Discipline and History: Political Science in the United States
James Farr and Raymond Seidelman, Editors
http://www.press.umich.edu/titleDetailDesc.do?id=9948
The University of Michigan Press, 1993

Recent Advances in Political Methods

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Recent History of Political Thinking

The purpose of this survey was to examine the development of methods of inquiry in recent years in the field of political science and of the related social sciences. It was also proposed to examine specifically the advance made in methods of the study of government in the United States. And finally it was proposed to sum up the principal advances in method in the study of government and the chief remaining obstacles.

An adequate analysis of recent political thought requires at the outset a look at the fundamental factors conditioning the intellectual processes of the time. Here if time permitted we might sketch the outlines of the larger social forces of the time, such as industrialism, nationalism, urbanism, feminism. We might examine the larger group interpretations as seen in the theories of the middle class, of the business group, or of the labor group, and we might scrutinize the rationalizations of the several race groupings of the time. Any thorough inquiry would necessitate some such wide-sweeping view of the forces that so profoundly affect the character and method of political thought. For present purposes it will be assumed, however, that such an inquiry has been made and that its results are fresh in the mind of the inquirer. It would also be desirable and necessary to examine the general intellectual technique of the time as reflected in philosophy, in religion, and in science. Obviously it is necessary for the purposes of such a paper as this to assume that this survey has already been made. We may then advance to a more minute inquiry into the methods of political thought in the narrower sense of the term. It will be necessary to advance with great rapidity in order to cover the ground within reasonable limits of space, but it is hoped that it may prove possible to sketch the main outlines of the development of political thinking in recent times adequately for the purposes of considering what methods are now open to the

Reprinted in a somewhat shortened version from *American Political Science Review* 17 (1923): 274–95. Also published in Merriam, *New Aspects of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), pp. 107–48. Copyright 1925, 1931 by The University of Chicago.

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use of political scientists, and what the relative advantages of these methods may be.

Methods in Related Fields

The development of methods of inquiry in related fields of social science is so intimately associated with progress in the study of government that advances in the various social disciplines will be briefly sketched at this point.

Politics has been placed under obligations to economics during the recent period of development. The classical and historical schools of the first part of the nineteenth century were continued and expanded, but new forms of economic speculation came into vogue. The climax of the classical school was found in the writings of the famous British economist, Alfred Marshall, who while in many ways eclectic in his theory may perhaps most accurately be characterized as a neo-classicist. The historical school found noted expounders, particularly among the German thinkers, in the writings of Wagner, Schmoller, and others. In the main, however, these thinkers continued the development of the classical and historical types of economic reasoning already begun in the first half of the nineteenth century.

In the meantime there appeared the Austrian school of economics evolving the doctrine of subjective value, or what might loosely be called psychological values. In the writings of Wieser, Menger, and Böhm-Bawerk, emphasis was shifted from the earlier forms of analysis to another aspect of the economic process which they called the subjective and which some others term psychological. Here we have an attempt to interpret economic values in terms of mental attitudes, suggesting but by no means realizing, the later developments of psychology.

Following the Austrian school came the study of economic motives, instincts, tendencies or traits, in short the inquiry into economic behavior. These inquiries were by no means complete, in fact they were characteristically inchoate. Their chief significance thus far is the emphasis laid upon another aspect of economic thinking. These scattered inquiries mark, as in the political field, the beginnings of another line of observation and reasoning.

The doctrine of the economic interpretation of history, developed in the middle of the nineteenth century by historians and economists was a subject of further analysis and application.[1] Loria, following Marx, undertook an interpretation of institutions in terms of economic interests and forces which, while not very skillfully executed, was symptomatic of general tendencies. The socialist group in general utilized the doctrine of the economic basis of politics for purposes of class propaganda. Generally speaking this emphasis

1. See E. R. A. Seligman, *The Economic Interpretation of History.*

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upon the economic factor in social life found wider and wider acceptance among the students of politics.

There was a pronounced tendency, however, to inquire into the social and psychological causes of events as well as the more strictly economic. It became evident that unless "economic" was used as an all-inclusive term covering the whole material environment it would be inadequate as an explanation of human behavior in all instances. While it was frequently asserted that men reason in terms of their economic interests, seldom was the question raised as to what determined their precise type of thought. Obviously the interpretation of the same economic interests might differ and even conflict, in which case the reason for the variation must be sought elsewhere than in the economic force itself and must lie in the forms or types of thinking. If out of exactly similar economic situations diametrically opposed conclusions or widely varying types of reasons were developed, it is clear that some other factor than the economic interest must have entered into the forces that produced the result.

