
Comparative Politics: A Half-Century Appraisal

Author(s): Sigmund Neumann

Source: *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Aug., 1957), pp. 369-390

Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Southern Political Science Association

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2126766>

Accessed: 21-03-2018 10:34 UTC

REFERENCES

Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:

http://www.jstor.org/stable/2126766?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents

You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Southern Political Science Association, The University of Chicago Press are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of Politics*

COMPARATIVE POLITICS: A HALF-CENTURY APPRAISAL*

SIGMUND NEUMANN
Wesleyan University

THE ORIGIN OF A DISCIPLINE

IN THE BEGINNING was Comparison. Or in the words of our centenarian, Woodrow Wilson: "I believe that our own institutions can be understood and appreciated only by those who know somewhat familiarly other systems of government and the main facts of general institutional history. By the use of a thorough comparative and historical method, moreover, a general clarification of views may be obtained. . . Certainly it does not now have to be argued that the only thorough method of study in politics is the comparative and historical."¹ What has happened to comparative

* This paper was presented at the American Political Science Association meeting, Washington, D. C., September, 1956. The author is indebted to the valuable comments of the panel discussants: Taylor Cole, Herman Finer, Charles B. Robson, Lucian W. Pye, K. N. Thompson, F. C. Englemann. The paper was also critically read by two elder statesmen of the profession, Francis W. Coker and Henry R. Spencer. Their thoughtful suggestions were gratefully incorporated as far as the set space of the essay permitted it.

¹Woodrow Wilson, *The State. Elements of Historical and Practical Politics* (Boston, 1889), pp. xxxv-xxxvi. The significance of the comparative and historical approach for the young discipline was previously pronounced by Munroe Smith in the programmatic opening statement to the first American journal in the field: "What then are the methods of the social sciences? All the various methods employed may be grouped under one term: *comparison*. The single fact means nothing to us; we accumulate facts that seem akin; we classify and reclassify them, discarding superficial and accidental similarities as we discover deeper substantial identities. We accumulate and compare facts from our own and from foreign countries; we accumulate facts from the immediate and more remote past, and compare them with each and with present facts. Statistics, comparative legislation, history—these are means and modes of accumulating facts for comparison. . . . Of all these auxiliary sciences, the most important is *history*. All other methods of comparative study may be said to operate on a single plane—the plane of the present. History gives to the Social Sciences the third dimension, and thus indefinitely increases the range of comparison. But it does far more than this. To the application of the historical method we owe the discovery that social institutions persist and at the same time change from generation to generation and from century to century. . . ." See "The Domain of Political Science," *Political Science Quarterly*, I (1886), 3ff.

politics since those very early days of our Association and especially since its official birth in 1903, when the society was founded as "an outgrowth of a movement looking toward a National Conference on Comparative Legislation"?²

The celebration of Woodrow Wilson's centennial is an appropriate time to take account of our discipline. This tentative appraisal is an attempt to gain some historical perspective for our study of comparative politics, which, to the delight of its lone-wolf old-timers, suddenly seems to have received a new impetus. Both this reawakened interest and the characteristic stages of the preceding development—with its ups and downs—are not accidental, but a vivid illustration of the unfolding of our discipline within its specific historical and social setting. By its very nature, political science is embedded in time and space. Part and parcel of the social sciences, it shares with them the grandeur and the misery of a critical field. The sciences of man and his decisions ("sciences of ethics" in the meaningful classical terminology) flourish, if they do not actually originate, in times of crisis. As long as society, the state, the world community seem to be in order, one is not concerned about them. It is at the breaking-points of history when man's values are questioned, his institutions shattered, his international bonds cut—it is in the challenge of revolutionary upheaval or in the defense of a threatened system that eminent social scientists come to the fore. This is also the hour of the "great simplifiers" against whose appearance the famed Swiss historian, Jacob Burckhardt, warned a hundred years ago. It is the age of the sage and the charlatan, a dangerous era, full of both promise and perils. We are living in such a time of crisis.

Politics, in theory as well as in practice, is faced with pressing issues and decisions. Against this background we must rethink our traditional tenets and reconsider our changing comparisons. Politics demands a renewed response from each generation. What brought the discipline into being in the United States at the turn of the century? What does it mean today?

Observing public opinion as a whole, we see that it has undergone, within this half-century, significant changes in the approach to the affairs of the state—from political alchemy to political mor-

²Jesse S. Reeves, "Perspectives in Political Science 1903-1928," *American Political Science Review*, XXIII (February, 1929), 1-16.

phology to comparative government proper. The mere collection (out of curiosity) of hapazard, exotic facts was the stage for the beginner in world affairs a generation ago. A more serious and systematic consideration of significant dates became exciting to a young nation discovering the wide world between the two World Wars. And now, in their aftermath, a purposeful comparison of alternatives in policy decisions—a comparison which is the prerequisite for the maturing of protagonists among the great powers—makes demands that the academic discipline grow and change its character entirely. Who among the teachers of comparative government has not observed this amazing transformation as reflected in changing student attitudes within recent decades?

