

POLITICAL SCIENTISTS AND POLITICIANS

A pure political scientist and a pure politician are quite different. To show this is a primary purpose of this essay. Even though we may never see either in his pure form, we may benefit conceptually from the distinction. And for those readers who disdain what Max Weber liked to call a heuristic model there will be a second part of the study devoted to the more common phenomenon, the evangelical scientist or scientific politician. Essential differences mark off the work of political scientists from the work of political men of action; yet the larger political process enclosing both types arbitrates constantly against their maintaining differences in role.

I.

The Distinctive Roles of
Scientist and Activist

The occupational goals of the scientist and the politician are different. Political science is a method of arriving at general propositions about politics or political behavior, and a system of statements about such behavior. The political scientist hence has impersonal

goals: in traditional language, he seeks truth or knowledge; in the language of more modern science, he seeks truth according to the premises and concepts of the scientists who compose his reference group. He aims at producing statements about politics that are at once precise and general. He becomes a specialist in parties, pressure group, public^c opinion, election systems, and the like (or portions of such fields) in order to be more precise in drawing generalizations from the field. His work develops as he moves from one generalization to another, as he puts findings together into theories. His use of time becomes occupationally circumscribed as he separates himself more and more from the world of action and the concerns of others: he may not turn away from the pointings of his data; his success will lie in pursuing fruitful hypotheses in a long series.

The man of action, be he politician or active citizen (for I draw no clear line here ~~between social~~ ^{among politists} ~~activists of these two sorts~~), aims at influencing social relations; his goals are personal - - the behavior of himself and others is what concerns him. Furthermore, the politician's goals are specific; general¹² propositions do not suit him; a life of action is a series of means and ends that must be climbed like a ladder: today a speech, tomorrow a conference, the next day an election, the day after a proposal for a law, and so on without end. The number of

differently combined situations in human behavior in politics is so great as to deny great practicality to general rules, except insofar as such rules are commonplace and then, like the Ten Commandments, they are available to everyone, and one does not have to ~~turn~~ turn to science for them.

The astute politician ~~moves~~ ^{moves} from one problem to another, scarcely related problem as fast as he can; he does not waste his time on the solution of irrelevant scientific riddles. It is enough for his purposes to learn that his opponent may be accused of corruption; he would be foolish to take the time to study treatises on corruption, compromise, the democratic process, socialist politics versus capitalistic politics with respect to corruption, and other problems so dear to those who are removed from the political struggle.

The practical ethics of the scientist and politician differ too. The political scientist, as such, lives the pleasant life of one with few problems of ends and means; for instance, only in a logical and empirical sense is a frequency distribution of votes by age groups a means to a general goal of a proposition on age in relation to conservatism. Thus the occupational ethics of a scientist may be rigid.

Not so the politician. His life is confounded by worries over means and ends. In America especially,

politics has the appearance of a process without ends. The ethics of politicians acquire a flexibility that can easily be confused with or turned into amorality, process without ends, action without goal. It is not without significance in the history of thought, I believe, that the philosophy of the act as set forth by ^{William} James, Mead, Tufts, and Dewey describes American politicians and politics as no other philosophy ~~of the age~~ does. It was William James who once suggested that democracy consisted of doing something, then waiting to see who hollers, and then relieving the hollering as best one can to see who else is hollering. Certainly the persistent allegations against politicians to the effect that they are amoral and opportunistic have their basis in the obsession of politicians with the process of politics rather than the goals of an abstract order of life.

It is no insult to politicians to declare that, so far as the prototype of their kind may be detected, ~~it~~ ^{it} is most unprofessorial. To quote from the essays, On Politics and Politicians, of the historian, Frederick Scott Oliver, "The prime motive of the politician is not to do good to humanity or even to his country, but simply to gain power for himself... In taking stock of a politician... the first question is not whether he was a good man who used righteous means, but whether he was

successful in gaining power, in keeping it, and in governing; whether, in short, he was skillful at his particular craft or a bungler."

Thus, whereas we evaluate a scientist by his method and by his contribution to generalizing his world of data, we evaluate the politician by his ability to achieve and hold a position of power from which he may distribute chances to rearrange human relations. We may disagree with his distributive policies, but yet separately rank him high with respect to his political ability. Knowledge is the business of scientists, influence that of politicians.

