SCIENCES OF POLITICS
An International Conference Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Founding of the "American Political Science Association" at Tulane University on December 30th 1903.

Place: Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118, USA.
Date: January 3-5 or January 10-12, 2004.

Conference Description:

The location, timing and theme of the proposed conference are each suggested by its occasion: the 100th anniversary of the founding of the American Political Science Association (APSA). On December 30th, 1903, a group of 25 distinguished American economists, historians, lawyers, sociologists and other university educators met in the Howard Tilton Library of Tulane University to found a "national association that should comprehend within its sphere of interest the entire field of Political Science." Such marked the beginning of APSA, the oldest,[1] largest and undoubtedly the most influential of all existing, national political science associations.[2] On the occasion of APSA's centenary, an equally distinguished, similarly interdisciplinary group of scholars will meet at Tulane University to reflect on the character, presuppositions, past achievements and future prospects of the "scientific" study of politics. This time, however, the group will be as much international as American and its analyses of "sciences of politics" will be culturally and historically much broader than has usually been the case.

One of the most obvious features of contemporary American political science is that it is undergoing yet another of its recurrent redefinitions of its own identity. The proposed conference will address the central issues involved in this current identity crisis (if that is not too strong a phrase) but it will do so by setting these issues within different contexts from those which at present dominate discussions. American political science may be a century old but attempts to establish a science of politics as a university discipline go back more than seven centuries.[3] What can we learn (and hence what should we teach)

[1] APSA was founded in 1903 and the Canadian Political Science Association followed in 1913. Some national associations, at least the Finnish and the Indian, were founded in the 1930s. But most existing associations seem to have been created after the Second World War. For example, the French AFSP was founded in 1949. When the International Political Science Association (IPSA) was established in 1949, the founding members were the American, Canadian, French and Indian national associations. The British Political Studies Association was founded in 1950, as was the Dutch Political Science Association. The German DVPW was established in 1951. The Hellenic PSA was founded in 1959, the Danish PSA in 1965, the Chilean in 1966, the Austrian ÖGPW in 1971, the African PSA in 1973, the Italian PSA in 1973, the Argentinean in 1983. At present, IPSA has between 42 and 44 national political science associations as collective members (depending upon which of IPSA's current web pages one reads).

[2] There is a brief official, documentary account of the APSA founding in: Proceedings of the American Political Science Association (Lancaster, PA: Wickersham Press, 1905), pp. 1-17. The quotation is on p. 9. The relevant archival material stored in Tulane's Howard Tilton Memorial Library will be on display during the conference in the original Howard Tilton Library Building where the 1903 foundation meeting took place.

[3] The best, most methodologically sophisticated, recent study of the history of political science as a university discipline is Wilhelm Bleek, Geschichte der Politikwissenschaft in Deutschland (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2001). An equally sophisticated study of British political science from the 18th to the mid-20th

about the identity of political science by setting the experience of the last hundred years within the context of the experience of the last seven hundred years? Is there a continuous, evolving, universal history of political science or are there several discrete and significantly different "sciences of politics"? What are the relationships between earlier forms of political science and later ones? Are the presuppositions, institutional forms, successes and failures of political science peculiarly embedded in Western cultures or are they more universal, more global? What have been the consequences for the identity of political science of the attempts over the past two centuries to export them or transplant them to non-Western cultures? What, in particular, have been the consequences for the identity of political science of the global domination since the Second World War of American-style political science? These are the main questions evoked by APSA's centenary and by the current identity crisis in American political science. Some further clarification of these questions may be helpful.