As for the young discipline itself, the shifts were even more articulate and characteristically quite separate from the prevailing climate of unlimited possibilities in the United States—a sign, indeed, of the intelligentsia's alienation (so much talked about at present, though probably with much less justification than formerly). To be sure, political science started out as an esoteric enterprise of a small group of academicians in the midst of an America that did not question its own existence, its power of absorbing an ever-growing population, its promises of the wide open spaces, and its continental security, guaranteed by the mighty British navy in control of the seven seas. If any criticism arose at all, it was merely out of a concern for particulars, calling for limited amelioration: the proper assimilation of successive waves of immigration, the integration of racial minority groups, the coordination of social strata in the fast-growing giant cities. If there had been only these concerns, however, political science would never have been developed.³

³The same holds true of our good neighbor, sociology. It is not accidental that for decades it eked out a modest existence as a preparatory course for social workers in a few American women's colleges, somewhat glamorized by crusading publicists and disappointed ministers turned reformers. Apart from the lone giants William Graham Sumner at Yale and Lester F. Ward at Brown and small groups of sociologists such as those around the University of Chicago who were very much under the influence of continental theorists, sociology as a systematic discipline did not develop before the radical crisis of the late twenties that called for a reconsideration of the whole society as a major concern. For the specific "native" elements and the succeeding stages of this "American Science," see Roscoe C. and Gisela J. Hinkle, *The Development of Modern Sociology* (New York, 1954); for an equally short, suggestive treatment of the relations of sociology to the other social sciences, see George Simpson, *Man in Society: Preface to Sociology and the Social Sciences* (New York, 1954).

Political science as a distinct discipline is confined largely to the present century. Originally the study of the state, if undertaken at all, was dealt with by historians, jurists and philosophers. Even in this short period of its independent existence, three definite stages of development may be recognized in the whole field and, with some slight, though characteristic variations, to be sure, equally detected in the specific areas of our research—in theory and public law, in national government and public administration, in international affairs and comparative politics. One may characterize the prevailing intellectual climate of these three phases as idealistic, positivistic, and realistic.

THE STAGES OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Rationalist Idealism. What brought about the first school of political scientists was the deep dissatisfaction among some young academicians who measured the reality of their American community against the ideals of an imagined *polis* and found it wanting. They were not ashamed to be called idealists. It is easy for today's sophisticate to smile at the naiveté of their concepts and convictions, yet their complaints about the disease of "Congressional Government,"⁴ of "Boss rule," and "the shame of the cities" were real, and so were their models of proper politics. Not that they all agreed on any specific governmental system as the best, but they all shared the deep conviction that such an ideal did exist and could be pragmatically realized in a step-by-step development.

Three fundamental assumptions apparently served as the basis of their conception of comparative politics: the belief in the assured spread of democratic institutions, the essential harmony of interests among peoples, and the basic rationality of men who, by discussion

⁴Cf. Woodrow Wilson, *Congressional Government* (1884). The fluctuating popularity of this American classic in itself reflects the shifts of power in the United States government between the congressional and executive branches. Written in the period of weak presidential leadership between Lincoln and Cleveland, its findings were seriously questioned by Wilson himself in his preface to the 15th printing (1900) and practically repudiated by his later *Constitutional Government in the United States* (1908), written in praise of presidential leadership. The volume, following upon the careers of Cleveland and Teddy Roosevelt, shows a preparation for Wilson's own historical role. However, subsequent weak presidential leadership has evidenced the recurring nature of the disease and illustrated the renewed timeliness of Wilson's original attack.

and the interplay of opposing ideas, ultimately, and almost automatically, would reach a common understanding.⁵

Form rather than function, means of communication rather than content-analysis of dynamic forces, were the main concerns of the experts. In comparative politics this meant a primary emphasis on a descriptive study of national institutions, constitutional structures and administrative organizations. This concern reflected not only the natural desire to give the young discipline a definite and concrete framework before it could grapple with the more fluid forces of dispersive dynamics; but such modesty in aim and aspirations was also meant to reject the doubts and accusations of the established older social sciences concerning the "scientific reliability" of politics. It was its essentially political orientation, and therewith its "subjective" ties, which made it suspect in the eyes of the so-called "objective" disciplines. Indeed, the emancipation of political science was to some extent a not-altogether-voluntary declaration of independence; it could have meant expulsion from the temples of the university. And in order to prevent this threatening fate, the young political science desperately tried to keep out of "politics" and to stand so to speak "on neutral ground." Such a position was understandable for the fledgling, whose uneasy flights fluctuated between a childlike dependence on its mother disciplines—philosophy, history, economics and public law—and a fierce fight for emancipation from their tutelage.

The retreat to factual description and expert advice, no doubt, allowed political science to develop pioneering tasks which in a way anticipated certain characteristic contributions of the next

⁵To mention but one among many "confessions" of original motivation, there is the statement of the founder of the first School of Political Science at Columbia University: "My memory traveled back to that terrifying hour in the winter of 1863 when alone, amid the horrors of nature and war, I first resolved to consecrate my life's work to substituting the reign of reason for the rule of force." John W. Burgess, *Reminiscences of an American Scholar* (New York, 1934), p. 197. These crucial assumptions and consequential policies were spelled out most dramatically in the field of world politics. The difficulties in international affairs, according to this idealistic school, were primarily due to a lack of communication and proper procedure. Promotion of international intercourse and of new methods of arbitration, therefore, was regarded as the primary aim in that era of conferences. The Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague and the League of Nations became the epitome of the age's attainments and the efficacy of these institutions became the criterion of crisis in the succeeding decades.

phase in its academic process. Yet such deep-seated, defensive dispositions led, especially in later periods, to strange adaptations of a conceptual course which in turn led political science to neglect the essential assignments of its domain. These trying adjustments were aggravated by an additional factor in the American academic picture. Without elaborating here on the complexities of trans-Atlantic acculturation, it is well to remember that the young political science borrowed heavily from continental experiences, as did American universities on the whole. Practically all the founders of the profession had received significant graduate training, if not their higher degrees, in European universities. Germany especially was the academic Mecca of a whole generation of social scientists and through this experience it made a deep impact on the development of higher learning in the United States.⁶ What is even more important to recall in this connection is the altogether different intellectual position of the German universities, and of the social sciences in particular, in the Bismarck era. While some of the great German masters—Gneist, Roscher, Schmoller, Treitschke—of those impressionable young Americans wielded considerable influence on the political and social-economic make-up of the new German Empire, their academic role was circumscribed within a limited framework.

