

Political Science 616, Fall 2007

## **Modern Political Analysis**

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*Calendar description: An introduction to the concepts underlying modern approaches to the study of politics. The scope of the discipline will be delineated and the foundations of empirical research, including the philosophy and methodology of science especially as these apply to social science, will be considered. Various alternatives and critiques will be presented and evaluated.*

This course introduces students to some of the critical ongoing debates about how we study politics. We cover some of the more important philosophical questions underlying the epistemological, ontological and methodological choices that all political scientists must make, and relate these to current research and debates in the discipline.

The most obvious of these questions is “Is it possible to have a scientific study of politics?” But there are also other questions regarding theories of knowledge and the nature of society that are relevant to almost all current political analyses. This course first covers a number of the classic epistemological and ontological issues. We then review and critique a number of “approaches” to political analysis, espoused by some critical authors in the discipline, and varying in epistemology, ontology and methodology. We look at these approaches in some detail, and consider the relative merits of and difficulties with each. There are twelve weeks with scheduled readings, leaving one for a guest speaker.

Students will write five papers over the term, in Weeks 3 through 12. 75% of the class grade will be based on these papers, where each one is worth 15% of the final grade. (Papers are discussed in more detail on the next page.) 25% of the class grade will be based on conference participation.

Most readings are available in the course text, Michael Martin and Lee C. McIntyre, eds., *Reading in the Philosophy of Social Science* (MIT Press, 1994). This book is available at the University Bookstore. All other readings are on reserve at the Redpath Library.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity> for more information). Also, in accordance with the University’s email policy - see <http://www.mcgill.ca/email-policy/> - course-related email should be sent using McGill email addresses. Emails from mysterious sources are likely to be deleted.

The first week is substantive, and students are expected to have read the material for that week, including the paper attached to this outline.

## Papers

Students will write five papers over the term. They should be 5-6 pages in length, double-spaced. They should cover some, or all, of the week's readings, although students are welcome to spend more time on the readings that they find more interesting. Papers should not recite what is in the readings; they should assume that I've read the material. Instead, papers should discuss a specific point drawn out of the readings – they may highlight a strength or weakness of a given approach, or reading, for instance. I will write a short example to distribute in Week 1.

In addition, each student will have three minutes (no more) at the beginning of class to summarize their paper – that is, to introduce the specific question or issue which they found interesting. This is mandatory, and counts as part of the participation grade.

**Absolutely no late papers will be accepted without a doctor's note.** There will be no exceptions. Papers are due by 5pm the day before class. Electronic versions should be sent in Word or pdf format by this time to [stuart.soroka@mcgill.ca](mailto:stuart.soroka@mcgill.ca).

The specific weeks for which each student must submit a paper will be decided by lottery in the second week of class. Every student will write five papers, distributed across Weeks 3 through 12.

## Course Outline

### **Week 1: A Science of Politics?**

Fritz Machlup. "Are the Social Sciences Really Inferior?" Ch 1 in *Martin & McIntyre*.

Brian Fay and J. Donald Moon. "What Would an Adequate Philosophy of Social Science Look Like?" Ch 2 in *Martin & McIntyre*.

*Plus, please read this paper, attached to this syllabus:*

Gabriel Almond. 1988. "Separate Tables: Schools and Sects in Political Science," *PS: Political Science and Politics* (Fall 1988): 828-842.

### **Week 2: Laws in Social Science**

Carl C. Hempel. "The Function of General Laws in History." Ch 3 in *Martin & McIntyre*.

F.A. Hayek. "The Theory of Complex Phenomena." Ch 4 in *Martin & McIntyre*.

Brain Fay. "General Laws and Explaining Human Behavior." Ch 7 in *Martin & McIntyre*.

Harold Kincaid. "Defending Laws in the Social Sciences." Ch 8 in *Martin & McIntyre*.

### **Week 3: The Naturalist/ Antinaturalist Debate: Two Positions**

Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London: Routledge). On reserve.

Thomas Kuhn. 1962. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). On reserve.

### **Week 4: Neutrality in Political Science**

Max Weber. "Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy." Ch 34 in Martin & McIntyre.

Charles Taylor. "Neutrality in Political Science." Ch 35 in Martin & McIntyre.

Charles Nagel. "The Value-Oriented Bias of Social Inquiry." Ch 36 in Martin & McIntyre.

Michael Martin. "The Philosophical Importance of the Rosenthal Effect." Ch 37 in Martin and McIntyre.

### **Week 5: Individualism, Holism, and Systemism**

Emile Durkheim. "Social Facts." Ch 27 in Martin & McIntyre.

J.W.N. Watkins. "Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences." Ch 28 in Martin & McIntyre.

Mario Bunge. 1996. *Finding Philosophy in Social Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press), Chapters 9 and 10. On reserve.

### **Week 6: Behavioralism**

B.F. Skinner. 1953. *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: The Free Press). On reserve.

Heinz Eulau. 1962. "Segments of Political Science Most Susceptible to Behavioristic Treatment," in James C. Charlesworth, ed., *The Limits of Behavioralism in Political Science* (Philadelphia: The American Academy of Political and Social Science). On reserve.

Russell Kirk. 1962. "Segments of Political Science Not Amenable to Behavioralistic Treatment," in James C. Charlesworth, ed., as above.

