

Introduction

Nearly a quarter-century has passed since APSA President David Easton announced that “a new revolution is under way in American political science, . . . the post-behavioral revolution.” The discipline, Easton argued, needed this new revolution because “the last revolution—behavioralism” had been overtaken by social and political crises in the public world. These crises had revealed how inattentive political science had been to questions of relevance, action, and “the brute realities of politics.” Easton was by no means counseling or even prophesying “an end to political science,” as did other members of the discipline at the time. Rather, he hoped to clarify the normative premises and social responsibilities of political science, as well as to encourage a speculative imagination and even a few “outrageous hypotheses” about politics of the kind that Robert Lynd had called for thirty years earlier in *Knowledge for What?*¹ Whether all of this has been realized over the course of the last two decades is open to doubt. But we certainly have had no other revolution since then. We are still in a postbehavioral era.

The idea of a *postbehavioral* political science reinforces the historical importance of behavioralism in shaping the discipline’s twentieth-century identity. The idea of a *postbehavioral* political science underscores a sense of the irretrievability of the behavioral past and a more generalized consciousness of temporality and change. It is therefore not surprising that there has been such a revival of interest in recent years in the disciplinary history of political science (as outlined in the General Introduction above). Moreover, *postbehavioralism* also evokes the sense of anxiety and crisis that brought it about in the first place. For many in the discipline, there is the feeling that the last two decades have been marked by widespread “uneasiness . . . not of the body, but of the discipline’s soul.”² Others have chimed in that the discipline is adrift, disenchanted, afflicted with tragedy, or alienated from its roots.³

1. David Easton, “The New Revolution in Political Science,” *American Political Science Review* 63 (1969): 1051–61; Marvin Surkin and Alan Wolfe, eds., *An End to Political Science* (New York: Basic Books, 1970); and Robert Lynd, *Knowledge for What? The Place of Social Science in American Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1939).

2. Gabriel Almond, “Separate Tables: Schools and Sects in Political Science,” *PS* 21 (1988): 838.

3. See, among others, Heinz Eulau, “Drift of a Discipline,” *American Behavioral Scientist*

Amidst these unsettling diagnoses of the discipline, postbehavioral political scientists would seem to agree that the discipline was deeply altered by the political events, social movements, and cultural turmoil of the 1960s. Urban riots, student protests against the Vietnam War, and the rise of feminism, among other things, sparked a reaction that was virtually without precedent in the discipline. Never before had the profession's organizational hierarchy and the intellectual assumptions governing research been subject to so much debate and contention, nor its legitimacy and public role so questioned.

Conflict about theoretical orientations, the status of science, the meaning of professionalism, and the social composition of the discipline led to divisive debates. Sometimes the debates took organizational form, as in the challenge by the Caucus for a New Political Science to "the establishment" candidates for office at the 1969 APSA meetings, over which Easton presided. More often the debates were in print, as in the publication in 1970 of *Politics and Community: Dissenting Essays in Political Science* and the formation of a new journal of political criticism, *Politics and Society*.⁴

Yet the intense period of debate between critics and defenders of the American political order—as well as of science, objectivity, pluralism, and quantification in the discipline—was actually quite short-lived. By the mid-1970s, postbehavioral political science settled down to the less confrontational enterprise of refining research programs and developing new theories and methods. Older approaches and philosophies, once the subject of behavioral attack, were recast and reintroduced. Thus, despite all the initial ferment and the lingering anxiety, postbehavioralism has turned out to provide an intellectual ambience for a great deal of scholarly production that most agree is not governed by some overall purpose or mission. Scholars go their own ways, do their own things, or sit at their own separate tables.

In the subfield of American politics alone, the range of recent scholarly production has proved to be somewhat daunting. Behavioral political science was often attacked for its political irrelevance; in the last two decades students of public policy and political economy have created a veritable industry. Behavioralism was scorned for its scientism; today, scientific claimants exist alongside many political philosophers who question the very idea of a genuine science of politics. Behavioralism was rejected for its attachments to a liberal status quo; today, the ideological range of political science has broadened to give greater voice to conservatives, radicals, and feminists. Behavioralism

21 (1977): 3–10; David Ricci, *The Tragedy of Political Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); and the essays by David Easton and Raymond Seidelman below.

4. Sanford Levinson and Philip Green, eds., *Power and Community: Dissenting Essays in Political Science* (New York: Pantheon, 1970); also see Surkin and Wolfe, eds., *An End to Political Science*, and Theodore Lowi, "The Politicization of Political Science," *American Politics Quarterly* 1 (1973).

was attacked for its ahistorical neglect of the state; today, ventures linking historical inquiry with rational-choice theory are increasingly published, as is a “new institutionalism” that echoes many of the discipline’s prebehavioral concerns and preoccupations.⁵

The six essays in this section present different historical reflections on the discipline. They remember, and enter into, some of the more important recent debates in political science, including those that brought about post-behavioralism in the first place and those that intimate what departures we are presently undertaking.

In their effort to characterize the postbehavioral present, the essays by David Easton and Raymond Seidelman offer contrasting overviews of the history of political science. In his essay, originally an address to the Shanghai Academy, Easton argues that behavioralism represents the third stage in the discipline’s development, having superceded the formal and traditional stages. It marked “the central transformation of political science in this century” because it supplied “theoretical coherence” to a discipline that had lacked it since its inception. Yet behavioralism was subsequently and rightly taken to task for its political quietism, its “indifference to moral judgments,” and its “profound forgetfulness about the history of political systems.” Post-behavioralism has absorbed these criticisms, Easton argues. It has permitted healthy dialogue between competing points of view and a “more relaxed,” less positivistic view of science that promotes “no single, fixed kind of intellectual product.” This genuine advantage is nonetheless counterbalanced by another: that “there are now so many approaches to political research that political science seems to have lost its purpose.” It is as yet unclear, therefore, what new directions and departures the discipline will take.

Seidelman offers a more sharply critical rendition of the mood prevalent in this postbehavioral era, even as he intimates considerable praise of the prebehavioral past. He argues that the discipline ought not to be judged internally, that is, by its ideas and theories alone. Rather, its historical claims as a savior and helpmate to liberalism require an external evaluation, that is, by the discipline’s public political ambitions and its attempted transformation of political conditions and events. Since the discipline traditionally sought to be a science *of* and *for* liberal politics, Seidelman argues that any meth-

5. Examples of new work are numerous but would certainly include, for the new institutionalism, Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1982); for public choice, Kenneth Shepsle, “Studying Institutions: Some Lessons from the Rational Choice Approach,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1 (1989); for political economy, Charles Lindblom, *Politics and Markets* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); and for comparative history and the state, Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1976), and Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

odological or theoretical program, including behavioralism and its successors, ought to be judged in these demonstrably political terms. To Seidelman, the initial postbehavioralist critique of the past did recapture the discipline's important reformist identity. But many postbehavioralists have by now largely rejected what he calls "reform political science." Only a few others bear the current burdens of its history.

In essays originally published ten years ago, Charles E. Lindblom and William H. Riker offer further contrasting views about the discipline's past and its postbehavioral condition. They also display competing theoretical and historiographical postures about what political scientists have done and ought to be doing when they judge the present debates in terms of those of the past.

In his 1981 presidential address to the APSA, Lindblom criticizes what he takes to be the insularity of contemporary political science from "radical" perspectives about the nature of political power and democracy in America. The works most intent on their scientific objectivity and sophisticated methodology, as, for example, studies of political socialization, are the "most vulnerable to the charge from radical political science that we have without evidence fallen into a complacent view of the liberal democratic process." Lindblom refuses to side with the radical critics of mainstream political science because of their "questionable methods." But he does argue that the discipline's historical identity has been undermined by the propensity of mainstream scholars to say conventional and even "silly things," and by its unwillingness to take on a greater dose of radical thought.

Riker is not interested in "criticism or philosophic speculation" but in the advance of science. Close attention to the methodological and theoretical program of rational-choice theory can make good the claims of science and also obviate the sorts of claims that Lindblom makes. In evidence, Riker offers the scientific history of Maurice Duverger's proposition that "the simple-majority single-ballot system favors the two-party system." Over the course of a century of patient research on the explanatory foundations of what has become known as "Duverger's law," political scientists displayed "increasing scientific sophistication" and have now demonstrated the scientific power of models based on individual rational choice. In Riker's view, rational-choice theory holds out the promise in this postbehavioral era of vindicating the discipline's historical aspirations to the scientific accumulation of knowledge.

Many postbehavioral critiques of mainstream political science stress the absence of systematic attention to issues of race, class, and gender in the discipline's history. Helene Silverberg's new essay chronicles and criticizes some of the ways in which feminism and gender have been incorporated into political science analysis in the last twenty-five years. A "behavioralist compromise" between feminists and political scientists brought about a substantial

increase in published research on women's political behavior and on the relationship between the sexes. However, the feminist revolution must press beyond this sort of research strategy by analyzing gender, which Silverberg understands as a "category of analysis" that "provides a theoretical lens through which the inequalities of power between men and women can be seen to structure (and be structured by) the organization of political, social, and economic life." A compromise with the "new institutionalism," she argues, is the most promising way for feminist scholars in the empirical subfields of political science to progress.

Theodore J. Lowi's recent (1991) presidential reflections on the discipline's past and present complete this section as well as the volume as a whole. Lowi argues that political science's disciplinary identity was originally shaped by the fact that it emerged before the growth of a large and powerful nation state. But as the American state transformed itself into a "Leviathan," political science transformed itself into a "dependent variable" of the state it studied and still studies. To Lowi, American political scientists have therefore "become what we study." In the postbehavioral present, this has meant, among other things, that the language of economics has come to predominate in political science, just as it has in the discourse of the state. Yet Lowi sees a way out of "becoming what we study," and that is by rediscovering "the satisfaction in having made a good guess about what makes democracy work and a good stab at improving the prospect of rationality in human behavior." Here, then, is an opportunity—expressed repeatedly by political scientists during the discipline's history—for us now "to meet our own intellectual needs while serving the public interest."

Taken together, these essays by no means exhaust the current range of postbehavioral political science or the ways it remembers the history of the discipline. Yet there is sufficient range to appreciate the point behind Lowi's observation that, today, "there is not one political science but several, and each is the adaptation to what it studies." This would appear to be the state—or, rather, the states—of the discipline for some time to come.