association of Political Science
Serbian Political Science Association
Slovenian Political Science Association
Swedish Political Science Association
Swiss Political Science Association
Turkish Political Science Association

America, North

American Political Science Association
Canadian Political Science Association
Mexican Political Science Association

America, Latin

Argentine Society of Political Analysis
Bolivian Political Science Association
Brazilian Political Science Association
Colombian Political Science Association
Ecuadorian Association of Political Science
Latin America Political Science Association
Uruguayan Political Science Association

Appendix II Survey Questionnaire



Dealing with Violations of Academic Freedom

The Academic Freedom Committee of the IPSA is currently undertaking an analysis and preparing a report on how national and regional Political Science Associations (PSAs) deal with violations (threats to and/or actual violations) of academic freedom. As part of this report, we are seeking information about how PSAs have been dealing with these issues. In this regard, we would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to answer our ten (10) questions. Thank you, in advance, so much for your time and support.

Name of your Association:*

In our view, "academic freedom" is concerned with a wide variety of activities. These include, but are not limited to: obtaining and holding academic positions; conducting research; developing, disseminating, and publishing research; teaching; institutional autonomy; participation in campus, and freedom from political interventions into university and/or other research bodies.

1. Does your Association specify or have any provisions or statements regarding academic freedom violations in any of its documents? *

YES

NO

2. Is there any official or designated member, committee, or body responsible for dealing with potential situations of academic freedom violation in your Association?*

YES

NO

3. Does your Association have a formal procedure to deal with violations of academic freedom?*

YES

NO

4. If we consider academic freedom is concerned with a wide variety of activities, including -among others- obtaining and holding academic positions; conducting research; developing, disseminating, and publishing research; teaching; institutional autonomy; participation in campus, and freedom from political interventions into university and/or other research bodies... which kind(s) of violations or issues did your association encounter?*

5. Has your Association ever addressed cases of violations to academic freedom?*

YES

NO

6. If your Association encounters cases of violations of academic freedom, what actions or steps would your association take?*

7. Has your Association cooperated with other academic associations or professional organizations in dealing with violations of academic freedom?*

YES

NO

8. Are there procedures or activities or initiatives of other organizations in your country/region that you consider good examples for fighting violations of academic freedom?*

YES

NO

9. What kind of support, if any, could IPSA provide your Association to counter violations of academic freedom?*



10. Is there any other issue or topic you would like to share with us regarding ways to protect and advance academic freedom?*



International Political Science Review

Editors:

Daniel Stockemer
University of Ottawa, Canada

Theresa Reidy
University College Cork, Ireland



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**International Political Science Association
Association internationale de science politique
1590, avenue Docteur-Penfield, bureau 331
Montreal (Québec) H3G 1C5
Canada**

Tel : +1 514 848-8717

Fax : +1 514 848-4095

info@ipsa.org

www.ipsa.org