### **Week 7: Functionalism**

Carl G. Hempel. "The Logic of Functional Analysis." Ch 22 in Martin and McIntyre.

G.A. Cohen. "Functional Explanations: In Marxism." Ch 24 in Martin and McIntyre.

Harold Kincaid. "Assessing Functional Explanations in the Social Sciences." Ch 26 in Martin and McIntyre.

David Easton. 1979. *A Framework for Political Analysis*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). On reserve.

### **Week 8: Interpretivism / Hermeneutics**

Charles Taylor. "Interpretation and Sciences of Man." Ch 13 in Martin & McIntyre.

Clifford Geertz. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." Ch 14 in Martin & McIntyre.

Michael Martin. "Taylor on Interpretation and the Sciences of Man." Ch 17 in Martin & McIntyre.

Dagfinn Follesdal. "Hermeneutics and the Hypothetico-Deductive Method." Ch 15 in Martin & McIntyre.

### **Week 9: Structuralism**

Michel Foucault. 1982. *The Archeology of Knowledge* (Pantheon). On reserve.

### **Week 10: Rational Choice**

Gary S. Becker 1978. *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior* (University of Chicago Press), selections. On reserve.

Kenneth J. Arrow. 1950. "A Difficulty in the Concept of Social Welfare", *Journal of Political Economy* 58(4), pp. 328–346. Available through JSTOR.

Dagfinn Follesdal. "The Status of Rationality Assumptions in Interpretation and in the Explanation of Action." Ch 19 in Martin & McIntyre.

Jon Elster. "The Nature and Scope of Rational-Choice Explanation." Ch 20 in Martin & McIntyre.

Mario Bunge. 1995. "The Poverty of Rational Choice Theory," in I.C. Jarvie and N. Laor, *Critical Rationalism, Metaphysics and Science 1* (Dordrecht: Kluwer): 159-68. On reserve.

### **Week 11: Feminism**

Naomi Weisstein. "Psychology Constructs the Female." Ch 38 in Martin & McIntyre.

Alison Wylie. "Reasoning about Ourselves: Feminist Methodology in the Social Sciences." Ch 39 in Martin & McIntyre.

Susan J. Carroll and Linda M.G. Zerilli, 1993. "Feminist Challenges to Political Science." In Ada Finifter, ed. *Political Science: The State of the Discipline, II*. Washington, DC: The American Political Science Association, pp.55-76. On Reserve.

Jennifer Ring. 1987. "Toward a Feminist Epistemology." *Journal of Politics* 31:753-772. Available through JSTOR.

### **Week 12: Where Do We Stand?**

TBA, based on class discussion.

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# Separate Tables

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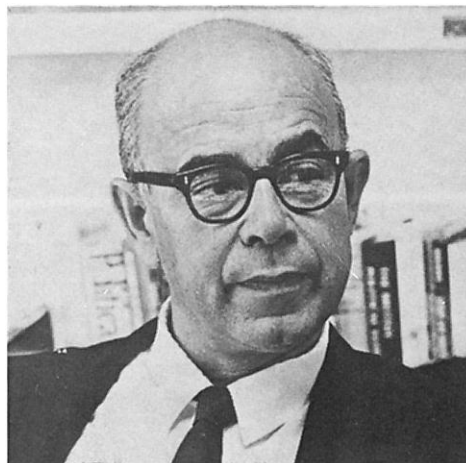
## Separate Tables: Schools and Sects in Political Science\*

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Gabriel A. Almond  
Stanford University

“**M**iss Cooper: Loneliness is a terrible thing don't you agree?  
Anne: Yes, I do agree. A terrible thing. . . .  
Miss Meacham: She's not an 'alone' type.  
Miss Cooper: Is any type an 'alone' type,  
Miss Meacham. . . ?”

(From Terence Rattigan's *Separate Tables*,  
(1955, 78, 92)



GABRIEL A. ALMOND

In *Separate Tables*, the hit of the 1955 New York theatrical season, the Irish playwright, Terence Rattigan, used the metaphor of solitary diners in a second-rate residential hotel in Cornwall to convey the loneliness of the human condition. It may be a bit far fetched to use this metaphor to describe the condition of political science in the 1980s. But in some sense the various schools and sects of political science now sit at separate tables, each with its own conception of proper political science, but each protecting some secret island of vulnerability.

It was not always so. If we recall the state of the profession a quarter of a century ago, let us say in the early 1960s, David Easton's (1953) and David Truman's (1955) scoldings of the profession for its backwardness among the social science disciplines, had been taken to heart by a substantial and productive cadre of young political scientists. In 1961 Robert Dahl wrote his *Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest* reflecting the sure confidence of a successful movement, whose leaders were rapidly becoming the most visible figures in the profession. Neither Dahl nor Heinz Eulau, whose *Behavioral Persuasion* appeared in 1963 made exaggerated or exclusive claims for the new political science. They expressed the view that the scientific approach to the study of political phenomena had proven itself, and that it could take its place alongside political philosophy, public law, and institutional history and description, as an important approach to the study of politics. As the part of the discipline "on the move," so to speak, it created some worry among the older sub-disciplines. An appropriate metaphor for the state of political science at that time, perhaps would be the "young Turk—old Turk" model, with the young Turks already beginning to gray at the temples. But we were all Turks.