The universities, which had once been centers of the fight for freedom, had now been transformed into guardians of training for leadership in important public offices, the judiciary, the bureaucracy, and the teaching profession. To be sure, in performing this crucial function, the academicians could allow themselves the privilege of "freedom of research," especially in the less dangerous fields of philosophy and the arts. Even a professor of economics was permitted to utter some radical thoughts, for the Second Empire was not a totalitarian dictatorship. It did allow for certain aberrations, if only as a safety valve, as long as they did not disturb the political order—and this Hegel's disciples certainly did not do. Enthusiastic academic admirers of the omnipotent state that they were (reassured by the victories of the Iron Chancellor), they glorified the bureaucracy as the unquestioning guarantor of transcendental order against the anarchy of free-floating Western demo-

⁶The only institute of political science that had a marked influence on the young American discipline apart from the German universities, was the *École Libre des Sciences Politiques* at Paris.

cratic ideas. With the uncomfortable exceptions of a few great liberal non-conformists, such as Theodor Mommsen, they increasingly retreated to the mere recruitment of experts and a conscious separation from policy decisions. This political castration and unassuming ivory-tower isolation was the price they paid for the social prestige they undoubtedly commanded. No wonder that, during the Wilhelminic Empire, a concept of the social sciences developed which sought to rationalize this specific historical plight. It hit most tragically those academic teachers who were born leaders and who in other nations and under different circumstances might well have become the spokesmen of their people. The fateful development of Max Weber serves as a vivid illustration of this crucial estrangement.⁷

Transmitted to an altogether different American atmosphere, such cultural borrowing could easily lead to new tensions between continental systems of rigid abstractions and the concrete world of the pragmatically-minded United States. And, strangely, it was often the most abstract theory that made the deepest impression on the master-practitioners of daily life. No doubt, Hegel found disciples, and even Bismarck, admirers among this first generation of American social scientists; some of whom found it difficult to reconcile their admiration with the national fervor after the entry of the United States into World War I. It would not be difficult to show fundamental discrepancies between an inherent inclination toward pragmatic progressive politics and a determined drive for scientific systematics, embraced by the very same people.

What held this pioneer generation together was an unshaken belief in a rational progress which justified the scientific undertaking as a genuine moral crusade and directed the march to man's freedom. In the search for the proper scientific technique there was undoubtedly much to admire and to adopt in the European universities, especially if their deep-seated societal breaks and persistent presuppositions were obscured by an idealistic perspective. While the stimulus and strength of American political scientists

"Only seen against this background can the implication of his "theory of science" be fully grasped and especially his much discussed and often misunderstood concept of *Wertfreiheit*. A literal transposition of his socially conditioned formula of a "science free from value judgments" into a completely different American landscape has no doubt led to a most questionable reading of his essential teachings.

sprang from altogether different sources, a seeming symbiosis of rationalist idealism could thus prevail through the first decades.

The coming of the First World War was the first deep disturbance, but it remained an isolated phenomenon, especially as Wilson succeeded in persuading the nation that this was "the war to end all wars" and the war "to make the world safe for democracy." The unfortunate turn of events was interpreted as a seemingly necessary step leading up to popular government and the League of Nations. It was not until a decade later (a natural time-span to be sure for such a radical break-through) that the full impact of this new age of world wars and revolutions was felt, and that a changing climate of opinion could be observed.

Material Positivism. The second phase of American political science research was closely related to the frustrating experiences of the long Armistice between the Great Wars, for they gave rise to a growing disillusionment with the basic tenets of the idealistic school. Instead of the "assured" spread of free institutions, aggressive dictatorships emerged; despite a galaxy of conferences to promote international understanding, the system of collective security collapsed vis-à-vis its first tests; and irrational, integral nationalisms held the perspective of reasonable man and the harmony of interests up to ridicule.

In natural reaction to the sweeping philosophic idealism of the first group of scholars, a new generation turned its interest to the concrete and detailed study of material forces. This positivistic school rejected the naive utopianism of the earlier stage by accepting an equally naive cynicism. Ideologies were presented as subjective sentiments, superfluous and misleading rationalizations of the simple reality of objective power. Obviously such a violent reaction did a great injustice to the actual accomplishments of the early pathfinders of political science. Yet is this not the usual consequence of "scientific progress"? Or, to quote Goethe, "People throw themselves in politics, as they do on the sick-bed, from one side to the other in the belief that they can thus find a better position." In retrospect both periods played their part in the unfolding of political science; and critical though a new team of researchers must be of the position taken by that of its predecessors, one will have to register equally their major contributions to the discipline.

What were the approaches and aims, procedures and postulates of the second stage? First of all it was a sobering phase, suspicious of great panaceas, quick generalizations, broad comparisons and unrecognized deductions; in short, of all speculative theory. Consequently it turned toward detailed, concrete phenomena, toward inductive empiricism, toward measurable and verifiable data in order to make politics at last "scientific."

