THE POESIS OF A DISCIPLINARY METAMORPHOSIS: RHETORIC AND AMBITION IN AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE AFTER WORLD WAR II

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Abstract. The emergence of contemporary political science as a rigorously analytical and empirically based discipline is most commonly dated back to its remaking in the United States after World War II. This article highlights and explores the role of various components of rhetorical strategies deployed in the articulation and presentation of this new political science. In addition reshaping the terminological apparatus with which the 'revolutionaries' presented their own endeavours and those of their 'traditionalist' predecessors, the case for reforming the discipline was further boosted by the formulation of fantasies of interdisciplinarity as a shortcut to an unprecedented empowering of social knowledge, as well as by utterances of ambitions of the future social role of this new type of science – all three as discursive strategies in their own right.

Keywords: American political science, political behavioralism, history of political thought, 20th century political ideas, history of social sciences, history of interdisciplinary studies, Chicago school

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1. Introduction

The emergence of political science as a rigorously and self-consciously 'scientific' discipline is most commonly dated back to its remaking in the United States after World War II. This narrative has since its beginning been accompanied by a counter-narrative that places the theoretical and methodological innovations of the time in the context of Cold War anxieties, the challenges posed by the new global leadership of the United States, and opportunities arising from skyrocketing social science research funding (Crick 1959, Gunnell 1993, Cravens 2012). Yet what is conspicuously missing in historical research on this mid-century disciplinary remake – associated mostly even if somewhat inaccurately with the

emergence of political behavioralism[1] – is an account of its rhetorical and discursive dimensions that, this essay sets out to argue, played by no means an insignificant role, either for its audience, or for the morale of the innovators themselves. Evidence for the boosting role of wordcraft can be found in many texts, but is particularly overt in hortatory texts such as speeches, introductions and conclusions, statements of research agendas and proposals, and, above all, in texts addressed to and circulated within funding agencies. These sources rarely figure in accounts of the remaking of the discipline, while they express a crucial facet of the scientific-political imagination of the period.

To unravel the discursive and rhetorical strategies and reflect on their implications is important at least in three ways. First, the proponents of behavioralism after WW II explicitly aimed at rooting out all the so-called unscientific elements from the making of science, and highlighting the prominence of rhetorical imagination in this endeavour means to point at a tension at its very heart. Yet 'rhetoric' in this essay is not understood in the pejorative sense of deliberate deception or misleading of the audience. Instead, following research most notably in economics, sociology and psychology, I will discuss rhetoric in this context as ways in which scientific writing uses extensively common rhetorical strategies such as construction of ethos, authoritative point of view, style, metaphor, etc., as to maximise its potential to persuade (McCloskey 1985, McCloskey 1994, Gusfield 1992). Hence, rather than deeming these interconnected efforts of persuasion as discrediting, the ultimate aim of the essay is to criticise naïve and implicit disciplinary rhetoric, as opposed to a more self-aware, learned and explicit wordcraft.

Secondly, these efforts to strengthen one's scientific case with wordcraft in the case of mid-century political science were entwined with a number of other ways in which researchers sought to forcefully and persuasively open up the scientific – but also the public – political imagination. Two among the most explicit examples are, as the essay argues, the utterances regarding interdisciplinary fantasies and the socio-political ambitions of the newly 'rigorous'' political science. These two, especially in their appeal to their imagined scientific and social engineering potential, similarly functioned as strategies of persuasion. The highly exaggerated expectations, polemical character and at times problematic implications of these fantasies and ambitions was, interestingly, later acknowledged by some of the innovators themselves – and these reflections are the focus of the final section of the article.

Thirdly, this account of how politics became more of a science not only methodologically and theoretically, but also narratively, is not only relevant to the nature of the social sciences in the United States after World War II. For it was at

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[1]   Here I will omit a longer discussion of the overlaps and divergencies between the disciplinary developments in general and the emergence of behavioralism in particular, especially as it has been helpfully outlined in Berndtson, Erkki (1997) "Behavioralism: origins of the concept". The XVIIth International Political Science Association World Congress, Seoul, 17.8.–21.8.1997. Available online at <http://www.mv.helsinki.fi/home/berndtso/behavior.htm>. Accessed on October 17, 2017.

this time that American political science gained a leading position in the world, with its ideas, language and goals being diffused and increasingly adopted in many other countries, especially those of Northern Europe (Newton and Valles 1991). Furthermore, even if there is less narrative and methodological optimism in today's disciplines on both sides of the Atlantic, the 'politics of theory' (Selg 2013) has certainly not become insignificant in shaping the questions and approaches that become dominant or lose their importance. In this sense, this paper also seeks to offer a 'case study' as it were within the broader framework of the 'new sociology of ideas' (Camic and Gross 2003) – and hopes that the unfamiliar and uncanny fantasies of political behavioralism also encourage questions about the far more familiar – even if sometimes not less uncanny – language of our own disciplinary politics.

2. The inter-war vision for the New Political Science

In the aftermath of World War II, the United States stood as a metonym of the very idea of political freedom for almost the whole Western world. Yet its political theorists were increasingly concerned about the very possibility of preserving its liberal democracy and the terms on which this might be achieved. Before the economic shockwaves of the early 1930s and a series of collapses of liberal regimes in Europe, they had been able to take the linear progress of the liberal idea of political freedom almost for granted, as a direct outcome of increasing levels of wealth, welfare and education (Ross 1992:257–300). Now the European totalitarian regimes seemed to have been not only shockingly successful in securing the support of the masses, but also in delivering the same – if not superior – economic and welfare benefits as democracies. In 1935, Charles Merriam, one of the most eminent political scientists at the time, published a recommendation to introduce 'planning agencies' in the United States, with referring to recent similar developments in Europe. It is clear that Merriam considered at least some of the European changes progressive, noting that "especially since returning from Europe last summer, I do not share the complaisance of those who look forward to a world but little changed. … I anticipate fundamental changes in the scientific, technological, political, and industrial order – changes that will alter many of the present-day and historical social patterns and remake them in new … forms. The mold in which the modern state was cast is broken or is breaking (Merriam 1935–210)."