If such tends to be the case among pure scientists and politicians, what then does the scientist care about influence and the politician about knowledge? The political scientist, unhappily, has as his main concern the study of influence for the sake of knowledge. The politician, by contrast, studies political influence only insofar as his studies may produce power. One might say that the [#]politician is an advocate of vocational training. As the laborer desires training as a carpenter, as the lawyer wants training in the latest cases that seem to be influencing judges, the politician wants to know how to be elected next year, not ten years from now, nor fifty, not in Siam or England, but in the 4th District of Ohio. Science

to his mind,

is an instrument, not an end, for him; [^]all men are not equally to be indulged by the distant rays of science, ~~to be indulged~~, for he has immediate, personal, and practical needs, and evaluates the skills and apparatus of science accordingly. "Can science bring power?" is the important question to him.

In fact, we can understand just how important ^{is} this question ~~is~~ to him by understanding an even more poignant question that many politicians are ^{not} afraid to ask: "Can anti-science bring power?" Can anyone name a politician who published a survey showing strong sentiment for a bill which he intended to vote against? If someone can name one, then let him name two. But meanwhile, I perhaps can give him back ten for one, politicians who have not been able to conceal their distaste for the method of science or the findings of science - - of politicians, even, who prosper by flouting their enmity towards ~~towards~~ dispassionate social inquiry.

I cannot agree with those who foresee an easier acceptance of modern social science the more we demonstrate its reliability and validity. Such optimism ignores, first, the fact that present social science is impossibly weak because it is repressed in a hundred ways that are so habitual as to be ignored by the scientists themselves. The insistence that the social scientist be a part-time preacher is one indication of this repression; the

population must be reassured that we are well-intentioned and non-Machiavellian. Another instance of the atmosphere of repression is the denial of access to the most elementary data of social life; most scientists without experience in that area would be astonished at the political ramifications of gathering census data that would be useful to political science.

However, second, the optimists among us fail to realize that the present weakness of social science gives it some of its strength, and that a free and strong social science would be the most intolerable of social institutions. The enraged investigations of public opinion polls that follow the failures of present day polling are not so much a reflection of the mistakes of the polls as they are a foreboding of the nightmares that would follow reliable polls. A prophet (and is that not what a good social scientist tends to become) is ^{more} likely to be stoned ~~when~~ ^{when} he is consciously or unconsciously suspected of being truthful on important issues.

That the same fate is not so likely to be visited upon most natural scientists is owing to the indirect nature and long-range character of the effects of most of their discoveries and theories, and to the easy instrumentalism of their discoveries. ~~They~~ ^{Natural scientists} have had their troubles, ~~and~~ ~~of course~~ of course. Not everyone was so naive as to believe that the Renaissance scientists were entirely

good for the existing order. One critic of Galileo, after attempting a scientific disproof of his discovery of the satellites of Jupiter, reviewed the consequences of such a discovery to the existing social order and complained finally: "now, if we increase the number of the planets, this whole system falls to the ground." I skip the many lessons to be learned from atomic energy development in order to remind you that, if the state of Michigan has anything to say about it, rain-making in New Mexico will have to be confined to the winter months, or at least, Senator Moody of Michigan told the Congress so once, and he was not an ignorant man. But there are still important differences in the social role of the natural and social sciences; ordinarily, natural science discoveries are not soon followed by psychoanalysis or a Council of Trent.

To sum up our last remarks, raising a hue and cry against men of free thoughts (meaning by "free" the thoughts developed out of step, out of system, with the prevailing powers) has been and promises to remain a profitable source of symbolic agitation for the power-seeker.

On a more subdued level, being against science is sometimes useful even to politicians who are or consider themselves friends of science. In fact, being against science, again in a limited sense, may actually be a

condition for the survival of the social order one desires. We should point these matters out because men tend to be hypocritical when conflict disturbs their souls; we should reassure ourselves on this point: the best citizen or politician in the world cannot tolerate the whole truth and nothing but the truth on political issues. To be an active citizen or politician ^{involves} means some dissemblance. Faith in oneself and one's cause is maintained by abstractions of utopian thinking that are quite distinct from scientific abstractions or models. (One is reminded here of Winston Churchill, delivering an impassioned speech in 1940, and proclaiming a fight to the end with men and material ~~that~~ ^{that}, in whispers aside, he confessed to not having.)

Moreover, the larger society in which any person or movement is contained depends upon premises that scientists are forced to consider beyond their purview. This is the great paradox of norms and facts that Plato attempted to solve in his ^{fictional} republic. His rulers were scientists of high morality who had mastered behavioral mechanics to the point that enabled them to conceal reality from the masses when the masses would be disorganized by knowledge, and yet who were also courageous and determined enough themselves to act in conscious defiance of reality. His rulers, in brief, were a combination of sceptic and

saint that would be perhaps impossible to achieve among a numerous group over many generations.