No doubt, this period of "objective" fact-finding, in its pre-occupation with methodological problems, sharpened the tools of our perception and our critical source analysis by introducing and testing elaborate techniques of case studies, survey methods and statistical research. Thus it contributed immeasurably to an exacting delineation of the discipline. Moreover, the material enrichment of comparative-government research during these years of strenuous, painstaking collections gave the field for the first time a substantive foundation from which to operate a rationally controllable body politic and to advance the frontiers of our knowledge.⁸ New areas of scholarly inquiry developed, and the machinery of functioning political systems was subjected to intensive analysis. The rise of public administration was probably the most conspicuous corollary to this trend. At times it almost seemed as if the enterprising expansion and proselyting zeal of students of public administration were pre-empting the whole field.⁹ In truth, the data brought together consisted mostly of the mere raw material out of which politics is made, and it was not a particularly excit-

⁸The monumental *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (which made its first appearance in 1934) served as a symbol of such stock-taking and is the pride of the period.

⁹The importance of public administration at the time could be measured by its predominance in the programming of the American Political Science Association meetings, not to mention the financing of research projects. Such a development might have been regarded as a concomitant to a general return of interest in domestic politics. Yet a careful check of predominant comparative government texts would have revealed an extraordinary, if not exorbitant, extension of administrative analysis in that field. Noteworthy in this connection is the rapid emancipation of public administration, this most empirical and easily static specialty, from its rough and ready beginnings and its turn toward more sophisticated, dynamic, and philosophical approaches—an indication of the vital forces, embodied even in the seemingly formal paraphernalia of politics, which could be tapped by ingenious research. For these "emerging trends" see the series of essays by George A. Graham, John M. Gaus, Charles S. Ascher and Wallace S. Sayre in the *Public Administration Review* (1950-51), X, 69-77, 161-168, 229-235; XI, 1-9.

ing collection at that. In fact, one might venture to say, with one of comparative government's keenest students, evaluating his own specialty after it had passed this trying period, that it was caught in a "tedious and stagnating routine."¹⁰

The young collegians knew it, too. If they entered the study of politics at all, they turned to the entertaining and enthralling "international relations," which in some universities had moved out of the domain of political science altogether. The increasing artificial separation of world politics and comparative government was certainly detrimental to both—the one often degraded to pontifical pronouncements on the daily headlines for up-to-date faddists and young men in a hurry; the other a dump heap of dusty data—where a common approach, with systematic penetration and scholarly perspective, to the burning issues of the time would instead have been mutually beneficial.

That comparative government seemed for a while to be completely over-shadowed among its academic companions by the more exacting public administration and, among the college crowd, by the more exciting international affairs was not the most serious shortcoming in this low ebb of its esteem.

The real problem and peril of this second period only becomes apparent if one probes into the underlying assumptions and expectations of its protagonists; because, proud declarations notwithstanding, this phase had its *raison d'être*, too, and was by no means "free from value judgments." The prevailing philosophy—uncouth and inarticulate to be sure—was that of positivism and, like August Comte's system itself, it was open to "positivist" criticism, so adroitly administered by Vilfredo Pareto, the newly elevated scholarly saint of this very period. This master mind of man's irrationality (seeking out constant and determining "residues" underlying the shifty and "non-logical derivations" of human conduct) indeed appealed to a generation whose belief in progress and rational man had been shaken by the chaos of war and revolution.

This shocking experience, if it was not to lead to the cynic's complete resignation and utter despair (and the American mood was hardly inclined toward such philosophical pessimism), aroused the desire to seek the persistent powers and determining laws which

¹⁰Karl Löwenstein, "Report on the Research Panel on Comparative Government," *American Political Science Review*, XXXVIII (June, 1944), 540-548.

make irresponsible and irascible man operate. In search of this "Open Sesame" of the rationale behind man's irrationalism, twentieth-century scientific inquiry has indeed pushed forward the frontiers of knowledge and has made its pioneers (Freud, Köhler and many others) welcome pathfinders to a new political science. Its novelty was due in no small part to the rich influx in methods and material from neighboring and even distant research disciplines. Yet the pertinent impact of such scientific expansion and crossfield fertilizations was to be felt only later and more fully in its third stage, when a more cautious and confident discipline would weigh, digest and assimilate the findings of other fields.

Such careful differentiation was certainly not the order of the day in the earlier stages of the explorers' enthusiasm when an uncritical identification with the natural sciences was often proclaimed. Behind such a confession one might even have detected an urge for a simple, over-all formula. And in justice to that past phase, one might remember that it was part and parcel of a cultural crisis—a period which, having lost basic values, was in desperate search for stable concepts, indisputable tenets, absolute standards. Such new signposts the universities' new scientific absolutism was to establish. Whenever its restless youth could not find satisfactory answers, it looked for them outside the lecture halls (and not seldom found them within the university walls). This was the attraction of Marxism that it seemed to give a complete comprehension of past history, a scientific prediction of the inescapable future, and above all a marching order for lost man by giving him a new footing outside himself. For such security he was even ready to surrender his freedom. These were the deeper roots of modern totalitarianism and its fascinating appeal (leaving aside the perplexing question whether the revolution which had found a fatherland had much in common with original Marxism). Only a new image of man and his meaningful place in society could defeat such morbid self-destruction.