After the World War, even when National Socialism in Germany had been defeated from the outside, the Soviet Union was not only one of the victorious war powers, but had come to reign over the Eastern half of Europe. What, if anything, could ensure that American liberalism would be safe from external threats and internal conflicts?

As the Cold War tightened its grip, the nature and grounds of American freedom no longer seemed self-evident: the liberal individual was altogether too nebulous and fragile a basis on which to rest one's hopes. In this new Cold War

world it was only technical know-how about channelling mass political impulses in a favourable direction – or so argued the advocates of the 'new political science' – that could protect the United States from suffering the political fate of Europe (Gunnell 1993:126–145). If the political imagination of the American social researchers had been greatly disturbed by the atrocities of the war, their scientific imagination was stimulated by the role that not only technology, but also natural sciences, had played in winning the war. Few, if any, could doubt the key role of science in shaping the future of the world – and the new task of the social scientist was to find and take his due place in this new sphere of influence.

This ambition was fueled by the less than stellar reputation of political science at that day (Dahl 1961). It was the poor relation of other disciplines, whether the natural sciences, jurisprudence and psychology, in part because it was still a relatively new discipline – in fact it existed only in the U.S. as a separate field of social science. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that in the immediate aftermath of World War II, the younger generation of political scientists became increasingly convinced that their discipline needed a methodological, theoretical, institutional and programmatic metamorphosis. They set about producing it (Eldersveld et al. 1952).

At the same time it is important to acknowledge that numerically it was still only a minority of the members of the profession who joined the innovative effort or even deemed it necessary (Berndtson 1997). Nonetheless, as few in number as the individual researchers behind these changes – commonly known as the 'behavioural revolution' – might have been, their disparate efforts came to constitute the mainstream through and then against which the discipline's self-understanding was formed.

While it was not until the 1950s that the vision of a new political science – one that sought to contribute to social progress in the same way as natural sciences had contributed to technical progress – started to enjoy wider influence, some of its basic ingredients went back to the 1920s and to one person in particular, Charles Merriam (1874–1953). Merriam worked and taught at the University of Chicago, where he chaired the Department of Political Science from 1923 to 1940 and founded what would later become known as the Chicago School (Heaney and Hansen 2006). More accomplished as a prophet than as a scientist, Merriam was an enthusiastic and skilled advocate for the imagined future role of this trans-formed discipline. In stark contrast to the natural sciences that had "made rapid progress" (Merriam 1922:317), political science had, Merriam insisted, "fallen behind the possibilities of our times, and that by a very long interval" (Merriam 1922:315). Must we thus conclude, Merriam asked, "that it is possible to interpret and explain and measurably control the so-called natural forces – outside of man – but not the forces of human nature? Or have we overdone 'nature' and underdone 'man' scientifically?" (Merriam 1921:183) This was certainly not an answer with which Merriam was willing to rest satisfied, and his life-long task was to convince his readers, students, public administrators and the wider public that "the pro-cesses of social and political control may be found to be much more susceptible to human adaptation and reorganization as they now are" (Merriam 1921:183).

First and most importantly, Merriam urged the social sciences to adopt some of the methodological tenets of the more prestigious natural sciences, such as the use of 'systematic observation', 'exact measurement' (Merriam 1922:319) 'standardization' of methods, and above all, 'quantification' and 'statistics' (Merriam 1923:288). Secondly, he insisted that the social sciences ought to draw on the practices of natural sciences, especially in the sense that they should become more closely integrated, establish research teams, including inter-disciplinary teams, with a view to acquiring comparable resources, for instance in order to build research institutions and collect data on a large scale. Last but not least, for Merriam political science had to become a science for practical use (Merriam 1921:175ff). It ought to strive for the production of knowledge that would contribute to an advanced organization of political and social affairs, just as the natural sciences had placed nature in the service of human needs. "Social science and natural science come together in a common effort," Merriam argued, "and unite their forces in the greatest tasks that humanity has yet faced – the intelligent understanding and control of human behavior" (Merriam 1925:12).

While Merriam only had modest success in practicing in research his ideas about what it meant for a social science to be scientific, he played a key role as a visionary for the younger generation of political scientists who became the vanguard of the so-called behavioral revolution (Eldersveld et al. 1952:1004–5). During his tenure as Chair, the researchers at the political science department at the University of Chicago produced seminal studies about political parties, political psychology, voting behavior, and methodology. His students and young followers were among the first to use new empirical-analytical methods in political science such as survey experiments, field experiments, correlation, regression and factor analysis. Importantly, Merriam also undertook the reshaping of the curriculum of his department, particularly in a more empirical and interdisciplinary direction. Some members of this group of young and committed innovators, among them Harold Lasswell, V. O Key, Gabriel Almond, and David Truman, became leading theorists in modelling a "new science of politics", what came to be called behavioralism, that by the 1960s had come to dominate the field and which remains influential in many ways today (Heaney and Hansen 2006).