Now there is this uneasy separateness. The public choice people seek an anchorage in reality, a "new institutionalism," to house their powerful deductive apparatus; the political econometricians want to relate to historical and institutional processes; the humanists cringe at the avoidance of political values by "scientism," and suffer from feel-

Figure 1.

		Ideological Dimension	
		Left	Right
Methodological Dimension	Hard	HL	HR
	Soft	SL	SR

ings of inadequacy in a world dominated by statistics and technology; and the radical and "critical" political theorists, like the ancient prophets, lay about them with anathemas against the behaviorists and positivists, and the very notion of a political science professionalism that would separate knowledge from action. But their anti-professionalism must leave them in doubt as to whether they are scholars or politicians.

The uneasiness in the political science profession is not of the body but of the soul. In the last several decades the profession has more than doubled in numbers. American type political science has spread to Europe, Latin America, Japan, and more interestingly to China and the USSR. Political science has taken on the organizational and methodological attributes of science—research institutes, large-scale budgets, the use of statistical and mathematical methods, and the like. Political science has prospered materially, but it is not a happy profession.

We are separated along two dimensions; an ideological one, and a methodological one (see Figure 1). On the methodological dimension there are the extremes of soft and hard. At the soft extreme are Clifford Geertz (1973) types of "thickly descriptive," clinical studies. As an example of this kind of scholarship Albert Hirschman (1970) celebrated the John Womack (1969) biography of the Mexican guerrilla hero, Emiliano Zapata, with its almost complete lack of conceptualization, hypothesizing, efforts to prove propositions and the like. Despite this lack of self-conscious social science, Hirschman argues, the Zapata study was full of theoretical implications of the greatest importance. Leo Strauss (1959) and his followers in political philosophy with their exegetical approach to the evocation of the ideas of political philosophers come pretty close to this soft extreme as well, but while Womack's kind of work leaves everything but narrative and description to implication, Straussian exegesis involves the discipline of the explication of the great texts, ascertaining their "true" meaning through the analysis of their language.

Somewhat away from the soft extreme, but still on the soft side of the continuum, would be political philosophical studies more open to empirical evidence and logical analysis. Recent work such as that of Michael Walzer on justice (1983) and obligation (1970), Carole Pateman on participation (1970) and obligation (1979) would be illustrative. Here there is more than a simple, rich evocation of an event or personality, or precise exegesis of the ideas of political philosophers. A logical argument is advanced, often tested through the examination of evidence, and developed more or less rigorously.

At the other extreme of the methodological continuum are the quantitative, econometric, and mathematical modelling studies; and the most extreme would be the combination of mathematical modelling, statistical analysis, experiment, and computer simulation in the public choice literature. Theories of voting, coalition making, decision-making in committees, and in bureaucracies, involving the testing of hypotheses generated by formal, mathematical models would exemplify this hard extreme.

On the ideological continuum on the left we have four groups in the Marxist tradition—the Marxists properly speaking, the "critical political theorists," the *dependencistas*, and the world system theorists, all of whom deny the possibility of separating knowledge from action, and who subordinate political science to the struggle for socialism. At the conservative end of the continuum are the neo-conservatives who favor among other things a

## Separate Tables

free market economy, and limits on the power of the state, as well as an aggressive anti-communist foreign policy.

If we combine these two dimensions we end up with four schools of political science, four separate tables—the soft-left, the hard-left, the soft-right, and the hard-right tables. Reality, of course, is not quite this neat. The ideological and methodological shadings are more complex, more subtle. To elaborate our metaphor a bit but still within the refectorial realm, since the overwhelming majority of political scientists are somewhere in the center—"liberal" and moderate in ideology, and eclectic and open to conviction in methodology—we might speak of the great cafeteria of the center, from which most of us select our intellectual food, and where we are seated at large tables with mixed and changing table companions.

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The outlying tables in this disciplinary refectory are strongly lit and visible, while the large center lies in shade. It is unfortunate that the mood and reputation of the political science discipline is so heavily influenced by these extreme views. This is in part because the extremes make themselves highly audible and visible—the soft left providing a pervasive flagellant background noise, and the hard right providing virtuoso mathematical and statistical displays appearing in the pages of our learned journals.

### The Soft Left

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Suppose we begin with the soft left. All of the sub-groups of the soft left share in the meta-methodological assumption that the empirical world cannot be understood in terms of separate spheres and dimensions, but has to be understood as a time-space totality. "Critical theory," as developed by Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, and others of the "Frankfurt School" reject the alleged detachment and disaggregating strategy of mainstream social science. The various parts of the social process must be seen "... as aspects of a total situation caught up in the process of historical change" (Lukacs quoted in David Held [1980], 164). The student as well as that which he studies is involved in struggle. Hence objectivity is inappropriate. "Positivists fail to comprehend that the process of knowing cannot be severed from the historical struggle between humans and the world. Theory and theoretical labor are intertwined in social life processes. The theorist cannot remain detached, passively contemplating, reflecting and describing 'society' or 'nature'" (Held, 165). To understand and explain one must have a commitment to an outcome. There is no political science in the positivist sense, that is, a political science separable from ideological commitment. To seek to separate it is a commitment to support the existing, historically obsolescent order.

The more orthodox Marxists such as Perry Anderson (1976), Goran Therborn (1977), Philip Slater (1977), and others, while sharing the meta-methodology of the "Critical school," go further and argue that unless one accepts historical materialism in the fullest reductionist sense of explaining the political realm in class struggle terms, one ends up failing to appreciate the relationship between theory and "praxis."