The study of history during this period developed materials of great significance to political science, although its influence is not as notable as in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. At that time the historical method had swept the field both in jurisprudence and in economics. The German historical jurisprudence and the German national economics had illustrated in a striking fashion the influence of the historical method of inquiry. In this period the historical influence was unquestionably dominant, although toward the end of the era it tended to weaken and decline where it was supplanted by processes of actual observation and of psychological and statistical analysis.

History itself was profoundly influenced by the same set of forces that were gradually changing the character of the study of government.[2] The conflict between romanticism and positivism in this period was vigorously conducted but on the whole the idealists seemed to yield to the attacks of the historical realists or materialists. Buckle, Ranke, Lamprecht, and in America writers of the type of Turner, recognized the influence of mass, races, societies, economic and social tendencies in determining the course of historical events and they reached out with great avidity for illustrative material of different types. History ceased to be purely military or political, and tended to become either economic or social history, while in some instances historical materialism triumphed completely and the course of events was interpreted altogether in terms of the action and interaction of environmental influences.

From the point of view of political science, however, an immense

2. See G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century;* Croce, *Theory and History of Historiography,* especially chap. 7 on the "Historiography of Positivism."

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amount of institutional political history was uncovered and made available, and in the absence of a more definite technique on the part of the students of politics and in the absence of an adequate number of observers and students of government, the boundary lines between government and history were blurred, as indeed they must always overlap, and the technical writing of the history of politics was still in the hands of the historical group. Economists, however, tended to take over the evolution of economic thought and institutions as did the workers in the field of material science. The review of the scientific processes and forms was completely taken over by the technicians in the various scientific disciplines, as in the case of the history of mathematics, the history of chemistry, and the history of physics.

Significant advances were made in the last generation by the sociologists, who began the study of social organization and process in systematic fashion. While much of the work of Comte and Spencer was abandoned, there remained an inpulse toward the development of a science of society, which enlisted the sympathy of many students.[3] The work of Gumplowicz, Ratzenhofer, Simmel, Durkheim, Tarde, LeBon and, in America, Small, Ross, and Giddings, was a notable contribution to the understanding of the social process. For the sociologists a central problem was that of social control, to which political control was incidental and collateral, but inevitably the study of the one subject threw light upon the other. Of special significance was the attention directed by these students to the importance of social forces and social groups in the development and functioning of political forces, purposes, and institutions. Political scientists of the type of Bodin in the sixteenth and Gierke in the nineteenth century had directed attention to these factors, but they had been somewhat neglected and new interest and study of them was imperatively needed.

The sociologists did not arrive at a very definite social technology, but they struggled hard with the problem and made certain advances of note. The use of the social survey was an achievement of value in the understanding of the social process and tended to introduce more exact methods into the task of social measurement. The frequent use of the case method was also an accomplishment of great utility in the development of the more accurate study of social phenomena.

Of great significance in the methods of political science were the inquiries in the fields of anthropology, ethnology, and archaeology. Here were opened out wide vistas in the early development of the race and in the study of the characteristics of the various groups of mankind. In the field of quantitative measurement, anthropology made material progress, endeavoring to work

3. See H. A. Barnes, "The Contribution of Sociology to Political Science," *American Political Science Review* (15): 487; Albion W. Small, "Sociology," in *Encyclopaedia Americana*.

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out the characteristics of groups by means of physical standards and tests. Even anthropology, however, was often overlaid with race prejudice or with national influence or propaganda of an absurdly transparent type.

In the field of psychology progress was rapid. Advancing from purely philosophical inquiry to the standardized and comparable methods of observation, psychology tended to become an instrument of relative precision and uniformity in its application. It was no longer introspective and meditative alone, but developed instruments for making observation standardizable and comparable, and began to make possible a clearer understanding of human behavior, and of what had hitherto been charted as the great unknown in human nature. The significance of psychology for political inquiry was not at first fully appreciated, but in time the results of the psychologists began to be appreciated by the student of government and of social science. Political psychology began to be a subject of discussion and the terminology of psychology came into common although not accurate use in political inquiry. Psychology began also to find practical application to the problems of government.

In still broader fashion social psychology tried to solve the problem, dealing not merely with individuals but with the group, or with the intricate interrelations between groups. Here we approach closely the work of some of the sociologists who were interested in the same problem and undertook somewhat the same type of examination.

Methods of Political Inquiry

The philosophical treatment of politics, firmly established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, continued in recent time, but with less notable examples of logical method than in the eighteenth or earlier nineteenth century. John Stuart Mill's type of political and social reasoning had marked the end of an epoch of speculation among English thinkers, as had that of Hegel among the German philosophers.[4] Bosanquet was an apostle of neo-Hegelianism, while Hobhouse discussed the metaphysical theory of the state. Sorel, an engineer, and Cole, a mediaevalist, discussed political problems in philosophical style, while Bertrand Russell, the brilliant mathematician, essayed a theory of politics. The pragmatists, best represented by Dewey, definitely set about to effect a reconciliation between philosophy and affairs, and to develop a type of logic adequate to the demands of the situation. In the main, however, it is clear that the a priori speculation upon political questions was on the decline as compared with the thinking of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Many thinkers approached the problem of government from the juristic

4. See Mill's *Logic;* William Dunning, *A History of Political Theories*, part 3, chap. 4.

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point of view, and primarily their method was the logic of the law. But in many of the leading instances, this attitude was modified by other forms of inquiry. Thus Gierke was essentially a student of the genesis of political ideas. Maitland and Pollock were also deeply interested in the genetic processes of legal development. Von Jhering, with his far-reaching doctrine of social interests, the protection of which is the chief concern of the law, was deeply affected by the social studies of his time, and showed the profound influence of the social science of his day. Berolzheimer was imbued with the influence of social and economic forces in shaping the course of law and government. Duguit was likewise fundamentally affected by the rising study of social forces and of sociology in systematic form. Pound with his sociological jurisprudence is a modern illustration of the same general tendency. Jellinek with the theory of subjective public law and Wurzel with his projection theory are conspicuous examples of legal logic modified by psychology and by the consideration of social forces.

The study of criminology followed another line of advance, proceeding with Lombroso and his more conservative followers to adopt methods of measurement, to consider the influence of the environment and statistical analysis foreign to the speculations of the stricter juristic group, but enormously fruitful in ultimate result upon the nature of penology. In this respect these studies differed widely from the current type of legal speculation, placing itself upon the basis of scientific inquiry rather than upon precedent or the logic of the law.

A frequent way of approach to the study of politics has been the historical inquiry into the development of political institutions. The modern historical movement began as a reaction against the doctrinaire theories of the French revolutionary period, and swept through the domain of law and government. In recent times it has been a well-traveled road toward political conclusions and much of the energy in political research has been expended in this field. A survey of the literature of the time shows that the bulk of the output falls under this category. The process of development is employed for the purpose of illustrating broad movements and tendencies of political and social forces, and perhaps deducing certain lessons, morals, or laws from the examination of the past. Thus the previous development of the institution or the people is used to explain its present status or its probable future tendency. In these situations the history of political ideas or customs or forms or institutions becomes the background for the consideration of its present situation.

Another method has been that of comparison of various types of institutions, with a view of classifying, analyzing, discovering similarities and dissimilarities in them. Here we have a study of comparative government or law which, while using historical material, is not confined to an inspection of the genetic process, but employs contemporary material as a basis for political

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reasoning. Industrious researches of this type have been carried on in recent years both by jurists and by students of government. Kohler is a conspicuous example of this juristic group and Bryce of the other. Freeman, Seeley, Sidgwick, Hasbach, Laband, and many others have employed similar methods. In general, description and classification are developed in this way and certain useful comparisons and analogies are set up.

With the comparison of types there came to be a body of political science centering around the observation and description of actual processes of government, as distinguished from historical development or from comparisons of existing types of organization and structure. Much of Bryce's work fell under this head, as did that of Ostrogorski, Redlich, and Lowell. Bryce's *Modern Democracies,* Ostrogorski's *Democracy and the Organization of the Party System,* Lowell's *Government of England,* and Redlich's *Local Government in England* are examples of this method of studying government. Many monographic studies of the workings of particular institutions were made in various parts of the world, some decidedly descriptive and structural and some more noticeably analytical. Many of these studies were of course combined with historical inquiries and comparative and analogical researches.