3. The New Truth – (also) a rhetorical construction

It is not altogether uncontested what exactly behavioralism was – what its central tenets were, who belonged to the movement it represented, or whether its proponents were co-extensive with those advocating the 'new political science'. As with most schools', to apply to the mid-century disciplinary reformers the label 'behavioralists' is to do injustice to the movement's heterogeneity (Dahl 1961). It was not until the mid-1950s that the concept of behavioralism came to be used by the researchers later considered its pioneers and it first appeared as a term of art in the pages of the American Political Science Review only in 1963. Previously, in

the 1940s and early 1950s, the disciplinary revolts were dispersed under several different characterizations and slogans, although perhaps one of the most common was the call for study of 'political behavior' or 'behavioural research' (Berndtson 1997).

Many of the key principles of the disciplinary reformers roughly coincided with the agenda outlined by Merriam: the plea to follow the model of the natural sciences, an emphasis on interdisciplinarity, and the insistence on the potential practical contribution of the new social sciences. Nonetheless, the innovators often disagreed about many specifics of this agenda and how to discharge it, especially over the discipline's proper methods.

One of the key divisions, for instance, ran along the theory/empiricism line, that is, between the more empirically-quantitatively oriented political scientists, like David Truman, Pendleton Herring, Peter Odegard, V. O. Key, Jr., Angus Cambell, and Oliver Garceau, with their survey-research based studies of political parties, administration and elections, on the one hand, and more theoretically-analytically oriented researchers who engaged in analysis linking the micro and macro level, like David Easton, Robert Dahl, and Heinz Eulau (Berndtson 1997). By the same token there were authors who believed, like Harold Lasswell, that the new political science would and should respond to some of the greatest political hazards of the times, while many others insisted on the strictest possible separation between questions of science and value (Easton 1957:112). In this sense, rather than ever becoming a school, or even a doctrine, behavioralism constituted a loosely and occasionally converging matrix of research efforts. Or, as Evron Kirkpatrick has argued, it became "a sort of umbrella, capacious enough to provide a temporary shelter for the heterogeneous group united only by dissatisfaction with traditional political science" (Kirkpatrick 1962:13).

Lack of unity did not seem to curtail the movement's pathos of novelty: the re-makers of the discipline described their undertakings as nothing less than a 'revolution' (Almond 1966:870), a 'new era' (Easton 1957:114), leading to a 'tremendous transformation' (Easton 1957:110) in political science (Almond 1956:391, Almond 1965:183). Indeed, on the one hand, behavioralists were engaged in the process of innovation that included not only the formulation of new methodologies and models of interpretation, but also conceptual, and sometimes linguistic pioneering. The vocabulary of the discipline was supplemented with an abundance of new concepts, including 'political system', 'system theory', 'functional analysis', 'symbolic behavior', 'structural and situational variants', 'mental measurement', and 'role structure', to mention only some of the most ubiquitous neologisms.

On the other hand, the legitimization of the promise of the new paradigm became not only a theoretical-conceptual, but also a rhetorical endeavor. This is particularly clear in the dramatic tone of the prefaces and conclusions, research proposals and speeches. As in other 'revolutions', behavioralism's agenda was defined not only positively but just as importantly through what it sought to overthrow – or, to be more precise, through the construction of rhetorical distance between the 'new' and the 'traditional' approaches in political science.

When proponents of 'progressive' political science spoke of their 'traditional' or 'conventional' predecessors, they usually had in mind two predominant directions in American political research in the first half of the twentieth century: normative-historical political philosophies or empirical-comparative studies in politics, administration and legislation. The revolutionaries shunned both equally, characterizing them as the "speculative-legalistic-historical tradition in political science" (Truman 1951). 'Speculative' became the code-word for political philosophy, 'legalistic' for empirical studies of government, and 'historical' became synonymous with useless. "To treat theory (only) historically and not to treat it as theory is to abandon the very aim of science," insisted Benjamin Lippincott – after all, "the great advances in physics have not been achieved by writing the history of physics" (Lippincott 1940:131).

The first discursive strategy of the reformers was to create a diametric opposition between the 'traditional' and 'behavioural' trends in the discipline. While the former offered 'panoramic description(s)', 'loose, pluralistic study with a variety of critical perspectives,' the new political science was conducted by 'specialists' who pursued 'rigorous analysis through positivistic model-building'. In contrast to the old discipline based on 'metaphysical discourse' (Eulau 1962: 8–10) the new science was a 'realistic enquiry' 'rooted in demonstrable facts.' The 'ancestral order' (Eulau 1968:3) based its scholarship on the edifice of our 'literary inheritance' and was inclined to deliver 'secular sermons' (Lasswell 1993:159–164); its rival by contrast based its own 'value-free and objective' research on 'observation, … statistical-empirical verification.' While the former was merely 'descriptive' and 'fragmentary' (Easton 1953:5), the latter sought to offer to 'explain', and ultimately 'predict' political phenomena. In teaching, the innovators insisted, the 'dissonant potpourri' (Eulau 1968:3) of the contemporary curriculums ought to be replaced by ''raining" (Eldersveld et al. 1952:1008) that introduces the young brilliant minds to the 'use of empirical research techniques' based on a 'coherent body of knowledge' (Eldersveld et al. 1952:1009).

The second discursive strategy the reformers used to assert the superiority of their new approaches was to imbue the ambitions and activities that the opposing sides shared in common with contrasting evaluative characterizations. For instance,

Table 1. Opposite characteristics used for 'traditional' and 'new' political science

TRADITIONAL	NEW
speculative-legalistic-historical	behavioral
loose, confuse"	exact
panoramic	specialized
based on literary inheritance	based on observation and empirical data
pluralistic, incohesive	systematic
providing secular sermons	value free, objective
descriptive	explanatory, predictive
compilation of facts	rigorously analytical
hyperfactual, theoretically lax	aiming at conceptualization, theory oriented
sterile	imaginative, dynamic

where traditional political theory was accused of 'false comprehensiveness', behavioralism was complimented for its 'systematic expression of new truth'. In contrast to the 'crude and indiscriminate empiricism' and 'hyperfactualism' of the former, the latter was 'positivistic'', with its research based on 'rigorous ordering of evidence' and 'quantifiable techniques'. Similarly, while its predecessors produced 'loose' and 'confused' theories, behavioralism was engaged in 'complex', 'dynamic' and 'imaginative' (Lippincott 1940:132ff) 'model-building'. Traditional academic eclecticism was 'pluralistic' and 'incohesive', whereas their challengers' closely comparable attempts to expand the disciplinary horizons qualified, to use their own formulations, as 'interdisciplinary cooperation' and 'cumulative knowledge'.

Table 2. Opposite evaluations of similar characteristics of 'traditional' and 'new' political science

TRADITIONAL, CONVENTIONAL	NEW, BEHAVIORAL
panoramic, false comprehensiveness	coherent systematic expression of new truth, systematizing observations according to an elaborate set of postulates, definitions and propositions, positivistic model building
compilation of facts, indiscriminate empiricism crude and indiscriminate empiricism, hyperfactual	quantifiable techniques rigorous ordering of evidence rooted in demonstrable facts
dissonant potpourri, pluralistic incohesive	interdisciplinary cooperation, cumulative knowledge
loose, mushiness, confused, based on semantic obfuscation, theoretically lax	complex, dynamic, imaginative
sterile	value free, objective
guesswork	Explanatory, predictive value, experimentative
metaphysical	Aiming at conceptualization, theory oriented
	Other selected characteristics of the new political science: effective identification of behavioral uniformities; rigorously analytical, critical analysis; based on mathematical-theoretical hypothesis and rigorous techniques

It is worth adding that quite as vehemently as the ''new" approaches rejected 'traditional' theorizing that was not based on 'facts', they disparaged 'crude empiricism' for failing to advance theorizing. This critique of the 'hyper-factualism' and 'theoretically lax' empiricism, even if a less familiar episode in the disciplinary history, nonetheless became a key impulse in modelling the projected disciplinary transformation. Some of the best known 'behavioralists', such as Easton, Eulau and Dahl repeatedly recognized the need for a new epistemological basis for the new approaches, and even a new normative political theory – and lamented their absence. While they called for all research to be based on 'evidence', they also stressed that there was little use for this 'data' unless it was

systematized "according to an elaborate set of postulates, definitions and proposi-tions" (Lasswell 1993). Their work as a rule was 'theory-oriented': it started from 'mathematical-theoretical hypothesis', and approaching its data with an 'explanatory' intent, aimed at 'effective identification of behavioral uniformities' and 'model building'. Or, in the words of Harold Lasswell, one of Merriam's most brilliant students: "The disciplined scientist looks forward to the day when he can find a mathematical formula that unifies the observations that are made" (Lasswell 1993).

4. A Field without boundaries: the quest for scientific cures for political ills

Lasswell's dream of a 'unifying formula' rested on a vision of political science as an intensely and increasingly inter-disciplinary field of research – a widely shared vision at the time. The ambition of Lasswell, and of like-minded reformers, was nothing less than the extension of political science into 'a field without boundaries': "On the one frontier, we touch biology; on another, we reach toward the models of the physical sciences and mathematics and more generalized concepts of behavior; on the third, we touch the humanities" (Kimpton 1953). This is the direction to dominate in all future research because "the logic of scientific method is the same whether it is applied in the physical, the biological, or the social sciences" (Kimpton 1953).

Although the idea of 'cross-fertilization' of research fields was present in the interwar period, it was in the 1950s and 1960s that it became one of the leading principles in the re-organization and re-institutionalization of the discipline. The scope planned for the Institute of Behavioral Sciences at the University of Chicago is one of the most telling and spectacular examples of such efforts – both in its scientific and its socio-political ambitions. The proponents of the institute believed political science ought to be integrated with research "in such areas as clinical psychiatry, clinical and applied psychology, economics, business administration, social service, law and" – perhaps curiously – "divinity" (Kimpton 1951a). The areas which have already 'begun to overlap' were – or so it argued – "cybernetics… physiology, particularly neurophysiology and endocrinology… experimental psychology… mental measurement… learning theory … psycho-analysis… social influences on behavior… the effects of culture on behavior" (Kimpton 1951a). To the proposal was attached "a list of illustrative researches" to be conducted in a cross-disciplinary fashion at the Institute of Behavioral Science, which deserves to be quoted at length:

"Electrical phenomena of the central nervous system; metabolic studies of the nervous system in relations to various behavioral mechanisms; neural bases of thinking and memory disorders; psychosomatic aspects of medical, surgical, obstetrical, gynecological, pediatric, and geriatric conditions; evaluation of electroshock therapy; evaluation of various psychotherapeutic techniques; study of hypnosis and hypnotic methods; relations between personality theory, learning

theory, and psychotherapy; […]; study of hypnosis and hypnotic methods; bio-social determinants of personality formations, including the biological, psycho-logical, social and cultural influences at work in order to discover what is known about the incidence of common and variant types of personality within and between historical – social – cultural groups; measurement of cerebral function in relation to general mental abilities; factor analysis of temperament; […]; bio-logical and social determinants of perception; principles of animal and human learning; […]; socialization of the child; general processes of group education; affects of social class, status and mobility; the functions of institutions in society; […] the analysis of kinship groupings, interest groups, power groups; … study of the factors underlying consensus in a democratic urban-industrial mass society… research on social norms, […]; how they are related to the basic characteristics of human nature and variant social orders; how they can be established and lived by with a minimum of coercion; how they can be adapted to variant situations and modified to meet changing conditions… criminology; mental hygiene; … relation-ships between economic theory and personality theory…" (Kimpton 1951a).

As is evident from this list, and was emphatically underlined in yet another attachment to the proposal, the Institute's interdisciplinary vision was based on the underlying presumption that "social phenomena should eventually be capable of translation into biological terms, […] in a way comparable to that in which biological phenomena are gradually being explained by physical laws." To give an indication of the possible ramifications of this idea, another author of the institutional proposal provided a 'periodic table' of 'determinants of human social behavior', reminiscent of 'Mendeleev's periodic table of chemical elements'. This tabular arrangement identified 22 principles of human behavior (such as action, reaction, repetition, learning, etc.), explained through a 'physiological descrip-tion', 'behavioral concomitant', 'subjective concomitant', and 'physical model'. For instance, 'learning' as one of the basic principles of 'behavior' defined as 'stimulation of the nervous system' that 'ordinarily causes partially or completely reversible structural (or functional) changes'. Learning's 'physiological descrip-tion' states: "Reversible changes in bodily structure produced by energy changes in environment of organism". While its 'objective concomitant' is 'conditioning', its subjective accessory is 'remembering'. Even if recognizing its yet preliminary character, developing such a 'systematic theory of behavior', the author suggested, might "generate a strategy for the science which can produce rapid advance in both basic understanding and application" (Kimpton 1951a).

Probably only a minority of reform-minded political scientists were this optimistic about the possibility of fusing natural and social science research methods. Yet the idea of synthesizing methods in different fields of research regarding the human world, such as social, political, economic, psychiatric, anthropological and legal studies became a prominent element in the post-war re-shaping of the politico-scientific imagination.

One of the most influential research consortiums in particular – the Social Science Research Council – had made the idea of 'cross fertilization' of dis-

ciplines one of its core principles since its founding in the 1920s. Serving as a monumental intermediary between foundations and researchers, on the one hand, and seeking to advise and cooperate with federal research and policy agencies on the other, its influence is difficult to overstate. The Council always remained an 'independent non-profit organization' whose main aim was to advance research in the social sciences, but its donors included the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation and Russell Sage Foundation. Initiated by the American Political Science Association under the presidency of Merriam, its ranks were joined by research associations of economists, historians, anthropologists, legal scholars, and psychologists.

The Council from the first had grand ambitions: to fuse different disciplines into a unitary behaviourally oriented social science, and to develop the Council into a federal research planning agency, or at the least, a regular counsellor in socio-political matters for federal agencies (Worcester 2001). While neither of these ambitions was realized fully, the Council still became and remained a national organization with a significant impact whose specialized research committees attracted at one time or another some of the most brilliant minds of the age to its boards.

One of its most important post-war undertakings was the founding of Committee on Political Behavior (1945), similarly and outspokenly interdisciplinary in its orientation, headed at different times by Pendelton Herring, David Easton, David Truman and Robert Dahl. Indeed, in 1951, the primary research task of the committee was defined as "identifying important problem areas of convergence of the behavioral sciences – anthropology, social psychology, and sociology – that need planning and development in order to stimulate and focus research" (SSRC 1952–3:37). Notably, it was precisely this programmatic interdisciplinarity that was seen as critical for the realization of the hope that research could in the near future provide accurate predictions about human political behavior (Eldersveld et al. 1952:1005; Eulau 1954:1052).

It was in particular with psychiatry that the political behavioralists expected to 'exchange ideas and methods, to work together'. Here, again, Lasswell was one of the trailblazers, having made psycho-analytical methods the cornerstone of his theory of politics. In one of his earlier books, *Psychopathology and Politics* (1930), Lasswell used Freudian theory to identify politically relevant determinants of human behaviour. Analyzing the negative aspects of politics as forms of pathology, he argued that politics often tends to be a set of symbolic manifestations of disorders originating from the human psyche. These disorders can, however, on the basis of sufficient knowledge, be corrected – and here what Lasswell called his theory of 'preventive politics would be instrumental.

In the 1930s, Lasswell's work was largely dismissed as an oddity. With the emergence of behavioralism, his idea of applying both the methods and theories of psychiatry and psychoanalysis to understanding and explaining social phenomena became increasingly accepted (Eulau 1954:1051–2). Psychiatry was a discipline that was perceived to stand methodologically at the borderline between biology,

the medical sciences and the humanities, and as such, to be scientifically more advanced. Where medicine had yielded admirable results in curing the bodily ills, and psychiatry the mental ills, the application of the latter's insight into the human mind was widely expected to contribute to solving social problems. Even Edward Shils, the renowned social philosopher (who can hardly be seen as a behavioralist), expressed a widely shared optimism when he argued that the fact that psycho-analysis was developed as a type of psychiatry dealing with the ill individual does not limit its applicability for the analysis of 'normal behavior' […]. Just as we learn of the conditions of health by studying illness, so we can learn about the conditions and mechanisms of normal behavior by applying in a generalized form a theory, which […] deals with the ill (Shils, undated).

Similarly, Talcott Parsons – a sociologist who needs no introduction – high-lighted in 1949 the potential contribution of 'psychology and the study of personality abnormalities' in improving the theoretical competence of the social scientists, and insisted that there was "good reason to believe that the many partial theoretical achievements will ultimately converge into wider complexes tending toward an increased generality of theoretical knowledge" (Parsons 1949:23, 31). Only three years later, in a "A Proposal for the Study of Collaborative Mental Health Research in Psychiatry and Social Sciences", a behavioralist psychiatrist and social psychologist noted that the interdisciplinary efforts had "gone beyond the stage of theoretical discussion" – they had triggered cooperation "to exchange ideas and methods, to work together on research and in action, and to develop common points of view" (Tyhurst 1952).

For political scientists with inter-disciplinary aspirations, psychiatry seems to have represented one of those few disciplines that studied humans and was nonetheless able to yield what were understood as tangible results – diagnosis and an alleged cure. Might not society's more irritating and debilitating ills – such as Communist ideas, poverty, antisocial behavior, criminality – also be cured by following psychiatry in its understanding of the human mind and action?

Perhaps, but social science would need to go further: the achievements of psychiatry were inadequate to the complexities of the political man and would need to be combined with recent knowledge gained in anthropology and eco-nomics, among other disciplines. Then, to cite Edward Shils again, social science would finally have a 'systematic' 'general theory of man', including knowledge on "the functioning of collectivities, ranging from small groups and institutions to the largest, such as the national State, and even whole civilizations" (Shils, undated) Only such comprehensive knowledge might eventually result in what could perhaps with modest exaggeration be identified as the ultimate aim of the 'new political science': the "remov[al of] the physical and technical barriers to per-fection" (Lasswell 1940:85–7).

Here we see a disciplinary ideal at work that contrasts sharply with the democratic-liberal agenda that takes pride in placing the judgement of the free citizen at its centre. It is striking how little the disciplinary practitioners were concerned with this contrast, and, by inference, with the broader social and ethical

implications of their research ambitions. Even if the advocates of rethinking politics psychiatrically, as it were, were few, theorists like Lasswell enjoyed a central position and not trifling authority. More importantly perhaps, vocal criticism – particularly from the ethical or political perspective – of some of the basic tenets of their ideas was rare, voiced perhaps only by the 'traditionalist' current in political science which the new political science had already stigmatised as retrograde.

4. The value question and the Science of Democracy

In a classic article comparing 'traditional' and 'behavioural' research, David Easton contended that "traditionalists and behavioralists stand on diametrically opposed sides with regard to two fundamental assumptions: the possibility of predicting human behavior and the role of values" (Easton 1957:112). This meant, first, as Easton went on to explain in a later piece, that most reformers would subscribe to the assumption that "there are discoverable uniformities in political behaviour" and that these regularities are 'testable', which meant, in effect, that political behaviour was, at least in principle, predictable (Easton 1962:6–7; Lasswell 1963:1–2). Through 'discovering' 'the determinants of men's behaviour' the political scientist would be able to provide predictions regarding various possible causal sequences, or 'patterns' (Truman 1951:37–39) of phenomena, and this knowledge in turn could be used "for the maintenance of a preferred system of values" (Truman 1951:39).

About the precise character of the 'preferred system of values' however, behavioralism was studiedly non-committal. Thus when contrasting themselves to traditionalists on the value question, the proponents of the new political science understood themselves to be "concerned with what *is*", and not "with what *ought* to be" (Dahl 1961:770–1). Or, in other words, the new social scientist "was prepared to *describe* values as empirical data; but *qua* 'scientist' he seeks to avoid prescription or inquiry into the grounds on which judgments of value can be properly made" (Dahl 1961:771).

This did not mean that most behavioralists were dismissing the idea of a politically engaged, or at the very least politically useful social science. In fact, the practical implications of the new political science constituted one of the main sources of controversy within the movement. As John Gunnell and Erkki Berndtson have noted, the question of whether and how behavioralism could or should serve the liberal and democratic values to which all of its proponents remained committed was one of the perennial items on its agenda (Gunnell 1991; Berndtson 1997). Should it strive to be only a 'pure science' or 'basic science', or, to the contrary, a science in the service of democracy? To what extent should its aims and achievements serve democratic governance and to what extent were these at risk of exploitation by non-democratic regimes? How politically engaged should the new political science be?

The very context in which the post-war methodological turn unfolded imposed upon it an unavoidably practical orientation – contradicting its occasional, and manifestly naïve declarations of a "pure" research orientation. To begin with, the plea for political research to follow the model of the natural sciences was driven by a sense of the latter's obvious practical successes, not least in making technological advances. At the same time, the social sciences lacked comparable prestige. While social scientists, among them political scientists, readily admitted this differential standing, this also gave them the impetus to underline the imperative need to attaining similarly impressive results in their own field. "We have learned a great deal about friction in machines," stated a behavioralist research proposal, "but almost nothing about friction between human beings. […] Scientists can tell us with amazing precision why heat is generated when metal meets metal, yet little is known about why heat is generated when man meets man" (Kimpton 1951b:2).

As the contemporary world was doubtless one of 'friction', the new political scientist saw his (mostly) or her (rarely) mission and opportunity to make a contribution to preventing the recurrence of past catastrophes. "Were as much study and research devoted to the prevention of war as have been to the prevention of disease" – argued a behavioralist researcher who claimed here to be quoting 'General Eisenhower' – "we should in time obtain the same control over its eruption and spread as we have over the physical plague" (Kimpton 1951b:2). The struggle for recognition for new approaches in political science meant to emphasize both the urgency and importance of their potential practical contribution:

Public leaders are in great need of guidance in the comprehension and pre-diction of human behavior, guidance which can come only from basic research in the behavioral sciences. New theoretical advances have occurred and new techniques have arisen […], though they are in the earliest stages of development and will probably not yield important, definitive results for some years, give promise for precise and accurate research in this field (Kimpton 1951b:2).

Guided by the quest for "orderly understanding, prediction, and control" (Kimpton 1951c:6) and through the "intensive application of scientific methodol-ogy" behavioralism was, despite periodic bouts of reticence, vocally oriented towards 'resolving' "critical public problems" (SSRC 1960:7). After all, as at least some of its advocates were tempted to speculate, "techniques that have led to so great a mastery over physical phenomena may force more obdurate human problems to yield" (SSRC 1960:7) Indeed, such ambitions only echoed the broader contemporary social and academic mentalities wherein "expectancy runs high that science, which has accomplished so much, may perform still other miracles" (SSRC 1947:9).

Neither wholly ingenuous nor politically unproblematic, this expectation guided the work of some of the most prominent social scientists of the day. "We have achieved an unparalleled mastery of nature, but of our ability to live together successfully […] there is much doubt and uncertainty", lamented Talcott Parsons in 1949. "Do we have, or can we develop, the kind of knowledge of social

relations which can serve as the basis of rational 'engineering' control?" Parsons, along with political scientists, answered this question in the "affirmative": "the only sensible thing is to develop and use such knowledge as fully and rapidly as we can" (Parsons 1949:14).

The role of the new political scientist was, in the phrasing of Harold Lasswell, to serve as "a specialist on the systematic expression of new truth" (Lasswell 1993) with the task of "scanning the horizon of the unfolding future [...] for the navigators of the Ship of the State" (Lasswell 1956:965–6). On the one hand, indeed, political scientists would assume this advisory role alongside other social and natural scientists: hence the emphasis on interdisciplinarity noted above. On the other hand, Lasswell, with all the *ex cathedra* authority he could muster as the president of APSA at the time of this statement, demanded that political science develop into a 'central' discipline in this policy-oriented integration of sciences. Moreover, he envisioned political science "to take the lead in a configurative approach to the decision process in society" (Lasswell 1956:979).

Certainly political behavioralists were at times aware and concerned about the uneasy relation between the idea of social engineering and the values cherished in liberal, democratic societies. As early as in 1951, Oliver Garceau declared in a paper referred to as the 'behavioralist manifesto' (Research in the Political Process) that there were several ethical problems awaiting reflection in contemporary political research. Among the most urgent, a 'central conceptual controversy' was that involved in perceiving uniformities, describing recurring patterns, identifying the determinants and behaviour with the liberal, democratic faith in man's individual capacity to determine his own ends, to think rationally and to reach individual and creative decisions. On this faith rests the political structure of rights, the machinery of the democratic electorate, the party system and the values of the constitutional democratic state (Garceau 1951:69–85).

Yet the behavioralists seem to have shied away from tackling this problem head-on. Instead, it was deferred to a not-yet existing, but hoped-for, new, normatively oriented 'systematic' political philosophy (Easton 1951: 36-58; Lasswell 1949). It is interesting to note that far from dismissing political philosophy root and branch, there were several attempts – in the form of joint seminars and research sessions – to encourage the birth of a new sub-discipline that would meet these expectations and so deserve to be called 'a new political philosophy'. The reformers of the discipline did not obviously rejoice over the feud between themselves and the contemporary philosophical approaches. Yet instead of seeking reconciliation or collaboration – which, admittedly, was difficult to imagine – they invested their hopes in the serendipitous emergence of a radically renewed political philosophy.

5. The decline of the Messianic Spirit and the solitary pluralism of the discipline

In many ways, behavioralism was an immensely successful protest movement, which catalysed one of the most transformative periods in the history of the discipline of politics. Today's political science, its theories, methods, concepts and language – in fact, its entire political and scientific imagination – would be quite different without its effects. At the same time, many of the key desiderata of the behavioralist movement – like interdisciplinarity, a comprehensive and unitary social scientific theoretical and institutional framework, increasing the explanatory and predictive capabilities of the discipline, interventionist ambitions in tackling social problems, and the coining of a new and collaborative political philosophy, among others – conspicuously failed to materialize. In other words, the disciplinary revolution, as Terence Ball has suggested, succeeded in the short run largely due to its effective self-promotion, but failed in the long-run because of the over-ambitious promises it had made (Ball 1993:220–1).

Since its earliest years, inter-disciplinary synthesis of research methods, concepts, models – and even institutions – was seen as vital to any effective scientific tackling of some of the most urgent socio-political problems of the time. While specialization was considered one element in the re-shaping of political science, the specialized knowledge produced had to be channelled back in its turn to contribute to the general progress of man's mastering of nature and social problems. For instance, Lasswell, in his APSA Presidential Speech in 1956, argued that the contemporary fate of politics was determined by developments in physics – such as its creation of the atomic bomb – so that in future training of some political scientists in physics would be inevitable (Lasswell 1956). As we saw earlier, in the 1950s, many committees, seminars and working groups were established to foster hitherto unforeseen cooperation across social disciplines in the expectation that a common theoretical framework, at least from a suitable sharp angle of elevation, would eventuate. Indeed, some behavioralist, inter-disciplinary research institutes still exist today, but without the agenda of developing a unitary Science. Already *by* the end of the 1960s, social sciences' departmental and university reports begin increasingly to admit that no 'systematic' 'common theoretical framework' even within social sciences had been found; for instance, no common framework for social sciences and psychiatry (SSRC 1953). Hopes to integrate models or other research tools of the natural sciences into the social sciences appear to have dwindled even sooner, assisted not least by criticism from political scientists themselves.

"Scientific progress is slow," wrote David Easton in 1969, trying to understand the reasons behind what he called the 'post-behavioral revolution' in political science. The problem was not only that behavioralism had delivered on too few of its promises – "political scientists have proved so disappointingly ineffectual in anticipating the world in the 1960s" (Easton 1969) – but also that its critics were increasingly successful in contesting the validity and pertinence of these promises

in the first place. Methodologically, it no longer seemed appropriate "to treat political events and phenomena as natural events lending themselves to the same explanatory logic as found in physics and the other hard sciences" (Almond and Stephen 1977:189–522). Even from the scientific point of view alone, "orderly understanding, prediction, and control" as research goals fell under suspicion not only in the social sciences but in the natural sciences as well. The very notions of 'objectivity' and 'fact' changed their meaning drastically in the space of three post-war decades, as is reflected also in the emergence of a radically constructivist history of science in the period.

While there was increasing doubt surrounding the transformation of political science into a terrain of 'professional expertise' (Easton 1969:1059) offering technical solutions to social ills, there was a matching scepticism over its pose of political detachment. Such a pose, as their critics were not slow to point out, in fact made behavioralists beholden to maintaining the existing system (McCoy and Playford 1967). Its credo – "our task as experts is to offer advice about means only, not about the purposes to which our knowledge might be put" (Easton 1969: 1059) – was seen as simply a tacit reinforcement of the dominant ideologies and structures. These in turn were increasingly seen as highly discriminatory and problematic. It was probably no coincidence that enthusiasm for behavioralism began to wane at the time of civil rights movements and with the rise of feminism in 1960s, and waned further with the student protests in 1970. In this emerging perspective, behavioralism, while it called itself the science of democracy, presupposed only a minimal agency on the part of the citizens who – it was hoped – could be steered in the right direction by the 'experts'. 'Post-behavioralism' by contrast was explicitly 'critical' in its orientation, with the aim of empowering similarly more critical citizenship (Engeman 1995:214–217).

The period of the decline of behavioralism's 'messianic spirit' – as David Easton aptly called it – and the process of pluralization of political science coincided with the reinvigoration of political philosophy as a (little bit more) recognized sub-discipline. Yet it seems that behavioralism's acclaimed separation of political science and political philosophy had a lasting impact on both fields. What is widely seen as the rebirth of political philosophy – the publication of John Rawls' A Theory of Justice in the 1970s—marked a definitive divorce between political science and political philosophy, for decades accepted by the exponents of both. With the assumption that they were too different to meaningfully interact, they rarely now interfered with each other's affairs and for even preferred to refrain from mutual criticism – with one representing real life without idealism and the other idealism with little interest in real life.

6. In conclusion

Critics of the imagined future in which most human and social problems would surrender to scientific solutions were quick to point to the highly problematic relationship between this vision and the ideal and practice of citizenship as the

very cornerstone liberal democratic practices. Given the dream of predictability and corrigibility of social and political action, was their space in this scientific fantasy for politics or the practice of citizenship at all? Almost paradoxically, even as it dwelt upon its own practical implications, it risked rendering the role of political action superfluous. As the aim of the theorist had become to seek universally valid and *practicable* maxims, she had already carried out all work of substance. There was no real reason why the citizen or the statesman should not simply follow these maxims. The politician's prudence and judgement, and the coercive instruments to which, historically, she has had recourse, fade away in the face of the precise and comprehensive knowledge of the theorist: the man of politics only has to follow the universally valid maxims set out by the theorist. More than that, it is difficult to see how any criticism that comes from *praxis* would not by definition be redundant and unnecessary.

The relationship between theory and practice is a notoriously difficult one. Of course, we – today's political scientists and theorists – seek relevance for our research endeavors and to inform where we think policy-making proceeds in a misinformed way. But we would probably still be hesitant to embrace the prospect of a genuine dialogue with *political* perspectives, that is, in an unprejudiced manner to open ourselves to the criticisms by *praxis*. Here, the baffling results of the Brexit referendum in the UK and the election of Donald Trump as president are probably only the most obvious litmus tests for political analysts in stepping outside their usual frameworks of reference and seek new understanding beyond disbelief. Also, as aware as we may be of our own biases and values as pursuers of scientific truth today, it is still less than common to acknowledge that research may be as polemical a way to make sense and seek to shape the world as the rival domains from which it seeks to distinguish itself by the virtue of knowing better. The inherently polemical path of social sciences – and the careful balance between rhetoric as a learned wordcraft or inflation of words and ideas that over-promises to deliver social change – emerges so acutely from these mid-20th century debates because it is much easier to judge these from an outsider's perspective, as it were, than to recognize our own ambitions and fantasies. Taken in isolation, the language of the past sounds somewhat unfamiliar to contemporary ears, which makes it easier to hear what is jarring and discordant than it is to hear what is exaggerated and bizarre in our own political-scientific discourse. The formulations of today's impact and outreach factors, and of ambitious innovations might sound no less problematic in many respects, but they have become our very own 'box'. And sometimes the orientation towards the past and not only the future is needed for the striving towards the highly acclaimed critical and creative thinking.

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