Most certainly such a new perspective was not presented by the academic school which won some ardent disciples in the thirties, namely *Geopolitik*. On the contrary, this importation from the continent was the true counterpart to Marxism, and indeed in Europe had widely served as a "Bourgeois Marxism." Now instead of economics it was space that became the absolute and exclusive yard-

stick. Its attractiveness resided above all in its simultaneous promise of stability and dynamic action, its scientific absoluteness and its presumed concreteness. Geopolitics merged the disturbing complexities of life into one single and seemingly objective factor. In the unending flood of continuous change, space seems to be the invariable, independent of man and events. Rootless man seeks a new hold outside himself. His loud call for action—speedy, glamorous, continuous—in the big world is a desperate move to make him forget the emptiness of his small inner life. The powerful dynamics of the modern world-conqueror is only an expression of man's desire to escape from his despair of real values and from himself. He is at war with the world, because he is not at peace with himself. Yet man cannot escape his responsibility as a man. Nor can a science of society and social order establish itself as a "natural science" without missing its challenge completely.

The very fact that space represented the one stable element, presumably independent of man's decision, by no means made it the most important element in world affairs. But the natural science of politics,¹¹ with its impressive principles of an everlasting mechanism of power balances, *seemed* to provide a monistic, scientific answer to a world longing for order and stability. When *Geopolitik* became instead the weapon of the unscrupulous Third Reich and an instrument of its unlimited drive for world conquest, it revealed a materialism devoid of any moral evaluation or restraint. The Second World War spelled the end of this cynical power politics and opened the way for a more adequate and exacting approach to a study of the state and society.

Before examining that third stage, a more serious, more subtle and, indeed, more scientific attempt at raising politics to the unimpeachability of an objective science must be dealt with: namely, the impact of the behavioral sciences.¹² No doubt political science

¹¹For an analysis of this case study of a natural science of politics, see Sigmund Neumann, "Fashions in Space," *Foreign Affairs*, XXI (January, 1943), 276-288. In its tri-partite division of *Geopolitik* as a science, a political weapon, and a *Weltanschauung*, the article warns against the present danger of forgetting the valuable emphasis on political geography as an essential element of political concern. Such forgetfulness is the frequent by-product of the passing of fashions.

¹²A suggestive balance sheet of pros and cons engendered by the emergence of the behavioral sciences is presented in a thoughtful essay by David B. Truman, "The Impact on Political Science of the Revolution in the Behavioral Sciences," in *Research Frontiers in Politics and Government* (Washington, D.C., Brookings Lectures, 1955), pp. 202-231.

gained much material enrichment, a refinement of research techniques, and some sober reassessment of its earlier generalizations through this confrontation and exchange with the developing findings of neighboring fields. At times, the very self-assurance and boldness of an expansive psychology and sociology intimidated a defeatist political science and threatened it with utter submission. One might find historical explanations for such unwarranted retreat from hardly-won positions. Political science has just passed through a period of insecurity and crisis, if not one of self-effacement. Its basic tenets had been shattered by war and revolution and the ensuing "retreat from reason." Deflated dreams of world order plunged a nation of missionaries back into a more accustomed and sober isolationism. In such a modest frame, politics did not look attractive to the enterprising youngster, if he entered the academic halls at all, instead of "the world that mattered." And when this world was shattered, too, by the great depression, the pressing problems of the economic crisis preoccupied the "braintrusters," who now concentrated their intellectual efforts upon finding "cures" for this internal disease.

Obviously this crisis did not occur in isolation, but required a world-wide perspective for its proper solution. Yet by and large (with the utopians' recent debacle still in mind), the country answered the threatening irrational break-through with a proud, "It can't happen here." Or was it "whistling in the dark," and fear of the unknown, that held back a courageous facing of the crisis? The successive one-track answers to the challenge of modern totalitarianism illustrate the changing moods of the time—from curiosity reports on inside stories of "megalomaniac one-man rule," to apologetic accommodations to a proud people's grievances, to the "shame of Versailles" and to appeasers' acceptance of the "bulwark against the Red Peril"—until the democracies were finally locked in battle with "the efficiency state of master organizers and propagandists."

The war, to be sure, awakened political science to its full responsibilities. Yet the martial exigencies called for quick action, for efficient services, and for specific and measurable results. In this respect the "behavioral sciences" seemed to excel, coming forward with verifiable propositions of refined sample-survey methods and models. Undoubtedly, the ascendancy of psychology and sociology derived in large part from the remarkable contribution which

these disciplines rendered during the war. It is equally undeniable that the spectacular field of public opinion measurement developed greatly in response to dictatorial mass manipulation, and even frequently accepted its underlying assumptions concerning human behavior. This proven war-time utility and the even greater promise of measurable social predictability raised the repute of the behavioral approach to a point, where it soon became the preferred, in fact for many serious scholars, the exclusive method of social science research. Only by becoming a natural science (in the way some of its eager converts defined it) could the social sciences justify their existence and the money spent by foundations on social research.

Political science, indeed, has profited greatly from collaboration with the so-called behavioral sciences and their exacting research methods. Yet it is in their absolutist dictum that only those phenomena which are measurable and calculable are worth scientific inquiry, that their influence may imperil the whole discipline of political science. If our research should concentrate exclusively, or even primarily, on these clearly circumscribed areas (which are often only peripheral), then political science would miss the key issues which are the crucial concern and daily dignity of our discipline.

Fortunately, under the cover of this seemingly "scientific" pre-dominance, a silent revolution has taken place which indicates that political science is entering upon a new plane. Only the first contours of its character and consequences can be drawn at this early stage of development. In a sense this third phase constitutes a natural step from both preceding stages to a higher plane, and, in the preservation and conciliation of their conflicting positions, it may possibly constitute an advance to a more promising synthesis.

Realism with Vision. Politics raised onto this third level must be modest in its claims and steady in its cautious endeavors. It has no blueprints, no great panaceas, no comprehensive concepts to offer, but a continuous adjustment and even improvisation in the light of an ever-changing political scene. Above all, it is impressed by the complexity of politics, the rich texture of the raw material, and the dynamic forces that constitute its full power. In this down-to-earth realism it has taken seriously the warning of the second school against easy generalizations and untested assumptions. Yet at the same time it has recognized that a mere fact-

finding spree may only lead into a no-man's land of mountains of meaningless material, if not directed beforehand by fundamental questions reflecting the researchers' aspirations. For this reason contemporary political scientists have gained a renewed respect for the searching theories and visions of the first generation of political scientists and, as so often is the case, have joined hands with their intellectual grandparents. Woodrow Wilson has been restored to a position commensurate with his contribution and crucial for our time.

What are the chief characteristics of this new phase in the study of politics? They are three-fold: an emphasis on dynamic processes, coupled with a rediscovery of the discipline's forgotten responsibility for policy decisions; a desire for the integration of the social sciences, dictated by a prevailing multi-causal approach to an entangled, intricate reality; and, as a consequence of the radical transformations around us, a new summons to a theoretical reorientation of the whole field. The emergence of these three trends is particularly evident in the field of comparative politics.

Our concern has turned away from a merely formal, legalistic and constitutional approach to a consideration of political dynamics and the processes of decision-making. Only when reaching beyond a mere political morphology of legislative, executive and judicial forms to the consequential comprehension of the political forces at work—men and movements in governments and parliaments, in political parties and pressure groups, and society's prevailing value structure—can responsible citizens recognize the different nature, purpose and direction of the political powers in being and in conflict. We want to know where, when and how politics is made in the constantly changing political scene. Such a new emphasis indicates that the instituted agencies, policies and procedures must have undergone fundamental changes, too.

It is at such a turning point that comparison gains a new momentum and a deeper meaning. "To know thyself, compare thyself to others." The comparative approach is, above all, an invaluable aid to a people's self-recognition and its sense of responsibility. It is not accidental that the great civilizations, like that of the Renaissance, were developed at the crossroads of history and articulated by the meeting of contrasting systems. This encounter alone made an awakening Western Europe more fully aware of her

own character and quality, apart from being naturally and fruitfully influenced by the impact of the strange new forces.

We are again living in such a period of opening frontiers, which will force us to recognize the values and concepts we live by and to test them anew against their challenge from abroad. It is in this crisis of our own society that comparative government becomes significant for the mature citizen. Beyond that, the intensive study of contrasting civilizations provides the necessary background for present-day policy decisions. While our planet is continuously shrinking, bringing the politics of far-distant areas into our compass, thoughtful students of public affairs have often been troubled by our limited "knowledge by experience." Its only substitute seems to be "knowledge by learning," which puts a great responsibility on our generation to make comparative government a live issue—comprehensive and contemporary.

In order to have such contemporary comprehension, comparative politics must widen its area of research far beyond its customary domain. The thoughtful treatise of Dankwart Rustow suggests in this respect a widening of our comparative perspective by a novel "focus on the non-Western world."¹³ It rightly questions our whole conceptual framework, which is still narrowly drawn within the patterns of Western experience alone. The altogether different historical setting of political problems and processes among the world's new protagonists necessitates a much more careful comparison of our global complexities. Moreover, this historical shift of power centers is accompanied by a radical upheaval of which the independence movement of formerly colonial peoples is only *one* significant feature.

This is an age of revolutions. And it is the very coincidence and confluence of these diverse streams that dramatize the dynamics of our time and make it difficult to grasp the direction it is taking. The contemporaneity of the much heralded liberations from "im-

¹³Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Comparison of Western and Non-Western Political Systems" (paper read at the American Political Science Association meeting, Washington, D. C., September 8, 1956); see also his *Politics and Westernization in the Near East* (Princeton, Center of International Studies, 1956), and the fundamental reports of the Social Science Research Council's Committee on Comparative Politics, "Comparative Politics of Non-Western Countries" and "A Suggested Research Strategy in Western European Government and Politics," *American Political Science Review*, XLIX (December, 1955), 1022-1049.

perialism" with democratic, national and social revolutions indeed creates a combination, which presents an altogether new phenomenon even if its component parts are still described with familiar labels. Nationalism in mid-twentieth-century Asia constitutes a different and infinitely more disturbing phenomenon than its simpler nineteenth-century European prototype.¹⁴

The outcome of these concomitant drives is hardly predictable, yet if one can take a hint from the pages of history, one may say that in the interwoven mixture of patterns and policies, it is the stronger revolution which sets the style and which may well direct the contending forces into the stream of the "coming world revolution." The professional strategists of this world revolution know this all too well and are ready to exploit the consequent confusion of the reluctant resisters. To master the revolution of our time, one must first of all fully understand the complexities and dynamics of present-day politics. For such a crucial comprehension political science must reach out to its sister disciplines. Fortunately, and not altogether accidentally, another *rapprochement*, which constitutes the second outstanding feature of the silent revolution in our decade, can be observed within the social sciences.

If one were to look for the historic break-through of the imaginary departmental borderlines which had hitherto been rigidly patrolled against incorrigible inter-departmental snipers and intruders, one might find that the Second World War marked that moment. War emergencies, no doubt, served as a major impetus to persuade difficult people to work together. The Office of Strategic Services and other governmental agencies became graduate schools for inter-departmental training and comprehensive comparisons such as we never attained before or after. Equally, the mushrooming area-study programs, while they naturally constituted a somewhat premature synthesis, did pioneering work in inter-disciplinary cooperation and policy formation, in evaluating research techniques and providing indispensable material stock-taking. Above all, people learned to talk to each other. Such experiences fostered respect for the neighboring fields, an increasing appreciation of their fruitful contributions, and a mounting desire for integration.

¹⁴For some cogent thoughts along these lines, see Hans Kohn, "A New Look at Nationalism," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, XXXII (Summer, 1956), 321-332; and "Some Reflections on Colonialism," *The Review of Politics*, XVIII (July, 1956), 259-268.

It is on the basis of this experience that political science can reassess its sister disciplines and call upon their services without the past trepidations of an immature contender striving for independence and constantly afraid of its former masters and oncoming competitors. The background materials of history and economics, anthropology and linguistics, psychology, psychiatry and sociology, to mention only the main auxiliaries, become a necessity for comparative studies, especially in a depth analysis of the lesser known areas. But the political scientist must also be aware of the fact that these supporting sciences, which emphasize altogether different aspects as their own central concerns, may not always offer the needed material, and that their findings may not always lend themselves to immediate incorporation in his own discipline. In short, he may find himself obliged to search for his own sources of information and his special slant of investigation.

The use of history, for instance, in the study of politics may demand a new perspective of a discipline, which, in its traditional presentation, has often tried to separate itself from policy-making decisions. In fact, the professionals may have forgotten altogether that the historian is "a prophet looking backwards," who, in reviewing past events and rewriting history for his own generation, makes past experience a meaningful part of the present-day challenge. Such novel application of traditional tools, in fact, can restore time-honored though forgotten principles, or open fresh avenues of neglected research. New fruitful concepts may thus evolve in the cross-fertilization of fields.¹⁵

¹⁵Such fructifications may be seen in the writings of Gabriel Almond and his developing concept of "political culture"; cf. his "Comparative Politics Systems" in *The Journal of Politics*, XVIII (August, 1956), 391-409. For a most recent statement see his Social Science Research Council paper (in collaboration with Myron Weiner), "A Comparative Approach to the Study of Political Groups" (Princeton, Center of International Studies, 1956).

In similar fashion, the encouraging development (at last!) of political sociology, promises substantial correlations between sociology and political science. For a sampling see: Rudolf Heberle, *Social Movements. An Introduction to Political Sociology* (New York, 1951); Hans Speier, *Social Order and the Risks of War; Papers in Political Sociology* (New York, 1952); S. M. Lipset, James Coleman and Martin Troer, *Union Democracy: The Internal Politics of the International Typographical Union* (Glencoe, Ill., 1956); S. M. Lipset and Juan Linz, *The Social Basis of Political Diversity in Western Democracies* (manuscript, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, 1956); S. N. Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation: Age Groups and the Social Structure*. See also Barrington Moore, "Sociological Theory and Contemporary Politics," *American Journal of Sociology*, XI (September, 1956), 107-115.

Having said all that about the necessity for a reintegration of the artificially separated social sciences in our time, one must quickly add that such a tremendous expansion is also some cause for alarm. A caveat is in order against easy generalizations and the transfer of research findings from alien domains, against the eclectics' semantic confusion and child-like play with big words and new tools. Such procedures may not only destroy the reputation of scholarship, but also the attempt at bridge-building between the disciplines.

One way of checking this threat is presented by a third trend current in this third phase of political science: the auspicious revival of theory. There is indeed a great need for a conceptual housecleaning, as the ideas we live by are desperately dusty, if not buried altogether in the attic of past remembrances.

Truly one could argue that a time-lag always exists between historical reality and its conceptualization, especially in a great period of transition when the political vocabulary has become quickly outmoded and hence full of misnomers. We are still living within an ideological framework of a hundred years ago and naturally cannot master our present-day political conflicts with such obsolete and often romantic stereotypes. This is a time when a meaningful historical comparison is called for. More than that, a theoretical clarification becomes an essential preliminary for the adoption of appropriate strategies in this revolutionary age. All fundamental concepts of politics, like nationalism and sovereignty, imperialism and colonization, socialism and statism, classes and parties, leaders and masses, must therefore be redefined in the light of a new reality. On this basis alone can theory become, as it should, a guide to political action, a compass through chaos.

Not only do concepts change through the ages—and indeed at an accelerated pace in this twentieth century—but also different historical types arise concurrently in our time. The loose application of the same term to the most divergent phenomena and the lack of their clear theoretical differentiation has led to dangerous confusions. Revolutions, like military battles, national and international, have been lost through obsolete strategy. Conceptual clarification thus becomes the indispensable preliminary for politics appropriate to our times. What is needed above all is a new realistic reappraisal of theory's proper place in the social sciences.

Neither the beginner's absolute, over-all generalizations nor the complete abandonment of a systematic scheme, such as characterized the despairing second generation of political scientists, could be the answer. It is necessary that our political science concepts be spelled out in time and space, both in their specific historical situation and in their local representation. This puts natural restraints on our theorizing.

The question of a proper approach to a meaningful theory of politics poses a dilemma of an even more fundamental nature. The overwhelming data of our material would fall into a conceivable pattern only if seen through the controlled order of a conceptual framework, which in turn cannot be conceived save in full appreciation of the rich texture of reality. The task of attempting to systematize our knowledge, therefore, is confronted by almost overwhelming difficulties and can proceed only by a simultaneous attack on both theory and practice. Social concepts evolve by stages, remaining necessarily fragmentary and tentative and, at best, present merely a useful working hypothesis for a deeper penetration into an ever-changing reality. Hence a conceptualization of politics must be a constantly renewed effort.

One further complication for a pertinent thought-pattern of twentieth-century politics derives from its extraordinary extension. In this indivisible world, which has become global and total in war and peace, in democracies and dictatorships, comfortable frontiers between man's private existence and social commitments, between domestic and foreign affairs are blurred, if not meaningless altogether. This is an age of international civil war. Its international conflicts are decided by the civilian morale and social cohesion in the nations' hinterlands. The impact of domestic forces on world politics plays havoc with Ranke's hitherto unchallenged postulate of the primacy of foreign policy. On the other hand, national upheavals are deeply affected, if not largely directed, by social and ideological forces, reaching far beyond the domestic domain. And last but not least, the restlessness of modern man—in his deep anxieties, his shifting loyalties, his drives for security—is at the base of great politics, at home and abroad. It is this simultaneous attack on all sides which gives twentieth-century politics its three-dimensional involvement—personal, national, and international—and its confusing complexity.

The study of comparative politics necessarily reflects this complexity. Strategically situated at the crossroads of politics, comparative politics must reach out from its national bases into the area of international power politics and at the same time dig down into the personal plight of individuals. Only from such a triple springboard can political science hope to launch a meaningful comparative analysis that will be at the same time comprehensive, circumspect, and contemporary. For that it will need a dynamic discernment of its own, the concerted support of adjoining disciplines, and a fresh theoretical perspective of the social sciences as a whole. The deep dissatisfaction, so widely felt with the teaching and research efforts in our field during the last decade, has centered exactly on these vital points.¹⁶

It could justly be argued that the traditional scope and method of comparative studies have not really allowed for genuine comparison, that in their formalistic, country-by-country descriptions of isolated aspects of a single culture, students of comparative government have not scientifically tested their inherent democratic bias, have shied away from farther-reaching research hypotheses, have evaded crucial policy issues and thus have missed out on the very contributions which the comparative advance should render to a mature and responsible political science. Such vigorous criticism is indeed a healthy sign that the field is taking a fresh look at itself, and, by measuring its own shortcomings, giving itself a new start.

Even more important and encouraging is the sudden sprouting of numerous productive and stimulating studies in the field, precisely professing these new concerns for dynamic analyses, interdisciplinary correlation and conceptual differentiation.¹⁷ At this

¹⁶For a measured catalogue of this mounting criticism, see Roy C. Macridis, *The Study of Comparative Government* (New York, 1955).

¹⁷To name only a few, the following works should rank high among recent American monographs: Gabriel A. Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York, 1950), and *The Appeals of Communism* (Princeton, 1954); David Apter, *The Gold Coast in Transition* (Princeton, 1955); Raymond A. Bauer, Alex Inkeles and Clyde Kluckhohn, *How the Soviet System Works* (Cambridge, 1956); Frederick C. Barghoorn, *Soviet Russian Nationalism* (New York, 1956); B. R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, W. N. McPhee, *Voting* (Chicago, 1954); Bernard C. Cohen, *Peace Making in a Democracy. The Political Process and the Japanese Peace Settlement* (Princeton, 1956); Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago, 1956); Louis Edinger, *German Exile Politics* (Berkeley, 1956); Henry Ehrmann, *Employers' Associations in France* (New York, 1956); Mario Einaudi and François Goguel, *Christian*

new stage, the discipline demands from its field-workers first of all the opening of virgin territory in the "underdeveloped areas" of Asia, Africa, South America, and a fresh reappraisal of the seemingly familiar landscapes of the Western World. Beyond such necessary groundwork in the by now well-established and defined areas, research must reach out for fruitful inter-regional studies in comparison and contrast. Such far-flung tasks—all too often beyond one man's capacity—necessitate team-work which coordinates and respects the findings of many without hampering individual initiative and enterprise, evaluation and inquisitiveness.¹⁸

Above all, in such a pioneering phase comparative politics must be cautious in its conceptual framework. Concepts it needs, but they must be now—more than ever—of a dynamic nature, allowing for the fluidity and flexibility of ever-new experiences. There are concepts available which have that quality. It is up to our ingenuity to seek them out. Our definitions of political parties and interest groups, of leaders and followers, of crisis strata and political generations should never petrify the political dynamics, but should present them as what they are: concrete and concise, colorful and consequential. Only such directives will lead to a meaningful confrontation, because, though the comparative approach is as old as political science, the proper use of comparison has hardly been undertaken.†

Democracy in Italy and France (Notre Dame, 1952); Rupert Emerson, *Representative Government in South East Asia* (Cambridge, 1955); Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge, 1953); Barrington Moore, *Soviet Politics—The Dilemma of Power* (Cambridge, 1950), and *Terror and Progress—USSR* (Cambridge, 1954); James K. Pollock, H. L. Bretton, F. Grace and D. S. McHargue, *German Democracy at Work* (Ann Arbor, 1955); Lucian Pye, *Guerilla Communism in Malaya* (Princeton, 1956); Dankwart A. Rustow, *The Politics of Compromise. A Study of Parties and Cabinet Governments in Sweden* (Princeton, 1955); Robert A. Scalapino, *Democracy and the Party Movement in Pre-War Japan* (Berkeley, 1953); Klemens von Klemperer, *Germany's New Conservation* (Princeton, 1957); and Nobutaka Ike, *Japanese Politics* (N. Y., 1957).

¹⁸For such a preliminary project of cooperation, see Sigmund Neumann (ed.), *Modern Political Parties: Approaches to Comparative Politics* (Chicago, 1956).

†For comments on Professor Neumann's article, see Views and Opinions (Ed.).