As we consider the composition of the soft left our four-fold metaphor of separate tables begins to break down. The Marxist theorists of several persuasions—the "critical theorists," the "dependency" writers, and "world system" theorists—make quarrelsome table companions. What they all share is a common belief in the unity of theory and praxis, in the impossibility of separating science and politics. As a logical consequence positivist political science, which believes in the necessity of separating scientific activity from political activity, loses contact with the overriding unity of the historical process and

is mindlessly linked to the status quo. Positivist political science fails to take into account the historical dialectic which makes the shift from capitalism to socialism inevitable.

Fernando Cardoso, the leading theorist of the dependency school, contrasts the methodology of dependency theory with the North American social science tradition in the following language:

We attempt to reestablish the intellectual tradition based on a comprehensive social science. We seek a global and dynamic understanding of social structures instead of looking only at specific dimensions of the social process. We oppose the academic tradition which conceived of domination and social-cultural relations as "dimensions" analytically independent of one another and together independent of the economy, as if each one of these dimensions corresponded to separate features of reality. . . . We use a dialectical approach to study society, its structures and processes of change. . . . In the end what has to be discussed as an alternative is not the consolidation of the state and the fulfillment of "autonomous capitalism," but how to supercede them. The important question, then, is how to construct paths toward socialism. (Cardoso and Faletto, 1979, ix and xxiv)

Political science can only be science then, if it is fully committed to the attainment of socialism.

One of the leading American expositors of the "dependency" approach, Richard Fagen, draws the implications of Cardoso's views for the academic community concerned with development issues. Real progress in development scholarship has to be associated with a restructuring of asymmetric international power relations and ". . . a much more difficult and historically significant assault on capitalist forms of development themselves. . . . Only when this crucial understanding infuses the nascent academic critique of the global capitalist system will we be able to say that the paradigm shift in mainstream U.S. social science is gathering steam and moving scholarship closer to what really matters" (1978, 80).

Two recent interpretations of the history of American political science show that this "soft-left" critique of mainstream work in the discipline has taken on some momentum. David Ricci in *The Tragedy of Political Science* (1984) traces the emergence of a liberal scientific school of political science in post-World War II America, a movement dedicated, according to Ricci, to proving the superior virtue of liberal pluralistic values and assumptions by the most precise methods. The validity of this complacent "empirical political theory" constructed by such political scientists as David Truman, Robert Dahl, C. E. Lindblom, the University of Michigan group of voting specialists, and others, was undermined in the disorders of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and in the associated discrediting of American politics and public policy. Ricci draws the implication of this behavioral-post-behavioral episode, as demonstrating that political science as empirical science without the systematic inclusion of moral and ethical values and alternatives, and a commitment to political action, is doomed to disillusion. Political science has to choose sides; failing to do so results in its withdrawal into specialized preciosity, and futility.

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Ricci's soft leftism is of the humanist moderate left variety. That of Raymond Seidelman (1985) is a more sharply radical treatment of the history of American political science. In a book entitled *Disenchanted Realists: Political Science and the American Crisis, 1884-1984*, Seidelman develops the thesis in detail that there have been three trends in American political theory—an institutionalist trend, a democratic populist trend, and a relatively



## Separate Tables

short-lived "liberal political science" trend, initiated in the 1920s and 1930s by the University of Chicago school, and flowering in the United States in the post-World War II years roughly until the 1970s. The institutionalist trend is the Hamiltonian–Madisonian tradition embodied in the constitutional system, so constructed that it would frustrate the will of majorities. Separation of powers theory is based on a distrust of popular propensities. Contrasted with this tradition of American political theory, is the democratic populist trend manifested in early agrarian egalitarianism, abolitionism, populism, and the like. This second Thomas Paine tradition is anti-statist, anti-government and was discredited by the rise of industrial-urban society and the necessity for strong central government.

The third tradition was based on a belief in the possibility of a science of politics which would help produce a powerful national state, manned by trained experts pursuing constructive and coherent public policies, and supported by virtuous popular majorities. This third tradition dream of a great constructive political science has been dispelled on both the political and the science sides. Political reality has turned into a disarticulated set of

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elite-dominated "issue networks" and "iron triangles," incapable of pursuing consistent and effective public policies; and the science has turned into a set of disembodied specialties lacking in linkage to politics and public policy. Seidelman concludes:

Historically, political science professionalism has only obscured fundamental conflicts and choices in American public life, for it has treated citizens as objects of study or clients of a benign political paternalism. . . . Until political scientists realize that their democratic politics cannot be realized through a barren professionalism, intellectual life will remain cleaved from the genuine if heretofore subterranean dreams of American citizens. Political science history has confirmed this separation, even as it has tried to bridge it. Modern political science must bridge it, if delusions are to be transformed into new democratic realities. (241)

The burden of the soft left, thus, is an attack on political science professionalism. It is a call to the academy to join the political fray, to orient its teaching and research around left ideological commitments—in particular, moderate or revolutionary socialism.

## The Hard Right

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The hard right, on the other hand, is ultra-professional at the methodological level, deploying a formidable array of scientific methodologies—deductive, statistical, and experimental. There is a tendency to view softer historical, descriptive, and unsophisticated quantitative analysis as pre-professional, as inferior breeds of political science, although in recent years there has been a notable rediscovery of political institutions, and an effort to relate formal deductive work to the empirical tradition pioneered by Gosnell, Herring, V. O. Key.