The pure scientist and politician would now seem to be quite opposed in goals and ethics, and differently disposed towards the activities of science. Even if their natural long-and short-term struggle over the good and true were to be ignored, ~~however~~, they would still cavil over the extent to which social science should produce vocational materials. How can social science conduct itself from day to day as an aid to power without losing its character as a more or less pure science? A contrasting of the typical modes of operation of the political scientist and politician may answer this question.

We speak now of the techniques of social science and the tactics of power. The techniques of social science include such devices as are contained in the gathering and analysis of census and survey materials; sampling of populations; participant observations; analysis of hearings of legislative and administrative bodies; sociometric methods of studying communities, groups, or leaders; studies of political circulation and political mobility; content analysis of symbolic materials; organization studies; and what I call access studies, the techniques of which require intimate scrutiny of such situations as the blocking of bills in a legislature, the meaning of a "yea" and

"nay" vote in a legislature or the methods lobbies use to influence the action on a bill or administrative ruling. These clusters of techniques and the resulting principles form the growing body of modern political science.

Now what can emerge from these scientific operations that will benefit the practicing politician? It would be begging the question to answer that the politician will benefit from whatever he finds of use among the product. A more specific answer would be that the scientist and the politician study many of the same general phenomena and use the same general techniques, but ~~a great deal of~~ room exists within the general classes of phenomena and within the general techniques for the one to lose the other rather easily. Let us give examples: The politician is interested in parties, as is the political scientist, or he is interested in public opinion, as is the scientist. Moreover, both are interested in sampling and content analysis: thus a ward leader usually samples his population via trusted informants or he samples mentally from hundreds of conversations with people. And Franklin D. Roosevelt made his own content analysis of the press daily, keeping his eye on certain papers, certain columnists, and certain regions.

Yet the large gaps between the ^{degree of generality} precise nature ^{chosen by} of the problems facing the two kinds of men and between the two techniques they use cause a great difficulty ^{of} ~~communication~~ in adapting science to art. The political scientist may be interested in a long-term political party trend such as would, for instance, provide him with an answer to the question whether the parties are shifting to a social-class basis. The politician is more likely to be interested in how many votes are going to the Eisenhower supporters on the second ballot in a nominating convention, or whether the ^{parties} states-rightists will bolt the northern Democrats again. There is no possibility of assembling the multitude of political scientists required to address themselves to all these questions. Moreover, only the most crass and destructive notion of utility would forbid the political scientist his right to concern himself about questions of an elemental and enduring nature.

Also, the politician must in a way know everything. He must pass judgment on all that comes before him, and these factual judgments number many thousands. The scientist can reject anything he cannot well study, and can study matters the politician would regard as trivial in terms of achieving power. The scientist will take thousands of dollars and many months to study tendencies towards cohesiveness and divisiveness in a small group

of college students, whereas the politician will, during a political campaign, have neither time, nor skill, nor money for such operations. His substitute operation is to ask some informant whether a group he has heard about is important, who runs it, and perhaps little more than that. ~~The scientist is interested in assigning priorities, but there is~~ no basic attraction between the two areas of interest ^{that} pulls ^{them} ~~both parties~~ close enough together to fit the needs of both parties. An indirect indication of this lack of sympathetic problem areas is found in the affinity of a great many social scientists for public planning and long-range political programs; the factual judgments appropriate to such areas of concern are more closely related to the long-range plans of scientific research itself. We may conclude hence that some basic antipathies exist between the ideal scientist and politician, and these antipathies pertain to the goals of the two types, their practical ethics, and their modes of operation.

II. The Community of Roles

However, as I declared at the beginning of this article, we must admit to a considerable confusion of roles between scientists and politicians. The two roles interact and the results are momentous for understanding the processes of science and politics. The second part of this paper, therefore, concerns itself with joining together what analysis has cut asunder.

A more tenable defense of devoting oneself to the solution of burning social questions is that, when deprived of such foci of attention, social science degenerates into aimlessness. This is a difficult position to attack, because social science *affords so many examples of* aimlessness. However, in the first place, aimlessness in values is as common as aimlessness in hypotheses; there are as many fifth rate St. Thomases as there are fifth rate Darwins. To be a little more positive, science as a value is based on a position that may be deemed useful to men of contrary demands in life and politics; it holds that a knowledge of how to inquire of reality, and the discovery of the behavioral principles underlying reality, may be shared objectively by all human beings who are curious about such things. This is not to say that science as a social force is impartial; indeed it is not that; it is corrosive of many social institutions and tends to promote various schemes for organizing society; these effects of science as a social force require protection as conscious and formidable as the lead shields that guard atomic energy workers from lethal radioactivity. Rather, I wish to say that the inquiry and principles of political science and all science are sauce for both goose and gander.

I should argue then that the degrees of diffidence of the individual social scientist in studying social problems should cause no scientific concern, but that a concentration of attention on social problems ranked

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according to their degree of "heat" would depress the level of social science. I say this without mentioning such practical problems as the time budget of social scientists. Anyone who tries to give a course in morals and politics at the same time usually ends up by teaching little politics. If physics were to be concerned with advising students on the moral implications of building atom bombs rather than teaching them the elements of physics, we should have few competent physicists. And if medical schools were to devote themselves to a thorough discussion of whether the mother's life is worth more than her baby's life, in a case where only one could be saved, medical school would be fun but less competent doctors would emerge. (Parenthetically I should emphasize that this position with respect to science does not preclude, and even encourages, the conscious and full emphasis that should be given moral questions, in the name of morals, not in the name of science; if science should meanwhile be demoted several grades, I should perhaps applaud the resulting increase in creativity and non-instrumentalism of our students.) In general, therefore, a scientist should not fool himself into thinking he ^{can} is making an important contribution to science when he hits the sawdust trail. » He is no whit less a good man, but he is not playing the same role.

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in current issue^s often goes so far as to exclude what I call the utopian hypothesis. This is not necessary. One may postulate a non-existent but definable condition and describe the changes that must be brought about if such a condition is to occur. There is nothing pedestrian, vocational, or unscientific in this procedure per se. One may decide that the best way to study the effects of a directing influence within a group (i.e. leadership) is to declare that the group will produce x units, or win x votes, or pass x bill, if changes in personnel are made in the group's officeholders. The changes are made and the results observed. This procedure is essentially similar in its logic to the hypotheses of a manipulative character that experimenters use. The use of an "ought" in the form of a postulated future condition does not nullify the scientific character of an operation. One judges the scientific or political character of such a utopian postulate by, whether the finding is intended to serve the pre-existing science or to serve the power-position of the person performing the operation, and by how well it is calculated to serve the science.

Again it is necessary to insist that the separation of science and politics does not require the separation of science from reality. Science must study politics as it occurs to avoid bewitchment by static models. Political behavior is mercurial; the frame of attention of the politician is a marvel of flexibility.

His calculations are often superbly calibrated to variables not understood or obvious to the scientist. The politician, by being vitally concerned with such questions about events as "What's in it for me?" or "How do we get around the law?" or "What is there to get excited about in this?" adds perspectives to scientific study. The perspectives are not authoritative to scientists but they help in the criticism of and construction of hypotheses. The advances in political science and social psychology of the last two generations have been largely due to the readjustment of scientific attention in the realm of politics. So common has the practice of realism in science become that we scarcely remember the tortures of change from legalism and moralism to objectivity.

In fact, so rapid has this change been that I dare say no more about realism for fear of seeming trite. Perhaps I should confine myself to ^{affirming that} ~~the~~ intellectual lag in this respect ^(still occurs) in hundreds of schools and among thousands of men who teach social science here and abroad. To make matters worse, simple realism itself is in my opinion about to undergo a transformation, so that a great many social scientists will be two epochs behind the newest thinking. Today we are no longer shocked by statements of a truth about sex or politics; we are becoming concerned with technique and methodology; and we are moving towards a reevaluation of realism in the light of scientific operationalism, founded on constructs and operational definitions the utility of which is the copyright of science.

What this trend means to the application of political science to politics is this: that having emerged from a period of primitive mysteries of law and theology that separated political science from politics, and having undergone a period of fifty years of realism in which the highest compliment to a political scientist was that he had a "~~real~~"feel" for politics," we are now moving into a period of sophisticated mysteries. The new mysteries are produced by the operational necessities of a science. The politician cannot understand them because they are too complicated and rigidly defined, rather than because they are too lofty in morality or too musty with legal tradition.

Now I think that this new era of political science' is already heralded by its sister sciences, so there may not be much news in it for my readers. However, its dawning in political science has paralyzing effects. It has brought me sometimes a feeling of ~~some~~ futility and sterility when delivering lectures to graduate students on public opinion and pressure groups. I cannot teach the laws of forty-eight states on communications and lobbying. I cannot let myself tell them what is good and bad public opinion or lobbies. Worse yet, I cannot any longer teach simple, descriptive realism. Twenty years ago, and I suppose today at most schools, I should

be content to expose politics, to uncover the "termites beneath the temple," to recount the details of hundreds of groups that contest for specific or general powers. Just now I am bored with all of this. It is enough to illustrate reality. It is too much to amble on and on among fields of daisies, all alike, that stretch beyond the horizon. So I find myself teaching graduate students how to think about social relations, how to draw conclusions about classes of events, how to generalize relationships among classes.

The student body itself, gathered together via the shibboleths and curriculum of the past, is disorganized by this kind of political science. The theologians and reformers retire to ^{the classes of} professors of ethics; the practical politicians in training become restless because they sense they can never use such techniques and they most need a smattering of many areas of law, manners, and argumentation. The remainder is small in number and consists of future scientists, who have the personal and intellectual attributes of those to whom science as a vocation appeals. I should say that the condition of political science in this respect tends to resemble other sciences; the moral reformers and "inside-dopesters" depart and we are left with a collection of technicians and theorists.

Such a collection would not provide many professor-politicians. But they can provide a staff to politicians. And, as if coordinated by some mysterious directive, the growth of staff services, allegedly of a scientific nature, among political organizations of all types is astonishing. As the gap between practitioner and scientist increases on an intellectual level, it is decreased on a functional level, for political science is badly needed by politicians. As political science becomes more reliable, it becomes more abstract and technical and difficult of interpretation. As it becomes more reliable, it also becomes more useful, if only it is understood. The result is an increasing emphasis on the proper organization and utilization of science. Problems of gearing in science occupy practitioners more and more, and soon the politician, who has been used to giving professors a peep-show into his affairs, must cease his patronizing airs and begin devising means of harnessing the mysterious abilities of foreign powers.

Naturally the politician will struggle a long time before he will confess his inexpertness; he will cry "fraud" often and loudly. Yet ultimately he will keep a list of names and phone numbers on his desk and whenever seized by insecurities in his art, he will call up the appropriate social specialist, just as he calls his physician to tell what happened when he over-ate and

over-exerted at the First Ward Picnic or to ask if he may continue to smoke his favorite brand of cigarette. Writing of contemporary California politics in the Western Political Quarterly, Professor Ivan Hinderaker^{has} declares: "Running for office in the more populous areas of the state is becoming 'big business.' More and more publicity and public relations firms are making political campaigns their speciality. Costs are going up. The amateur politician with an amateur organization is finding it increasingly difficult to compete with the professionally managed type of campaign."

On their side, the scientists can be expected to re-echo the cry of fraud as they jostle one another on the path that leads from basic research to prescription of instrumental conduct. Most belabored among them will be the interstitial scientists, those who must transform the carefully drawn and executed studies of basic research into easily employed techniques and into rules of conduct, and who must interpret the rules to the actors. Here we find social scientists making applications - - as public relations consultants; as managers of referendum campaigns, pro or con any issue; as research divisions of government agencies, labor unions, business associations, political parties; as university staff members charged with advising public officials or citizen bodies; and as creators and publishers of

information and guidance, such as public opinion polls.

There is no rule book for interpreting the process of the application of science. We have none and the natural scientist have none. We have no systematic descriptions, either, of what occurs when Scientist A's work is ultimately interpreted for use by Politician B. Let me illustrate the problem by an example: I extract items from a recent report by George Belknap and Angus Campbell in the Public Opinion Quarterly.

When a nation-wide probability sample of 999 adults were asked during June, 1951, "In the disagreements between President Truman and General MacArthur about how to carry on the war in Korea, who do you think was most nearly right?" 47% of those who answered Democratic to the question "If a presidential election were held today, do you think you would vote Democratic, Republican, or for some other party?" responded that Truman was right. 7% of those who said they would vote Republican responded that Truman was right.

Now we ask: how can such a finding be made useful to a politician? The easy answer would be: the politician who reads it will be helped. However, let us qualify this. First we have a difficult communication problem: What politicians and how many are to be helped? Shall the Survey Research Center advertise freely its findings among all politicians, or shall it advertise that it holds useful information for the highest bidder, or shall it sidle up to friendly politicians and whisper the tidings? Then, whichever policy it may be told to

choose, ought the SRC to have the right to ask questions that may perhaps serve to embarrass the Truman administration? