

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES

Quincy Wright

I- Political Science and Politics

1. Are political science and politics closely related? Walter Lippmann says that politicians think political scientists know nothing about politics, and that scientists think political scientists know nothing about science! In Lippmann's opinion politicians believe that they can only learn their trade from experience, not from books. An idea given some support by Michael Polany is distinction between personal knowledge and scientific knowledge. Scientists, on the other hand, believe that only facts, susceptible of precise analysis and measurement and adapted to mathematical treatment can make a science. Consequently, they think political behavior cannot be made into a science.

2. However, a good many political scientists have become politicians, as, for example, Woodrow Wilson who was president both of the American Political Science Association and of the United States. On the other hand, a good many politicians have become political scientists, as, for example, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and Harry Truman, all presidents of U.S. who later wrote on political science.

3. Furthermore, to an increasing extent politicians, especially those in high position, have found it necessary to utilize political scientists in their administration. Thus, President Wilson and President Franklin Roosevelt called upon Universities to let their professors serve in Washington during the two world wars. President

Professor Wright is a visiting professor at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Ankara.

Kennedy drained the departments of Government and History at Harvard to serve his administration.

4. A somewhat different kind of bridge between politics and science is developing in the rising discipline of "Science Affairs." This concept has been used in connection with the Council on Atomic Age Studies at Columbia University to prepare people familiar with the natural sciences to advise the government and to forecast the probable influence of scientific and technological advances on social and political affairs. The council realizes that many political decisions especially those related to defense, require precise knowledge of the natural sciences and technologies, and that politicians and administrators have usually been unable to talk the language of science. Consequently they need at their elbows such people as the scientific advisor of the president, who is probably today one of the most important officials in Washington. This discipline of "Science Affairs" seeks to meet the problem discussed by C.P. Snow in his book on *Two Civilization—the Humanists and the Scientists*. It is not political science in the sense of making a science of politics but in the sense of relating science to politics.

II- Politics

It will be useful at this point to define politics and political science in order to understand their relationship more precisely.

1. Politics means the art of gaining group ends against the opposition of other groups. It implies action rather than theory. In my opinion it implies conflict, whether between interest groups, political parties, states, or alliances, and whether the method of dealing with conflict is persuasion or coercion. Some exertion of power in broadest sense is necessary to overcome such opposition.

2. Political power does not necessarily mean military power. It includes the power of the *purse*, the power of the *word* and the power of the *law*, as well as the power of the *sword*. The sword, it is true, has been characteristic of international politics as suggested by the German writher on War, Karl Clausewitz, who said that war was politics carried on by other means. On the other hand, the power of the word through political propaganda has been characteristic of domestic politics and has been much used by the communists and other revolutionary movements. But all four of these types of power are used both between parties and between states. Threats of vio-

lence, assassinations, insurrection and civil war have occurred in domestic politics. Promise of rewards, patronage, and the offering of bribes are also known in all types of political action, as are the use of propaganda influence and education to persuade opinion or to incite action: the appeal to rights and law is often used as a political method. The diplomat frequently appeals to international law while the party leader appeals to principles of the Constitution.

3. There are important differences between domestic and international politics. In the former the law usually controls political methods forbidding violence and corruption, yet both occasionally take place. International law has exerted less influence over the methods of international politics but it has exerted some influence even in time of war. By the Charter of United Nations, the members have pledged themselves to refrain from the threat or use of force in international relations except to defend themselves from armed attack or to engage in collective security operations under the authority of the United Nations. It, therefore, seems that in spite of differences there is a close resemblance in the methods of politics whatever type of group may be engaged in it.

III- Political Science

1. Political science is a "discipline", that is, a logically organized body of concepts and propositions which is supposed to be useful for predicting what politicians are likely to do and what is likely to be the course of political change. This is the object of the "pure science" of politics, but political scientists more often consider their discipline an "applied science", providing useful guides for conducting political activity toward particular goals, or for controlling the political activity of other groups. Applied political science, like all applied sciences (engineering, medicine, law, education) implies that certain values, purposes or goals are desirable and orients ideas and methods toward their realization. Pure sciences, on the other hand, seek to avoid evaluations, confining themselves to predicting the probable course of events.

2. Political scientists have not been in complete agreement as to what should be the central concept of their discipline. Political science has actually emerged through the synthesizing of a number of disciplines, such as political history, political theory, comparative government, international law, constitutional law, etc... It did not

begin with a theory as did for example, economics which developed either from the theory set forth by Adam Smith in the eighteenth century or by Karl Marx in the 19th century. Political scientists have in recent years attempted to make their discipline a logical development of a central concept. But they have differed as to whether this central concept is the sovereign state, power, conflict, or the human will.

3. The original political scientist, from whose writings all modern political scientist have taken inspiration, was Aristotle. His book on "Politics" concerned all the activity of the Greek *Polis*, the *sovereign state* of his day. In this book he set forth the purposes, the forms of the institutions both political and administrative, the tendencies to change, and the internal and external policies of the Polis utilizing both comparative and analytic methods. He distinguished politics, the study of the state, from economics, the study of the household, which, in his time, engaged in agriculture, the making of textiles, the provision of food and housing, and other activities which today are usually be recognised as economic. Most modern political scientists have followed Aristotle in regarding the sovereign state as the center of their discipline. This however, many have thought, is not suitable for the logical development of a discipline, because sovereign states differ so much from one another and engage in such a wide range of activities, economic, social, and cultural, as well as strictly "political".

4. Some political scientists have, therefore, developed the concept of political power as the central characteristic of the state as a political entity. Books devoted to this subject have been produced in recent years by the British philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell, the French philosopher Bertrand de Jouvenel and the American political scientist Charles E. Merriam. They conceive of political power as a variable which can be measured, although not in absolute terms as can power in the sense used by physicists. The latter define power as a relationship between time, space and mass, which can be measured by the same criteria wherever it occurs. Political power, on the other hand, is relative: no matter how large may be A's military and economic resources, they manifest little political power in relation to B, if B's military and economic resources are greater. Thus some have suggested that political power means the adequacy of capabilities of all types to achieve the purposes of the particular group in the particular situation. From this point of view

it would appear that Mahatma Gandhi with no sword and no purse, had more political power in India than the British Empire with its vast naval, military and economic resources.

This relativity of political power to the particular situation indicates the difficulty of developing political science into a series of mathematical formula expressing the relationship between constants, parameters and variables, which has been the ideal of the natural sciences. Its conclusions must always be relative to the situation in which power is applied, and thus dependent upon a precise description and analysis of that situation. The utilization of the term power, although it suggests the absolute measurements possible in the physicists use of the term, cannot avoid this difficulty. Political scientists who have utilized power as their central theme have been obliged to recognise its varied methods of application, -the sword, the purse, the word and the law- and the impossibility of precisely comparing the relative weight of these different methods without considering the historic situation in which they are applied. These political scientists have also distinguished the varying manifestations of political power in effective organisation of the group, in development of a public opinion supporting particular values and goals, in the development of the authority of the government, and in utilization of adequate technical advice in the decision-making process. They have also distinguished the various agents that wield power - the legislature, which formulates policies; the judiciary, which maintains the Constitution and laws of the state; the executive, including the armed forces, which exerts physical force internally and externally; and the administration, including the civil service, which applies internal policies in detail. Writers on international politics have often distinguished the rather incommensurable aspects of national power - arms in being, industrial and human potential for making arms, national morale and international reputation attracting allies, pointing out that the last has been more important in winning great wars than the first. The relating importance of these aspects, however depends on the probable duration of the war.

It is obvious when one considers the varied methods, manifestations, agents and aspects of political power, that the use of this term cannot reduce political science to a purely mathematical discipline.

5. In recent times a school of thought has arisen, especially among political scientists who are aware of sociological concepts, which

puts *conflict* as the center of political science. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* published in the University of Michigan, develops this point of view, and professor Kenneth Boulding who is an economist and sociologist, as well as a political scientist, has recently published a book in which he attempts a mathematical exposition of the concept "conflict". I have much sympathy for this point of view which makes *conflict* the essence of politics, as *co-existence* is the essence of law, *competition* of economics, and *cooperation* of sociology. These essences, however, are not exclusive, and politics manifests all of them. Politicians have, for example, used the slogan "fight'em or join'em" usually utisliling the latter to fight some one else more effectively, or "cooperate if you can, oppose if you must", and "to tolerate is safer than to exterminate", or "to compete is less expensive than to conflict". However, conflict of some kind is always there in politics, whatever the slogan.

It appears that this will be true so long as there are independent decision-makers in close relations with one another. The idea of independence implies that decisions are made to realise values and goals developed from the internal constitution, opinion and attitudes of the group, with only a secondary consideration to the values and goals of other groups. The Greeks recognised the situation of an independent state or of a group which acts only from internal considerations as *hubris* which might be interpreted as arrogance, inviting continual conflict. *Hubris* was contrasted with *Themis* which implied mutual recognition by each group of the interests and values of others, thus developing a "natural law" similar to the physical natural law, which they called *physis*, observance of which produced complete harmony and eliminated conflict. In accord with this theory, some American political scientists like Karl Deutsch, have tried to measure the relative weight in decision-making of internal and external communications. Where decisions are based exclusively on the former conflict predominates and cooperation is impossible, but the reverse is true where there is an abundance of external communications making each group aware of the values and probable reactions of the other. However, if there is nothing but external communications, the group has ceased to be independent and has become an agent of the larger group of which it is a part. Harold Lasswell has pointed out that the initial effect of increased communications between previously separated groups like the Europeans and the peoples of Ameri-

ca, Asia and Africa, before the age of discoveries is conflict, but as communications increases, conflict diminishes and cooperation increases.

There have also been efforts to measure the cause and the probable frequency of conflict through a study of tensions manifested by public opinion or government actions. Others have attempted to relate the frequency of conflict between different pairs of states to changing aspects of distance between them, with the conclusion, related to Laswell's suggestion mentioned above, that conflicts will become less frequent if psychic and social distances between the groups is decreasing more rapidly than the technological and strategic distances between them, but if the latter are shrinking more rapidly conflicts will be more frequent. I have attempted to utilise this method in studying the relative probability of war between different pairs of states in my *Study of War*. The problem is, of course, to find objective criteria for measuring the rates of change in these aspects of distance.

6. Finally, I may mention the position of political scientists who emphasize the importance of social psychology. They hold that politics is basically a psychological phenomenon, and that of the four aspects of human personality—the sensory, the emotional, the intellectual, and the volitional—politics has to do with the latter. It concerns the formulation and realisation of the groups' will or what Rousseau called the "General Will." It is therefore, a practical art designed to direct action, rather than a science or a history designed to promote understanding or a fine art designed to stimulate emotions, sentiments and the enjoyment of sensory experience. Thus to make a science of politics it is necessary to relate these aspects of personality to each other, to formulate the relations of intelligence, sentiment, sensory experience and unconscious behavior patterns to the values and goals toward which the will is directed in the light of the capabilities and resources available to the actor.

Some, who have taken this point of view, like Socrates, as quoted by Plato, believe that as man is a rational animal, the intellect predominates and thus the will is controlled by the formulation of goals which are within the capabilities of the group under the circumstance which it faces. Knowledge creates values and controls action. Some writers like Lasswell emphasize the rôle of unconscious drives and reaction follows in political decision-making though like Walter

Lippmann they may urge greater rationality and point out that the great vice in the making of foreign policy has been the failure to distinguish conditions which the government cannot change from those matters which a wise policy can change, or in other words, the failure to relate goals to capabilities.

IV- Political Science in the United States

The discipline of political science began to develop in U.S. in the first half of the 19th century, but it was not generally established in American colleges and universities until the 20th century.

1. The first academic department in this field appears to have been at Indiana University where a department of Government was established in 1840. The department at Harvard was similarly entitled, and during this period the term "government" was preferred to "political science."

2. The use of the term political science, was introduced by American professors who had studied *Staatswissenschaft* in German universities during the 1880's and 1890's, including such men as Burgess and Goodnow at Columbia. At the latter institution, the term political science was given a broad meaning including all of the social sciences but this is not the general practice in American universities.

3. In the early 1900's there was a movement to establish the American Political Science Association among professors in various related fields that had to do with the state. These included professors of constitutional and administrative law like John W. Burgess and Frank Goodnow at Columbia, and W.W. Willoughby at John Hopkins; international law like J. B. Moore at Columbia; political history like Charles A. Beard at Columbia; political theory like Dunning at Columbia and Charles E. Merriam at Chicago; and comparative government like Woodrow Wilson at Princeton. On this basis the A.P.S.A. was established in 1907. But those who established it had no general theory of political science as had most departments of economics. They merely had a common interest in the study of the state. The A.P.S.A. has grown from a membership of less than 200 before World War I to a present membership of over 6,000.

4. Political science departments at American universities are generally divided into half a dozen sections dealing respectively with political theory, comparative government, constitutional and administrative

nistrative law, international relations, public administration, and politics, parties and opinion. There has been a tendency to give greater attention in recent years to the last three of these subjects in which an analytical, psychological or a statistical approach is possible, rather than the philosophical, descriptive, and legal approach which characterised the first three of these topics and political science in general during the earlier period.

5. American political scientists who have had major influence since the Second World War, have attempted to apply the methods of natural science, and have collaborated with sociologists, psychologists and economists often utilizing the terms "social science" or "behavioral science." They have attempted to apply measurement techniques to the study of public opinion, political attitudes, and international tensions. Voting behavior has also attracted much attention and some like professor Harold Lasswell have introduced the psychoanalytic concepts of identification, fixation, stereotype, displacement and the scapegoat. They have attempted to analyse propaganda methods and to measure changes of attitudes and opinions.

The suggestions of the sociologist Charles H. Cooley on the "Looking Glass Self", of the social psychologist Kurt Lewin on the importance of the "life space" or subjective image of a situation in determining action, and of the psychologist L.L. Thurstone on the meaning and measurement of attitudes have taught political scientists to appreciate the importance, in the making of political decisions, of unconscious attitudes and subjective interpretations, of the self, of other actors and of the situation as a whole, which may, or may not, correspond to reality. With such ideas in mind, a great deal of attention has been given to the process of decision making by political scientists such as Richard Snyder at North Western University and Frederick Dunn at Princeton.

These insights have been made use of by the numerous professors of international relations. This study, while usually regarded as a branch of political science, has in many universities been established as a separate department, institute, or inter-departmental committee. It has been recognised by some and denied by others that the economic, geographic, sociological, psychological, legal, and historical approaches to international relations are no less important than the political approach.

6. The A.P.S.A. took a prominent position in establishing the International Political Science Association under the auspices of UNESCO in 1949. At this time there were only four national political science associations, those in the U.S., Canada, France and India. Of these the A.P.S.A. was much the largest. Among objects of the International Association was to encourage the establishment of political science as an academic discipline in all universities and the establishment of national political science associations in all countries. There are now, nearly 40 such associations in all parts of the world. A general conference of this Association is held every three years with round table conferences on special subjects in the intervening years. *The International Social Science Journal*, published quarterly by UNESCO, reports the activities of this and the other International Social Science Association functioning under the auspices of UNESCO. These international associations, like the various social science associations in U.S., more and more recognise the interdependence of all the social sciences, and there is a movement to establish a unified discipline of "social science", or, as it is sometimes called, "behavioral science."

V. Conclusions

My conclusions may be summarised under the following six points:

1. Political science is a rapidly expanding discipline in the U.S. and in the world as a whole. All important universities now recognise it as a subject for which higher degrees are given.

2. Political science has become of increasing importance to governments and politicians. They recognise that with the increasing complexity of government and international relations, systematic knowledge is necessary, as well as experience, to make wise decisions.

3. The study of political science appears to be favourable to the growth of democratic ideas and institutions and to protect peoples against dictatorships whether of the right or of the left. It is true that as a pure science, political science seeks to predict what is likely to happen and to avoid value distinctions among forms of government. But it is also true that political science is closely related to political philosophy which believes that government should be for the good of the governed and consequently that the governed should have

a voice in it. It was certainly the hope of UNESCO in establishing the IPSA that a wider knowledge of political science throughout the world would tend in this direction.

4. Political science has been increasingly integrated with all the social or behavioral sciences. There has been increasing recognition of the psychological foundation of all these disciplines, and, as a result, there has been less exclusive attention to descriptive, historical, and legal analyses of political institutions.

5. Political scientists have attempted to use the methods of natural science, employing statistical measurement and mathematical formulations. Most of them, however, recognise that political science and social sciences in general cannot expect to achieve the precise results of many of the natural sciences. They recognise that the subject-matter of the social sciences are decision-makers or, as Talbott Parsons calls them, "systems of action," whether individuals or political organisations, susceptible to influence by the developing science itself. The feed-back of the discipline upon its subject-matter means that the development of the science may undermine the assumptions such as the persistence of states, of opinion, institutions, customs and behavior patterns, on which predictions are based. Consequently, the political scientist, even though he attempts to keep his own values out of his analysis, must realise that his analysis may have practical effects on the behavior of the decision-makers. Therefore, as a citizen he must consider whether these effects will be good or bad, and consequently whether he should seek to maintain the assumptions on which he based his generalisations and predictions or should encourage a new atmosphere of opinion, new institutions, new customs and new behavior patterns, which will undermine those assumptions and make his conclusions inapplicable. The social scientist cannot, therefore, distinguish himself wholly from the propagandist, as can the natural scientist whose subject-matter is not influenced by the development of this science.

In addition to this difficulty, the political scientist has to recognise that technological change proceeds at a rapid rate inevitably modifying behavior patterns, values opinions and institutions; that while rough measurement is possible of opinions, attitudes, and population changes, many important factors in political behavior are not measurable and so are neglected or treated as constants in statistical analyses. Therefore, any quantitative results have a large

margin of error. Furthermore because of the close interrelationship of all social sciences, intensive specialization, which has produced important results in the natural sciences, is not possible. Finally, the political scientists can not ignore the evidence of motivation, interpretation, causation and evaluation obtained from verbal communications of political actors, a type of evidence not available to the astronomer, physicist, chemist, and biologist. Cells, molecules, atoms and stars do not tell the scientist why they behave as they do, and some extreme behaviorists, say such subjective evidence should be ignored by the social scientist. For all of these reasons political scientists recognise that the methods of natural science must be applied with great caution to their subject, and that there are methods, available to the political scientists but not to the natural scientists.

6. Finally, the close relationship between political science and politics is being recognised, not only because politicians need the advise of political scientists, but also because political scientists can profit from personal contact with the politicians and decision-makers, as they often have in recent years through direct participation in government.