William Mitchell (1988), in a recent review of the public choice movement in political science, distinguishes between the two principal centers, which he calls the Virginia and Rochester Schools. The Virginia school, influential mainly among economists, was founded by James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock. The founder of the Rochester school, more influential among political scientists, was William Riker. Both schools tend to be skeptical of politics and bureaucracy and are fiscally conservative. But the Virginia school views the market unambiguously as the benchmark of efficient allocation. The Virginians according to Mitchell display a ". . . firm conviction that the private economy is far more robust,

efficient, and perhaps equitable than other economies, and much more successful than political processes in efficiently allocating resources. . . . Much of what has been produced by the [Virginian] Center for Study of Public Choice, can best be described as contributions to a theory of the failure of political processes . . . inequity, inefficiency, and coercion are the most general results of democratic policy formation" (pp. 106-7). Buchanan proposed an automatic deficit reduction plan years before the adoption of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings proposal; and he was the author of an early version of the proposed constitutional budget-balancing amendment. Buchanan, in two books—*Democracy in Deficit*, *The Political Legacy of Lord Keynes* (1977), and *The Economics of Politics* (1978)—presents a view of democratic politics in which voters act in terms of their short-run interests, that is to say oppose taxes and favor material benefits for themselves; politicians naturally play into these propensities by favoring spending and opposing taxing; and bureaucrats seek to extend their power and resources without regard to the public interest.

These theorists differ in the extent to which they believe that the short-run utility maximizer model captures human reality. Some scholars employ the model only as a way of generating hypotheses. Thus Robert Axelrod, using deductive modelling, experimentation and computer simulation, has made important contributions to our understanding of how cooperative norms emerge, and in particular how norms of international cooperation might develop from an original short-run utility maximizing perspective (1984). Douglass North (1981), Samuel Popkin (1979), Robert Bates (1988), and others combine rational choice modelling with sociological analysis in their studies of third world development and historical process.

That this view is on the defensive is reflected in recent comments of scholars with unquestionable scientific credentials. Thus Herbert Simon challenges the rational choice assumption of this literature:

It makes a difference to research, a very large difference, to our research strategy whether we are studying the nearly omniscient *homo economicus* of rational choice theory or the boundedly rational *homo psychologicus* of cognitive psychology. It makes a difference for research, but it also makes a difference for the proper design of political institutions. James Madison was well aware of that, and in the pages of the *Federalist Papers*, he opted for this view of the human condition; "As there is a degree of depravity in mankind which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust, so there are other qualities in human nature which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence:"—a balanced and realistic view, we may concede, of bounded human rationality and its accompanying frailties of motive and reason. (303)

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James March and Johan Olsen attack the formalism of the public choice literature. "The new institutionalism is an empirically based prejudice, an assertion that what we observe in the world is inconsistent with the ways in which contemporary theories ask us to talk. . . . The bureaucratic agency, the legislative committee, and the appellate court are arenas for

## Separate Tables

contending social forces, but they are also collections of standard operating procedures and structures that define and defend interests" (1984, 738). They similarly question the rational self-interest assumption of the public choice literature, arguing,

Although self-interest undoubtedly permeates politics, action is often based more on discovering the normatively appropriate behavior than on calculating the return expected from alternative choices. As a result, political behavior, like other behavior, can be described in terms of duties, obligations, roles, and rules. (744)

## The Soft Right

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In the soft-right cell there are miscellaneous conservatives of an old and a "neo" variety, who tend to be traditional in their methodologies and on the right side of the ideological spectrum. But the followers of Leo Strauss in political theory are a distinctive breed indeed. Their methodological conservatism is unambiguous. The enlightenment and the scientific revolution are the arch-enemy. High on their list of targets is the value free and ethically neutral political science of Max Weber. As Leo Strauss put it, "Moral obtuseness is the necessary condition for scientific analysis. The more serious we are as social scientists the more completely we develop within ourselves a state of indifference to any goal, or to aimlessness and drifting, a state of what may be called nihilism" (1959, 19). But political science is not only amoral, it is not really productive of knowledge. Again Leo Strauss, "Generally speaking, one may wonder whether the new political science has brought to light anything of political importance which intelligent political practitioners with a deep knowledge of history, nay intelligent and educated journalists, to say nothing of the old political scientists, did not know at least as well beforehand" (in Storing, 1962, 312).

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*The enlightenment and the scientific revolution are the arch-enemy.*

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The Straussians reject all "historicist" and "sociology of knowledge" interpretations of political theory. The true meaning of philosophical texts is contained in what has been written. The political philosopher must have the skill and insight necessary to explicate this original meaning. The ultimate truth can be located in the writings of the original classic philosophers, and particularly in the writings of Plato—in his Socratic rationalism shorn of all contingency. Truths transcend time, place, and context. Post-Machiavellian political philosophy has led to moral relativism and the decay of civic virtue; "behavioral" political science is the debased product of this moral decline.