It is clear to all concerned that American political science is once again not in the best of health. The so-called "Perestroika movement," the latest in a series of "revolts" going back to the foundation of APSA itself, has led to widespread debate and reflection on the association's organizational structure, purposes and performance. The main Perestroika criticisms are familiar, in part because they repeat longstanding, unresolved disagreements among political scientists about the nature of political science. Also, in one form or another, they are familiar because they reflect the contrary pulls of normative and positive studies, understanding versus explanation, hermeneutics versus scientism, art versus science, and so on, tensions which are characteristic of the history of all of the modern social sciences.[4] Under top-heavy leadership, according to the Perestroika critique, APSA has become increasingly unrepresentative of its membership and undemocratic in its activities. As the discipline of political science has become increasingly fragmented into specialized sub-disciplines, so the leadership has privileged and promoted just one set of specialisms above all others. Mere "technicisms"[5] (statistical analysis, formal modeling and rational choice) have pushed all other sub-

---

centuries is Stefan Collini, Donald Winch and John Burrow, That Noble Science of Politics: A study in nineteenth-century intellectual history (Cambridge: CUP, 1983). The focus of the first, of course, is on change and continuity in the discipline of political science in Central Europe. From that perspective, American political science (heavily influenced by German emigrants working in borrowed Germanic institutions) from say Franz Lieber to the late 20th century is essentially just the "missing chapter" in the continuity of German Politikwissenschaft. The latter focuses on British political science and from that perspective American political science was a very late comer indeed and none too significant at that.

[4] See, for example, the articles collected in: "Shaking Things Up? Thoughts about the Future of Political Science," PS: Political Science & Politics, 35, 2 (June 2002), pp. 177-205. For recent critiques of the social sciences in terms of normativity and positivity, reasonableness and rationality, Aristotle versus "physics envy," see: S. Toulmin, Returrn to Reason (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2001) and B. Flyvbjerg, Making Social Science Matter (Cambridge: CUP, 2001). For an op-ed attack on contemporary American sociology in similar terms to the substantive "Perestroika" attack on American political science, see: Orlando Patterson, "The Last Sociologist," New York Times (Sunday, May 19, 2002), WK 15. For a telling contrast between the public images (projected and perceived) of contemporary American political science and German political science, see the report of the speech by the current chair of the German Political Science Association (DVPW) on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Political Science Department in Tübingen University: "Warum gibt es keinen Politik-Galilei?" Schwäbisches Tagblatt (July 6, 2002).

[5] This dreadful neologism is deployed by Gregory J. Kasza, "'Technicism' Supplanting Disciplinarity among Political Scientists," PS: Political Science & Politics, 33, 4 (December 2000), pp. 737-8.

disciplines (like area studies and policy studies) to the periphery of American political science. These sub-disciplines have been forced to join political philosophy, political theory and the history of political ideas on the margins of political science. They have been forced, that is, to join the victims of earlier behavioralist and post-behavioralist revolts in American political science some 50 years ago. The costs, according to the internal opponents of contemporary American political science, have been immense. First, the rather grand aim to produce a universal science of politics which inspired so many earlier political scientists has been reduced to a mere parochialism. For the presuppositions of formal modelers, rational choice theorists and statistical analysts are supposedly such as render their work of relevance only to the cultures and political practices of advanced industrial and post-industrial societies, and in particular to the United States of America. Second, the rarified technicalities of the now dominant sub-disciplines render them incomprehensible to ordinary, educated readers. Third, even on those rare occasions when they can be made comprehensible, they do not address issues of any significance to past or present political practice or to current public policy. So fourth, in emulating the supposed "scientific" successes of modern economics, the dominant modes of contemporary American political science have paid the same price. Gains in scientific rigor have been achieved at the cost of relevance and applicability to everyday political concerns. Hence, so it is claimed, the lamentable lack of public interest in contemporary political scientists as "public intellectuals."[6]

Criticisms of these kinds and responses to them are to be encountered everywhere from opinion editorials in the daily press to articles in the specialized, professional journals. Minor changes have been instituted and more are no doubt on the way. One change, in particular, is of special relevance to the proposed conference. Acknowledging that APSA has become dominated by too narrow a conception of political science, the new editor of the American Political Science Review (APSR) recently rejected the view that political science is "a set or system of rules" or a single, unified, scientific "branch of learning." Instead, he claims,

> political science is a crazy quilt of borrowings from history, philosophy, law, sociology, psychology, economics, public administration, policy studies, area studies, international studies, civics, and a variety of other sources. Any real coherence in political science exists only at the broadest conceptual level, in the form of our widely shared interest in power, the "authoritative allocation of values for society," "who gets what, when, how," and the like.[7]

This is arguably a more appropriate conception of political science for the editor of one of the world's leading professional journals than previous, more narrow conceptions derived from the self-understanding and practices of just one (or one set) of the many sub-disciplines of political science. It is also, arguably, closer to the original conception

[6] The first point is made in Rogers M. Smith, "Should we make Political Science more of a Science or more about Politics?" PS: Political Science & Politics, 35, 2 (June 2002), pp. 199-201. For a recent contribution to the debate about the relationship between public intellectuals and contemporary political science, see: Andrew Stark, "Why Political Scientists Aren't Public Intellectuals," PS: Political Science & Politics, 35, 3 (September 2002), pp. 577-9.

[7] Lee Sigelman, "Notes from the (New) Editor," APSR, 96, 1 (2002), p. viii.

of the science of politics shared by the founders of APSA in 1903. But it is still highly controversial. Many will regard it as a step back to a period of incoherence and pre-scientific rigor.[8] Others will regard it as not stepping back far enough, as failing to return to the time when the academic study of politics was not institutionally separated from the scientific study of economics, society and law.[9] Still others will see in the unquestioned belief that the essence of politics is "power," the "authoritative allocation of values" and "who gets what, when and how" a commitment to culturally circumscribed, fundamentally American conceptions of the nature of politics and political science, conceptions not shared by some other cultures and traditions of political study.[10] And, finally, no-one is likely to be satisfied with the idea that political science is a "crazy quilt" of anything, let alone mere "borrowings" from other disciplines and fields of study.

It seems, then, that the identity of political science is as much in dispute today as it ever has been during the hundred years since the founding of APSA. This is not to deny, of course, the considerable gains in scientific rigor that have accompanied the establishment of national associations, increasing professionalization and increasing specialization. But neither is it to exaggerate the appropriateness of many of the Perestroika demands for the reintegration of history, philosophy, public policy, area studies and the rest into the mainstream of the university study of political science. No doubt, the current reforms in the organization and publishing priorities of APSA and the APSR will do something to alleviate the practical frustrations of those who currently feel excluded or unfairly treated. But such reforms only touch the surface of the issue of the identity of political science as a university discipline. A more direct and sustained enquiry is necessary to address the

---

[8] For example: Stephen Earl Bennett, "'Perestroika' Lost: Why the Latest 'Reform' Movement in Political Science Should Fail," PS: Political Science & Politics, 35, 2 (June 2002), pp. 177-9.

[9] Representatives of the neo-Marxist "New Political Economy" would be a case in point. But it is also worth noting here that the founders of APSA were committed to a conception of political science in the service of better understanding law. Their six main subdivisions of "the entire field of Political Science" were comparative legislation, international law and diplomacy, constitutional law, administrative law, historical jurisprudence and political theory. These were slightly modified during the foundation meeting, potentially very significantly, with the replacement of "historical jurisprudence" by "politics". Unfortunately, no record seems to remain of the discussions that led to this change and hence it is unclear what they meant by this last category and how it was related to the other five. See: Proceedings of the American Political Science Association (1905), 11, pp. 14-5.

[10] For these criticisms, together with evidence of their continual recurrence in the history of the discipline since the early 20th century, there is an enormous volume of literature. See, for example: Rogers M. Smith, "Science, Non-Science, and Politics," in: Terrence J. McDonald (ed.), The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 119-59 and "Still Blowing in the Wind: The American Quest for a Democratic, Scientific Political Science," in: Thomas Bender and Carl E. Schorske (eds.), American Academic Culture in Transformation: Fifty Years, Four Disciplines (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1998), pp. 271-305. For a wide-ranging critique of the essentially American presuppositions of American social and political sciences, see: Tony Andréani, Un être de raison: critique de l'homo oeconomicus (Paris: Éditions Syllepse, 2000). For an historical account centering on American "exceptionalism," see: Dorothy Ross, The Origins of American Social Science (Cambridge: CUP, 1992). For earlier British critiques, very different from one another but both hostile to American political science, see: Bernard Crick, The American Science of Politics: Its Origins and Conditions (London: Routledge, 1959) and M. Oakeshott, "The study of 'politics' in a university," (1961) in Timothy Fuller (ed.), Michael Oakeshott: Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1991), pp. 184-218. For German controversies and criticisms of American Political Science, see: Bleek, Geschichte der Politikwissenschaft in Deutschland, esp. chaps. 8-10.

identity issue and the proposed conference is designed to contribute to this more sustained effort.

To be sure, over the past two decades or so, much relevant work has been published. This work ranges, for example, from analyses of the current malaise (like Gabriel Almond's A Discipline Divided) to historical surveys and assessments of the character of American political science (like those of Rogers Smith, James Farr, Raymond Seidelman, Dorothy Ross, David Easton, Jack Gunnell and many others).[11] These writings offer indispensable help in attempts to explain the identity of American political science as an academic discipline. But they are all overwhelmingly written, so to speak, from the inside. They all offer more or less insider accounts of American political science. What they gain in attention to the details of change and continuity within the dominant strands of 19th and 20th century university teaching of political science, they lose in diversity of cultural perspectives and breadth of historical vision. The proposed conference will adopt these broader perspectives.

From these culturally different and historically broader perspectives, practically all of the recent writings on the discipline of political science, including self-styled "disciplinary histories," suffer from two major limitations. First, they assume that the terms "American political science" and the "disciplined study of political science" are interchangeable. Second, they presuppose that the disciplined study of political science at universities coincides, historically, with those 19th and 20th century movements which issued in the establishment of modern departments of political science and with the foundation of national political science associations.[12] But these assumptions are highly questionable.

It is, at least, undeniable that the study of politics at universities is practically as old as universities themselves. The term scientia politica was employed by St. Thomas Aquinas in his commentary on Aristotle's Politics and it gained wide currency in the 13th and 14th centuries.[13] It denoted a branch of disciplined university study, the foundation of distinctive political science departments within arts faculties in universities like Aquino in southern Italy, Paris, Cracow, Prague, Vienna, Heidelberg, Leipzig and Erfurt.[14] The

[11] In addition to the works cited in the previous footnote, see, for example: Gabriel Almond, A Discipline Divided (London: Sage, 1990); David Easton, J. Gunnell and L. Graziano (eds.), The Development of Political Science: A Comparative Survey (London: Routledge, 1991); James Farr and R. Seidelman (eds.), Discipline and History: Political Science in the United States (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993); J. Gunnell, The Descent of Political Theory (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993); David Easton, J. Gunnell and M.B. Stein (eds.), Regime and Discipline: Democracy and the Development of Political Science (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1995); John S. Dryzek, James Farr and Stephen T. Leonard (eds.), Political Science in History: Research Progress and Political Traditions (Cambridge: CUP, 1995).

[12] So deeply ingrained are these assumptions sometimes that they become the organizing principles for university courses which make the breathtaking claim that the university study of political science was invented in the United States. See, amongst several examples, a course currently being offered for graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Reno, Nevada, entitled "History of the Discipline" at: http://www.unr.edu/artsci/polisci/syllabus_psc-781.htm Students learn that "a new form of government was invented" in the United States and "there arose a discipline to study this government, Political Science. This new discipline sought to bring science to government for the purpose of progress." Etc.

[13] For example: A.P. d'Entrèves (ed.), Aquinas: Selected Political Writings (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), p. 196.

[14] Antony Black, Political Thought in Europe 1250-1450 (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), pp. 20-24; Bleek, Geschichte der Politikwissenschaft in Deutschland, pp. 43-46.

late 16th and early 17th centuries witnessed both a flourishing market in political science textbooks and the establishment of chairs in ethics and political science (e.g. in Jena), history and political science (e.g. in Altdorf) and political science alone (e.g. in Leiden).[15] To be sure, this first kind of political science was essentially neo-Aristotelian but it was far from monolithic. Political science, along with ethics and economics, was a branch of practical philosophy and its practitioners justified their activities in part in terms of both the advice they were able to offer to rulers and the practical, public administrative skills they taught their students.[16] Both in aspiration and in fact, then, the first political scientists in European universities were public intellectuals of a sort. But they were a very varied lot all the same with the thrust of their questions, answers and advice differing according to whether they were Catholic Aristotelians (like the Jesuit Adam Contzen), Lutheran Aristotelians (like Henning Arnisaeus), Calvinist Aristotelians (like Johannes Althusius or Batholomäus Keckermann) or Neostoic Aristotelians (like Justus Lipsius).[17]

So when Thomas Hobbes in the mid-17th century developed his very different "science of politics" and recommended that it be "taught in the Universities" instead of all those productions by "the Hogs of ARISTOTLE's Sty,"[18] his move accorded perfectly well with the then current state of political science education in European universities. It was the kind of move (in tone as well as in substance) which has become very familiar in the subsequent history of the discipline of political science. Hobbes, of course, was only partly successful in transforming the concept and, with it, the identity of political science. Both change and continuity characterized the discipline of political science in the period following the publication of Hobbes's works.[19] Indeed, both change and continuity must characterize the transformation of any such identity over time until change of such a radical nature occurs that it becomes necessary to speak of the replacement of one identity by another.

Some possible candidates for such a radical transformation in the identity of political science do, of course, exist. The rise of political arithmetic, statistical methods and political economy in the 17th and 18th centuries that accompanied the commercial transformation of European states is a case in point.[20] So, too, are those 18th century developments, mainly in Central Europe, which issued in the more narrowly conceived administrative and policy sciences and ultimately in Staatswissenschaft.[21] Further candidates might be found in the impact of 19th century utilitarianism, positivism,

---

[15] Michael Stolleis, Geschichte des öffentlichen Rechts in Deutschland. Erster Band 1600-1800 (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1988), pp. 97-104, 110-112.

[16] Bleek, Geschichte der Politikwissenschaft in Deutschland, p. 46.

[17] Stolleis, Geschichte des öffentlichen Rechts in Deutschland, pp. 85-124.

[18] Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan. Ed. M. Oakeshott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), p. 467; Hobbes, A True Ecclesiastical History from Moses to the Time of Martin Luther in Verse (London: E. Curll, 1722), p. 27.

[19] Collini, Winch and Burrow in That Noble Science of Politics remind their readers that the "hypnotic, unshakeable spell cast by Aristotle's Politics is so clearly readable on the face of so much" political science literature up to the mid-twentieth century "that one is in danger of failing to remark it at all" (p. 376).

[20] Cf., very interestingly in this respect, Karl Graf Ballestrem, Adam Smith (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2001), chaps. 4 and 5.

[21] Hans Erich Bödeker, "Das staatswissenschaftliche Fächersystem im 18. Jahrhundert," in: Rudolf Vierhaus (ed.), Wissenschaften im Zeitalter der Aufklärung (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), pp. 143-162.

Marxism and the emergent social sciences, the temporary collapse of political economy into separate departments of economics and political science[22] and, finally, in the various transformations of APSA, the dominant national association of the 20th century.[23]

These candidates for potentially radical transformations in the identity of political science will provide the organizational framework for the proposed conference. The first set of tasks for the conference will be to elicit the character of the main varieties of sciences of politics from the neo-Aristotelianisms of late-medieval and early modern universities to American-style political science in the present. The focus in each case will be on continuities as well as change. And the relevance of all this for the recurrent crises in the identity of American political science will be, for example, the extent to which later varieties of political science can be shown to contain within themselves the traces of earlier varieties. And, alternatively, where it is more appropriate to speak of distinctively different political sciences instead of change and continuity in a single discipline, to what extent the characteristic questions and answers offered by the different sciences of politics complement or contradict one another?

But there is a second set tasks to be pursued in the conference. This concerns questions of the cultural politics of the various sciences of politics, especially American political science. From the beginning, political science has been understood as a practical discipline. The identity of the discipline, then, is not only a matter of its scientific presuppositions, its explanatory practices and its place in university curricula, it is also a matter of what it is supposed to effect in the world of practice. These practical aims (always a plurality) might range from the revolutionary transformation of an emergent system of sovereign states to denazification and democratization. But whatever the aims, they are never exclusively in the keeping of the political scientists concerned. They are always contestable and they have never remained uncontested for long. In this regard, the identity of a science of politics is partly forged through such contests. This applies to all of the various sciences of politics since the 13th century but it is especially interesting in the case of American political science. The last part of the conference, then, will address this particular case. We shall be concerned with the reception of American political science in both the European world (especially Britain and Germany) and in the non-Western world (especially Japan and India). From the perspectives of these "others," the character of American political science often appears different from that presupposed by its American practitioners. Sometimes the innovations of American political science have been rejected; often they have been embraced. Sometimes the innovations have been domesticated; always they have provoked reflection upon differences in cultural traditions in the disciplined study of politics. So the conference will end with papers discussing the impact of American political science on political studies in Europe and Asia and hence about the identity of American political science as seen from the perspectives of significant "outsiders."

In summary, then, the proposed conference will commemorate the centenary of the founding of APSA at the place where the foundation meeting occurred. It will address

[22] The indispensable reference here which emphasizes continuity in change is: Collini, Winch and Burrow, That Noble Science of Politics. For their focus on continuity in change, see pp. 373-7.
[23] See the relevant works listed in footnotes 10 and 11 above.

the same conceptual issues as confronted the founders themselves: what is the nature of political science, what is its place in university curricula and what practical consequences might reasonably be expected to flow from its pursuit? But the commemorative conference will address these questions from the vantage point of a hundred years experience of APSA and in the light of recurrent controversies (both inside and outside of APSA) about the changing nature of American political science. In particular, the conference is designed to add two missing or neglected dimensions to the current controversies within APSA. The first is a more appropriate historical dimension, one that places the experience of the last hundred years within the context of endeavors to create scientific disciplines of political studies during the last seven hundred years. The second is the broad dimension of the cultural politics of the various projects for a science of politics over the past seven centuries but especially with respect to change and continuity within American political science. In this second dimension, particular attention will be paid to the cultural politics of political science as envisaged and practiced by the founders of APSA, and the reception, reworking and, on occasion, rejection of American political science by relevant constituencies in Europe and Asia.

Conference Program:

Beginning: Friday, Jan. 3 or 10, 2004 at 9.30 a.m.

Section 1: The Politics of Aristotelian and Anti-Aristotelian Sciences of Politics from Marsilius of Padua to Thomas Hobbes.

4 papers , 2 commentators.

Section 2: The Politics of Political Economy and the Staatswissenschaften in the 17th and 18th Centuries.

4 papers, 2 commentators.

Saturday, Jan. 4 or 11, 2004
Section 3: The Politics of the 19th Century Social Sciences.

4 papers, 2 commentators.

Section 4: The Politics of American Political Science.

4 papers, 2 commentators.

Sunday, Jan. 5 or 12, 2004
Section 5: The Reception of American Political Science in Europe and Asia.

4 papers, 2 commentators.

End: Sunday at 1.00 p.m.

MPT, October 2002.