Closely associated with the development of comparison of types and observation of processes was the form of investigation which came to be called the survey. This method of investigation appeared almost simultaneously in economics, government, and sociology. The essence of the survey was the actual observation of forces in operation, with an effort to measure these forces and to standardize some system of measurement. The survey owed much to the engineers and the accountants who contributed materially to its development. The engineer was of course the original surveyor laying out his lines and conducting his measurements with great accuracy and precision. Surveys of human behavior were also taken up by the industrial engineers especially in the form of the time and motion studies of the Taylor-Emerson type. Here we have an effort at precise measurement of human behavior in the shape of what was commonly called scientific management. At the outset these studies omitted the basic factor of psychology, but later on they reinstated this essential element in their calculations although not achieving complete success in this undertaking. The accountant also aided through the analysis of financial data leading to the creation of cost accounting, a process which led to an objective appraisal of human behavior or human services rendered for specific purposes. Thus the accountant and the engineer have given a sharper point to the observation of political forces and processes than it had ever had before.

The social survey was developed by the sociologists approaching the inquiry from another point of view. Much was undoubtedly due to the efforts of city workers of the type of Booth in London and many other scattered

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students. The classic type of large-scale survey employing modern methods was the Pittsburgh Survey, followed by many others, usually upon a smaller scale. The survey of course contained elements of advertising, or publicity, or even propaganda, as well as an element of scientific analysis, and sometimes the advertising features overtopped the scientific analysis, but in the main it directed attention specifically toward concrete factors which were observed objectively and as far as possible measured accurately, analyzed, and compared carefully.

The political survey developed most rapidly in the United States and especially in the urban communities. The large-scale losses and wastes in the expenditures in cities challenged attention, and specialized grafting was met by specialized analysis and inquiry for the purposes of community protection. These investigations while carried on by trained students of political science were usually conducted outside of the academic walls. The leader in this movement was the New York Bureau of Municipal Research followed by the many other similar agencies in Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and elsewhere. The political survey was the immediate observation of the operations of government combined with the effort to measure these operations as precisely as possible and to organize methods of comparison and conduct analysis of facts observed. This method was distinct from the juristic method or the historical method or the historical-comparative method in that it substituted actual observations of government in operation and made strenuous efforts toward precise measurement. These efforts were not always wholly successful, but at any rate they were movements in the direction of precision. Later, similar undertakings were set on foot by state governments and by the United States government. In England also national inquiries of the same character have been carried through on a considerable scale.

Another group of thinkers approached the study of government from the point of view of psychology, or of social psychology, bordering upon what might be called political psychology. Of these by far the most conspicuous was the English thinker, Graham Wallas, whose *Human Nature in Politics,* and the later and more systematic study, *The Great Society,* started a new line of political investigation and opened up new avenues of research. It is interesting to compare Wallas's chapters on material and method of political reasoning with the famous chapters in Mill's *Logic* on the logic of the moral sciences.

Wallas, originally a student of the classics, later interested in practical political activity, reacted against the consideration of government in terms of form and structure and undertook an interpretation in terms of human nature. This method of inquiry seemed to involve the development of a type of political psychology. In his *Great Society* Wallas considered

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political forces as organized around the three fundamental factors of intelligence, love, and happiness, on the basis of which he endeavored to rebuild a political theory and a political structure. In *Our Social Heritage* he opened out still other forms of subtle analysis of political processes, hitherto unexplored.

Wallas's work was brilliant, stimulating, and suggestive, rather than systematic. While he discussed the influence and importance of quantitative measurement of political phenomena, he did not make elaborate use of statistical data in his work; and while he continually emphasized the significance of a psychology of politics, he did not advance far in that direction. But on the whole his work was a decided variation from that of his predecessors or contemporaries, and his impetus to a new method was a notable one. An interesting comparison might be made between the method of John Stuart Mill, that of Lord Bryce, and that of Graham Wallas, all significant figures in the shaping of English political thought.

Walter Lippmann followed much the same method as his early instructor, Wallas, notably in his *Preface to Politics* and in his *Public Opinion*. Lippmann made wider use of contemporary psychological advances than did Wallas, however. A significant phase of his discussion is the analysis of organized intelligence in the concluding chapters of *Public Opinion*. This is a plea for the establishment of an intelligence bureau in the several departments of the government, and for a central clearing house of intelligence centers. Accompanying this is the suggestion for the articulation of these intelligence centers with the work of the professional students of government in the development of the problems of "terminology, of definition, of statistical technic, of logic."

There were also eclectic types of thinkers employing several of the methods just described. There was no writer who did not employ logic and history and comparison and analogy at various times. Even the most dogmatic lapsed into statistics at times, and the most statistically inclined developed philosophical attitudes somewhat inconsistent with the general position of the statistician. Differences in method were often differences in emphasis and in degree rather than in kind. Nevertheless the differences were appreciable and significant evidences of the general tendency in methods of political theory. Broadly speaking they indicate the following to be the chief lines of development of the study of political processes:

1. The a priori and deductive method down to 1850
2. The historical and comparative method, 1850–1900
3. The present tendency toward observation, survey, measurement, 1900–
4. The beginnings of the psychological treatment of politics

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Summary of Advances and Difficulties

From another point of view we may summarize the advances in the study of politics in the period since the vogue of the natural-law philosophy, roughly speaking during the last one hundred years, as:

1. The tendency toward comparison of varying types of political ideas, institutions, processes; toward analyzing similarities and dissimilarities.
2. The tendency toward closer scrutiny of economic forces in their relation to political processes, in some cases extending to the economic interpretation of all political phenomena. In this, the relative ease of quantitative measurement of certain economic facts greatly aided the process, in fact tending to an extension of economic beyond the ordinary usage of the term.
3. The tendency toward the consideration of social forces in their relation to political processes. At times this took the form of a social interpretation of all political facts.
4. The tendency toward closer examination of the geographical environment, and its influence upon political phenomena and processes.
5. The tendency toward closer consideration of a body of ethnic and biological facts, in their relation to political forces.
6. These influences taken together set up another relationship between political phenomena and the whole environment, both social and physical. Crude analogies of this kind had already been made by Bodin and Montesquieu, but these were by no means as fully developed as the later and far more minute and searching inquiries.
7. The tendency to examine the genetics of political ideas and institutions. This was the joint product of history and biology with their joint emphasis on the significance of historical growth and development and of the evolutionary theory of life. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, it has operated powerfully upon all political thought.
8. The joint tendency to combine a view of the environment (economic, social, physical) as a whole, with the genetic or evolutionary point of view may be said to have effected a profound and indeed almost revolutionary change in political thinking. Certainly this is true in comparison with the static doctrine of scholasticism, or with the absolutistic tendencies of the *Naturrecht* school of thought.
9. The tendency toward more general use of quantitative measurement of political phenomena. On the one side this took the form of statis-

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tics or the mathematical analysis of political processes. The great agency through which this was brought about was the census, which prepared great masses of material, for the use of the observer and the analyst. Two disciplines in particular were able to apply the quantitative methods with especial success. These were anthropology and psychology, in which domains notable advances were made in the direction of measurement.

10. Political psychology was foreshadowed but not at all adequately developed during this time.

These tendencies taken together may be said to constitute the most significant changes in the character of political thought down to the present day. Significant defects in the scientific development of the study of government are as follows:

1. Lack of comprehensive collections of data regarding political phenomena, with adequate classification and analysis
2. Tendency toward race, class, nationalistic bias in the interpretation of data available
3. Lack of sufficiently precise standards of measurement and of precise knowledge of the sequence of processes

Some fundamental difficulties in the scientific study of political processes are readily discerned:

1. The paradox of politics is that group discipline must be maintained in order to preserve the life of the group against internal and external foes; but that rigid discipline itself tends to destroy those vital forces of initiative, criticism, and reconstruction without which the authority of the group must die. There must be general conformity with the general body of rules and regulations laid down by the state, otherwise there is no advance upon anarchy; but there must also be reasonable room for freedom of criticism, for protest, for suggestion and invention within the group.
2. The difficulty of isolating political phenomena sufficiently to determine precisely the causal relations between them. We know that events occur, but we find so many alternate causes that we are not always able to indicate a specific cause. For the same reason we are unable to reach an expert agreement upon the proper or scientific policy to pursue and by the same logic we are unable to predict the course of events in future situations.
3. The difficulty of separating the personality of the observer from the

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social situation of which he is a part; of obtaining an objective attitude toward the phenomena he desires to interpret. This has been perhaps the chief stumbling block in the evaluation of the political process. Classes and races and all other types of groupings put forward as authoritative the so-called principles which are the outgrowths of their special interests, unconsciously perhaps interpreting their own interests in general terms of universal application. Thus the greater part of political theorizing on close analysis proves to be more or less thinly veiled propaganda of particular social interests. A theory may contain an element of truth or science in it, but the truth will be so colored by the interests of those who advance the particular theory that it has little genuine or permanent value. The opinions of the most eminent philosophers of a given race or nation regarding the merits of that race or nation are subject to heavy discount, almost without exception. The same thing may be said of the defenders of economic classes or of other types of groups. In the last hundred years, progress has been made in separating the student of politics from his local situation; but the livid propaganda of the war period and the attitude of nationalistic scientists toward each other indicates that after all relatively little progress has been made. Not only were political scientists often made propagandists, but they subordinated the work of all other scientists to their purpose, namely the advocacy and advancement of nationalistic claims.

4. The difficulty of obtaining the mechanism for accurate measurement of the phenomena of politics. Until relatively recent times, most estimates had been rough and uncritical. It is only since the development of modern statistics that anything like accuracy or precision in political fact material was possible. Even now obstacles apparently insuperable are commonly encountered. The development of adequate machinery for the survey of political forces is still ahead of us. Yet the development of mechanical devices for observation of facts and their analysis do not present difficulties that cannot be overcome with sufficient persistence, ingenuity, and imagination.
5. A fourth difficulty lies in the absence of what in natural science is called the controlled experiment. The student of physical science constructs a temporary hypothesis which he proceeds to verify if possible by processes of experiment, performed under his direction and control. These experiments he may reproduce at will until he is satisfied of the truth or error of his hypothesis. Such experiments, however, have seemed to lie beyond the reach of the student of political or social science. On the other hand, the living processes of politics are constantly going on, reproduced countless times at various

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> points, and in various stages of the world's political activity. It is possible to draw inferences and to verify these inferences by repeated observation in the case of recurring processes. This requires, however, the setting up of more subtle and precise machinery than has yet been invented. It is possible that the mechanism for this process may be found in the development of modern psychology or social psychology, which seems to hold the key to the study of types of conduct or behavior, or in statistical measurement of processes recurring over and over again in much the same form, and apparently in sequences that may be ferreted out, given sufficient acuteness and persistence.

These are not presented as final objectives or as insuperable difficulties. They present obstacles, but that they cannot be overcome we do not know; neither do we know that they can be overcome. We only know that we do not know whether it is possible or impossible to ascertain with scientific precision the laws that govern human behavior in the political field or in the social field.

Political Science in the United States

With reference to the development of political science in the United States, we may say that down to the middle of the nineteenth century there was no effort to systematize the study of government. There was the shrewdest kind of practical political wisdom or prudence exhibited by men of the type of Hamilton, Madison, Adams, and Jefferson, and on the juristic side by such masters as Marshall, Story, Webster, and Calhoun. But of organized scientific study there was little trace. To this we may make exception in John Adams's *Defense of the Constitutions of Government of the United States,* and Calhoun's *Disquisitions on Government.*[5]

The founder of the systematic study of government was Francis Lieber, a German refugee who came to America in 1827. His *Manual of Political Ethics* (1838–39) and his *Civil Liberty and Self Government* (1853) were the first systematic treatises on political science that appeared in the United States, and their influence was widespread. Lieber was a pupil of Niebuhr, the famous German historian, and was familiar with the German and continental developments of this period. After many vicissitudes, he became professor of politics in Columbia University. His characteristic achievement was the introduction of a form of historical and comparative method of inquiry into the field of political study.

5. Explanation of current types of political theory are seen in Nathaniel Chipman, *Principles of Government* (1793); F. Grimke, *Considerations on the Nature and Tendency of Free Institutions* (1848); Richard Hildreth, *The Theory of Politics* (1853).

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The next great impetus to organized political inquiry came with the foundation of the Johns Hopkins and Columbia schools of history and political science. The moving spirit in the Johns Hopkins movement for the scientific study of history was Herbert B. Adams, while the founder of the Columbia school of political science (1880) was John W. Burgess. Both of these men were trained in the German universities and transplanted into American soil the characteristic methods of their time. These groups laid the foundation for the modern system of historical and political research, basing them in large measure upon the development of what in Germany was called *Staatswissenschaft*. Out of this movement has grown a long series of monographic studies in the field of government and politics. The establishment of these research institutions was epoch-making in the evolution of the scientific attitude toward political inquiry in this country. They undertook the examination of comparative types of institutions, and also undertook inquiry into the genesis of political forms and types. They brought to the study of government for the first time an impartial and objective attitude, and they began the construction of certain mechanisms of inquiry. It may be said that they did not reckon sufficiently at the outset at least with economic and social forces underlying the evolution of political institutions, and that they did not fully appreciate the importance of what has come to be called political and social psychology. These developments were reserved indeed for a later period, in which there came to be a fuller understanding of economic and social influences, and of the more subtle psychological processes underlying and conditioning them.

In the meantime, a great forward step had been taken in the direction of scientific attainment through the expansion of the work of the United States census bureau, notably under the direction of the well-known economist, General Walker.[6] This work of governmental observation and reporting had been begun with the foundation of the government itself, or shortly thereafter, but for the first half century it made comparatively little progress. Under Walker, the dignity and importance of this highly significant type of large-scale observation was very greatly increased. Large masses of comparable facts assembled with some degree of precision were now attainable for students of government, and of the allied social sciences. The American Statistical Society, first established in 1839, was reorganized and rejuvenated in 1888, and gradually increased in numbers and in information. The statistical development in this country remained in a relatively undeveloped state, however, as is the case down to the present time. One of the major tasks of our political science is the survey of the possibilities of political statistics and the development of schedules for extending the domain of statistical information.

6. See John Koren, *History of Statistics*.

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The historical and comparative studies remained the dominant types in the United States for many years, and may be said to be in the ascendency at the present time. In this group belongs the bulk of the output of the scientific world.

At the end of the period came the beginning of the study of forces behind government as well as the forms and rules of government. The work of Lowell in this field was notable, but was interrupted by his transfer to another realm of activity. Like Bryce and Dicey he pointed the way to a different type and spirit of inquiry, involving the study of the forces conditioning governmental activity. Like Bryce he avowed his lack of faith in political principles of universal validity, but like Bryce he alluded on many occasions to the possibilities of political psychology, a domain however into which neither of them entered.

The work of Lippman, a pupil of Wallas, in the approach to a study of political psychology has already been discussed, but may be again considered in its local, American setting. Advancing from the side of government, he approaches the psychologist, moving forward for the position of the technical analyst of human traits. On the practical side, this is well illustrated by the recent establishment of the bureau of personnel research in the Institute of Government Research, with the union there of the psychologist and the expert in civil service.

Some notable developments are discussed in further detail in this report. Both of them deal with the modus operandi of fact collection and analysis. One of them was undertaken in connection with the work of the law-makers of the state of Wisconsin, under the leadership of Charles H. McCarthy.[7] Another developed in connection with the activities of municipal government, beginning with the work of the New York Bureau of Municipal Research, but later taken up in many other municipalities, and lately to the establishment of the Institute for Government Research, the Institute of Public Administration, and the Institute for Public Service. These movements are of very great significance, however, in the technical development of the study of government, in that they mark the beginning of an effort to collect fresh material regarding the actual operation of political forces, and also the beginning of a more specific relationship between the theory and the practice of government.

An acute English observer recently expressed the belief that in such projects as these the United States might be expected to blaze the trail toward the development of scientific social research in its highest form. The development of the survey, the tendency to observe and analyze political forces, the increasing appreciation of the statistical method, the faint beginnings of politi-

7. See *The Wisconsin Idea.*

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cal psychology, are all significant advances in the development of political technique.

A notable variation in the general style of study was the application of the doctrine of the economic interpretation of history to certain phases of American political development. This was seen notably in Beard's work on the *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution,* and *Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy.* Seligman's penetrating critique of the economic interpretation of history was a notable contribution to the methodology of the time. The significance of these studies lies in the fact that they indicated a tendency to go below the surface of the forms of government and politics, and to examine more ultimate factors and forces influencing the situation.

Another notable development was the study of the American frontier by Turner, in which the influence of the pioneer environment upon the course of history was portrayed. The spirit of revolt against the current methods of historical writing was most effectively represented by James H. Robinson, who broke through the conventional lines of historical inquiry, first in his volume on *The New History,* later in his *The Mind in the Making.* Robinson challenged the traditional purposes of history, writing with particular reference to the undue attention given to political and governmental institutions. In his later work, he advanced a step farther and challenged the validity of the current methods of historical and social research. These protests seem to mark the beginnings of a new type of historiography similar to the earlier one in its emphasis upon documentation but leading out into broader ranges of what may be termed for lack of a better phrase, social inquiry. Of deep significance was Shotwell's *History of History* (1922).

The beginning of the study of sociology in the United States also influenced the course of the systematic study of government.[8] The sociological studies seemed at first somewhat vague and sentimental, but as time went on became more specific, concrete, and more methodical. In the works of Lester F. Ward, the pioneer of sociology in this country, and later Giddings, Small, Ross, Cooley, and others, the sociological point of view and the sociological method became more and more widely influential. Small emphasized particularly the importance of what he called the "social point of view," by which he meant the consideration of all the social factors in a given situation, as distinguished from the isolated or exclusive consideration of economic factors or political factors alone. Ross, particularly in his work on social control, seemed to veer over toward the study which came to be called social psychology. Giddings was at first interested in the development of the fundamental factor which he called "consciousness of kind" and later in efforts to introduce a degree of mathematical accuracy and precision into the measurement of social phenomena.

8. See Albion W. Small, *Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States.*

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The development of political economy was also of significance in relation to political science. Its chief types of inquiry followed the direction of the classical political economy and the lines of inquiry laid down by the historical school. There were notable evidences, however, of the development of statistical method in economics, even taking the shape of mathematical economics; and there were the beginnings of the study of the psychology underlying economic activities. There was also seen as in the study of government the tendency toward actual observation of economic processes, developing into types of surveys of sets of economic phenomena. Toward the end of the period came the powerful tendency toward vocational training for industry, and toward the development of business or industrial research. Broadly speaking, economics and politics seemed to follow parallel lines of advance, from the a priori method of the classical political economy and the natural law school, to historical and comparative studies of economics or of politics, to statistical inquiries and actual surveys, and on to the study of the psychological bases of economic or political activity as the case might be.

It is needless to say that the question of the development of methods will not be settled merely by discussion of the ideally best way of approaching the subject, but rather by the diffusion of the spirit of systematic, intensive, protracted, and sustained inquiry. We are still very far from exact political science, and there must be many experiments and probably many failures before there are many signal successes. The willingness of many men and women to devote long years of arduous and unremitting toil to the detailed study of political problems is a prerequisite to achievement, and even industry and devotion alone will not prove adequate if they slip into the ruts of scholasticism and only wear deeper the grooves of traditional thought. Experience shows that it is easy to fall into industrious but sterile scholarship. Imagination on the one hand and precision on the other, are essential to advancement in this field as in other departments of science. We must have both enthusiasm and tools, often a difficult combination, since the toolmakers may lack vision and the visionaries ignore the precise mechanisms or specific attainment. The political scientist must be something of a utopian in his prophetic view and something of a statesman in his practical methods.

Methods of approach to politics may easily be the most sterile subject of inquiry, if not followed by actual trials and tests. The discussion of methods has its greatest value as a by-product of specific undertakings, as an analysis of the strength and weakness of various going tasks of scientific political inquiry, in connection with actual pieces of investigation. Methodological discussion alone will not develop much in the way of scientific advance.

On the other hand scientific progress is not likely to be realized without persistent scrutiny and searching examination of fundamental methods. Like all other sciences, politics constantly faces the necessity of reviewing and

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revising its methods. Human nature may not change or may change only slowly, but the knowledge of human nature is advancing swiftly, and the understanding of its processes is developing with great rapidity. The political side of human nature is equally capable of more acute analysis and its processes may likewise be made the subject of more scientific study than ever before in the history of government. Never were there greater possibilities than now in the direction of accurate and scientific knowledge of the processes of political control; and never was the student's responsibility greater for the development of objective and analytical methods of observation of these processes, and for the minute understanding of the nature of the laws that govern their action and must control their adaptation and reconstruction.

It is easy to scoff at the possibilities of scientific research in the field of government, but unless a higher degree of science can be brought into the operations of government civilization is in the very gravest peril from the caprice of ignorance and passion, playing with the high explosives of modern scientific invention. Without the development of a higher type of political science in the fields of secondary education, in the organization of public intelligence, and of the technical knowledge of human nature, we may drift at the mercy of wind and waves or of the storm when we might steer an intelligent course. Social science and political science are urgently needed for the next great stage in the advancement of the human race. As custodians of the political science of our time, the responsibility rests upon us to exhaust every effort to bring the study of government in its various stages to the highest possible degree of perfection, to exhaust every effort to obtain effective knowledge of political forces, to bring to bear every resource of science and prudence at our command.