In the recent celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the Constitution, the Straussians, as one might expect, were in the vanguard of the "original intent" school of constitutional interpretation. Gordon Wood, in a recent review of the Straussian literature on the Constitution, (1988) points out that for such Straussians as Gary McDowell and Walter Berns the whole truth about the Constitution is contained in the constitutional text, and perhaps the record of the debates, and the Federalist Papers. Wood points out that the Straussian commitment to "natural right," leads them to distrust of all historically derived rights "... particularly those recently discovered by the Supreme Court" (1988, 39). For some Straussians the natural right to property postulated by the Founders may be grounds for rolling back the modern welfare state. The moral model regime for many Straussians is the Platonic aristocracy, or as second-best, Aristotelian "mixed government." Their program of action is a call for an intellectual elite which will bring us back to first principles.

## The Hard Left

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There is finally a hard left school, which employs scientific methodology in testing propositions derived from socialist and dependency theories. However, the moment one makes

explicit and testable the assumptions and beliefs of left ideologies, one has gone part of the way toward rejecting the anti-professionalism of the left. And this is reflected in the nervousness of leading socialist and dependency theorists over quantification and the testing of hypotheses. Thus Christopher Chase-Dunn, one of the leading world system quantifiers, pleads with his colleagues, "My concern is that we not become bogged down in a sterile debate between 'historicists' and 'social scientists,' or between quantitative and qualitative researchers. The 'ethnic' boundaries may provide us with much material for spirited dialogue, but a real understanding of the world system will require that we transcend methodological sectarianism" (1982, 181). The leading dependency theorists such as Cardoso and Fagen raise serious questions regarding the validity of "scientific type, quantitative" studies of dependency propositions. For reasons not clearly specified such research is "premature," or misses the point. Thus, they probably would not accept as valid the findings of the Sylvan, Snidal, Russett, Jackson, and Duvall (1982) group which tested a formal model of "dependencia" on a world-wide set of dependent countries in the 1970-75 period, and came up with mixed and inconclusive results. Nevertheless the dependency and world system quantifiers and econometricians, including political scientists and sociologists such as Chase-Dunn (1977) and Rubinson (1979), Albert Bergesen (1980), Volker Bornschier (1981) and others, are carrying on quantitative studies oriented toward the demonstration of the validity of world system and dependency propositions.

### Getting Our Professional History Straight

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Most political scientists would find themselves uncomfortable seated at these outlying tables. Having become a major academic profession only in the last two or three generations, we are not about to cast off our badges of professional integrity by turning our research and teaching into political advocacy. This is reflected in the partial defection from anti-professionalism by the hard left, who insist that assertions about society and politics can be tested by formulating them explicitly and precisely, and using statistical methods where appropriate.

Similarly most of us are troubled at the preemption by the public choice and statistical political scientists of the badge of professionalism, and their demotion of the rest of us to a prescientific status. And this concern is shared by some of the most reputable and sophisticated of our more rigorous political scientists, who are currently engaged in relating to and rehabilitating the older political science methodologies, such as philosophical, legal and historical analysis, and institutional description.

And there are few political scientists indeed who would share the view that all political science since the sixteenth century is a deviation from the true path, and that the sole route to professionalism is through the exegesis of the classical texts of political theory.

### *Truths transcend time, place, and context.*

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It is noteworthy that each of these schools or sects presents us with a particular version of the history of the political science discipline. Whoever controls the interpretation of the past in our professional history writing has gone a long way toward controlling the future. The soft left has almost pre-empted the writing of professional political science history in recent years. I believe they may have succeeded in convincing some of us that we have deviated from the true path. Both Ricci and Seidelman would have us believe that modern political science with its stress on methodology and objectivity could only develop in the United States where for a brief interval it appeared that liberal democracy and an objective professionalism were possible. As this American optimism abates, and as party and class antagonism sharpens inevitably, they argue, a politically neutral political science becomes untenable. According to this view political science must again become an active part of a political, and for some, a revolutionary movement.

## Separate Tables

The view of professional history presented by the hard right is a very foreshortened one. According to this view, prior to the introduction of mathematical, statistical, and experimental methodologies there was no political science and theory in the proper sense.

But the large methodologically eclectic majority of political scientists, and those who are committed to the control of ideological bias in the conduct of professional work—what I call the “Cafeteria of the center”—ought not to concede the writing of disciplinary history to any one of these schools. The history of political science does not lead to any one of these separate tables, but rather to the methodologically mixed and objectivity-aspiring scholarship of the center.

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*Having become a major academic profession only in the last two or three generations, we are not about to cast off our badges of professional integrity by turning our research and teaching into political advocacy.*

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It is not correct to argue that political science deviated from classical political philosophy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and that it has been on the wrong path ever since. Nor is it correct to attribute to American political science the effort to separate political theory from political action. The Straussians cannot legitimately claim exclusive origin in classical Greek philosophy. The scientific impulse in political studies had its beginnings among the classical Greek philosophers. Robert Dahl, for my money, is a more legitimate follower of Aristotle than is Leo Strauss.

There is a political sociological tradition going all the way back to Plato and Aristotle, continuing through Polybius, Cicero, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Hume, Rousseau, Tocqueville, Comte, Marx, Pareto, Durkheim, Weber and continuing up to Dahl, Lipset, Rokkan, Sartori, Moore, and Lijphart, which sought, and seeks, to relate socioeconomic conditions to political constitutions and institutional arrangements, and to relate these structural characteristics to policy propensities in war and peace.

Our founding fathers belonged to this tradition. Alexander Hamilton observed in *Federalist 9*, “The science of politics . . . like most other sciences, has received great improvement. The efficacy of various principles is now well understood, which were either not known at all, or imperfectly known to the ancients” (1937). And in *Federalist 31* Hamilton deals with the perennial question of just how scientific moral and political studies could be. He concludes,

Though it cannot be pretended that the principles of moral and political knowledge have, in general, the same degree of certainty with those of the mathematics, yet they have much better claims in this respect than . . . we should be disposed to allow them. (ibid., 189)

It is worth noting that the hard science–soft science polarity, which we have been led to assume is a recent phenomenon attributable to the heresy of the American behavioral movement, has in fact been endemic to the discipline since its origins.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries Auguste Comte, Marx and Engels and their followers, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Vilfredo Pareto, and others treated politics in larger social science perspectives, with law-like regularities and necessary relationships. At the turn of the 20th century John Robert Seeley and Otto Hintze, Moissaye Ostrogorski, and Roberto Michels all produced what they considered to be “scientific laws” of politics—Seeley and Hintze on the relationship between external pressure and internal freedom in the development of the nation states of Western Europe; Ostrogorski, on the incompatibility of the mass-bureaucratic political party and democracy which he derived from a

comparative study of the rise of the British and American party systems; and Michels, on the "iron law of oligarchy," the propensity in large bureaucratic organizations for power to gravitate to the top leadership, which he derived from his "critical" case study of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. More recently, Duverger's "law" of the relationship between the electoral and party systems also came from Europe.

Among the early pioneers of modern professional political science it was common practice to speak of this branch of scholarship as a "science" from the very beginning. Thus Sir Frederick Pollock and John Robert Seeley, the first lecturing from Oxford and the Royal Institution, the second from Cambridge, entitled their books *The History of the Science of Politics* (1890) and *An Introduction to Political Science* (1896), respectively. What these early writers meant by "science" varied from case to case. Pollock distinguishes between the natural and moral sciences.

. . . [T]he comparative inexactness of the moral sciences is not the fault of the men who have devoted their abilities to them, but depends, as Aristotle already saw, on the nature of their subject matter. (1890, 5)

For John Robert Seeley political science was to be a body of propositions drawn from historical knowledge. He expected a takeoff in the development of political science because of the development of historiography in the 19th century. If the moderns were to do so much better than Locke, Hobbes, and Montesquieu, it was because their historical data base was much richer.

For Seeley, who introduced political science into the Cambridge Tripos, it meant learning to ". . . reason, generalize, define, and distinguish . . . as well as collecting, authenticating, and investigating facts. . . ." These two processes constituted political science. "If we neglect the first process, we shall accumulate facts to little purpose, because we shall have no test by which to distinguish facts which are important from those which are unimportant; and of course, if we neglect the second process, our reasonings will be baseless, and we shall but weave scholastic cobwebs" (1896, 27-8).

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*. . . most of us are troubled at the pre-emption by the public choice and econometric political scientists of the badge of professionalism, and their demotion of the rest of us to a prescientific status.*

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There were two schools of thought in the 19th and early 20th century social sciences regarding the degree or kind of science which was possible. The work of Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, and Vilfredo Pareto makes no distinction between the social and the "natural" sciences. Both groups of sciences sought uniformities, regularities, laws. On the other hand the notion of a social science which would consist of ". . . a closed system of concepts, in which reality is synthesized in some sort of permanently and universally valid classification, and from which it can again be deduced. . ." was viewed as entirely meaningless by Max Weber.

The stream of immeasurable events flows unendingly towards eternity. The cultural problems which move men form themselves ever anew and in different colors, and the boundaries of that area in the infinite stream of concrete events which acquires meaning and significance for us, i.e. which becomes an "historical individual" are constantly subject to change. The intellectual contexts from which it is viewed and scientifically analyzed shift. (1949, 80)

The "lawfulness" of human interaction is of a different order for Max Weber. The subject matter of the social sciences—human action—involves value orientation, memory and learning, which can only yield "soft" regularities, "objective possibilities" and probabili-

## Separate Tables

ties. Cultural change may attenuate or even dissolve these relationships. Similarly Durkheim viewed cultural phenomena as too complex and open to human creativity to lend themselves to the same degree of causal certainty as the natural sciences.

During the first decades of professional political science in the United States—from 1900 to the 1930s—two scholars, Merriam and Catlin, the first as American as apple pie, the second a temporarily transplanted Englishman—took the lead in advocating the introduction of scientific methods and standards in the study of politics. Merriam's contribution was primarily programmatic, and promotional. He advocated, recruited personnel, and funded a particular research program at the University of Chicago. He also was a founder of the Social Science Research Council. Catlin wrote on methodological questions, differentiating between history and political science, and locating political science among the social sciences.

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*Whoever controls the interpretation of the past in our professional history writing has gone a long way toward controlling the future.*

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In his 1921 manifesto, "The Present State of the Study of Politics," Merriam (1925) advocated the introduction of psychological and sociological insights into the study of political institutions and processes, and of the introduction of statistical methods in an effort to enhance the rigor of political analysis. Nowhere in this early call to professional growth and improvement is there anything approximating a discussion of scientific methodology. He proposed to *do* political science rather than talk about it. And indeed, in the decades following at the University of Chicago, a research program unfolded exemplifying Merriam's stress on empirical research, quantification, and social-psychological interpretation. The scholars produced by this program constituted a substantial part of the nucleus of the post-World War "behavioral movement."

George Catlin may have been the first to speak of a "behaviorist treatment of politics" (1927, xi), and in his argument about a science of politics seems to dispose of all of those objections which would differentiate social and human subject matters from those of natural science. But he is hardly sanguine about the prospects of science.

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*It is not correct to argue that political science deviated from classical political philosophy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and that it has been on the wrong path ever since.*

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Politics must for the present confine itself to the humble task of collecting, where possible measuring, and sorting the historical material, past and contemporary; and following up probable clues to the discovery of permanent forms and general principles of action. . . . It is reasonable to expect that political science will prove to be more than this, that it will give us some insight into the possibility of controlling the social situation, and will show us, if not what it is wise to do, at least what, human nature being what it is, it is unwise to do, because such action will cut across the grain of the social structure and thwart the lines of activity of the deeper forces which have built up this structure. (1927, 142-43).

Thus Bernard Crick's (1959) argument that it was the behavioral movement in American political science, and particularly the Chicago school that was responsible for leading

political science down the garden path of scientism cannot bear careful examination of the sources. In both Europe and America meta-methodological opinion has been divided on this question. It would be hard to find more hard science oriented scholars than Comte, Marx, Pareto, and Freud. Durkheim and Weber, while fully committed to the pursuit of science, clearly recognized that the social scientist dealt with a subject matter less tractable to covering-law hard science forms of explanation. This polemic diffused to the United States in the course of the twentieth century.

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*. . . the hard science-soft science polarity . . . has in fact been endemic to the discipline since its origins.*

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Crick's attribution of this scientific orientation to Chicago populists does not hold up when we examine the evidence. One has to read the Tocqueville correspondence (1962) to appreciate how close that brilliant interpreter of American democracy, a century before the Chicago school saw the light of day, came to doing an opinion survey in his travels around the country. As he talked to a steamboat captain on the Mississippi, to farmers in the interior, to bourgeois dinner companions on the eastern seaboard, and to officeholders in Washington, D.C., sampling the American population was clearly on his mind. Karl Marx drew up a six-page questionnaire for the study of the living conditions, working conditions, attitudes, and beliefs of the French working class in the early 1880s. A large number of copies were distributed to socialists and working class organizations. The data gathered were to be used in the forthcoming general election (1880). In Max Weber's working papers for his study of the peasantry in East Prussia there is evidence that he planned and partially executed a survey of Polish and German peasant attitudes. And in his study of comparative religion he used a formal two-by-two table—worldliness-unworldliness, asceticism-mysticism—as a way of generating hypotheses about the relationship between religious ethics and economic attitudes.

Most of the important discoveries in the development of statistics were made by Europeans. La Place and Condorcet were Frenchmen; the Bernoulli family were Swiss; Bayes, Galton, Pearson, and Fisher were Englishmen; Pareto was an Italian; Markov a Russian. The first "public choice" theorist was the Welshman, Duncan Black (1958). The view that the quantitative approach to social science analysis was peculiarly American doesn't stand up to the historical record. What was peculiarly American was the improvement in, and the application of, quantitative methods as in survey research, content analysis, aggregate statistical analysis, mathematical modelling and the like, and the pursuit in empirical depth of psychological and sociological hypotheses largely generated in the European social science literature.

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*The view that the quantitative approach to social science analysis was peculiarly American doesn't stand up to the historical record.*

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At the darkest moment in European history—in the 1930s—there was a strong infusion of European social science into the United States through refugees such as Paul Lazarsfeld, Kurt Lewin, Marie Jahoda, Wolfgang Kohler, Hans Speier, Erich Fromm, Franz Neumann, Otto Kirchheimer, Leo Lowenthal, Franz Alexander, Hannah Arendt, Hans Morgenthau, Leo Strauss, and many others. It should be quite clear from this litany of names that this emigration carried the various social science polemics within it, and that the counterposition of a European and an American approach to social science around the issue of humanist vs. scientific scholarship will simply not bear the light of day. There is clear continuity



## Separate Tables

from the European background to the growth of the social sciences and political science in the United States.

This broad tradition of political science beginning with the Greeks and continuing up to the creative scholars of our own generation, is the historically correct version of our disciplinary history. The critical and Marxist schools throw in the professional sponge. Confronting this simplistic temptation we need to have a deep-rooted and unshakable firmness in our commitment to the search for objectivity. The call for "relevance" associated with "post-behavioralism" implies a greater concern for policy implications in our scholarly work, but it cannot imply a commitment to a particular course of political action. A political scientist is not necessarily a socialist, and surely not a socialist of a particular kind.

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*There is clear continuity from the European background  
to the growth of the social sciences and political science  
in the United States.*

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The version of disciplinary history presented to us in Straussian political philosophy cannot be taken seriously. The hard-nosed public choice version of our history mistakes technique for substance. Mainstream political science is open to all methods that illuminate the world of politics and public policy. It will not turn its back on the illumination we get from our older methodologies just because it now can employ the powerful tools of statistics and mathematics.

We have good grounds for professional pride in the development of political science in the last decades. And as Americans we have made important contributions to an age-old, world-wide effort to bring the power of knowledge to bear on the tragic dilemmas of the world of politics.

## About the Author

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## Note

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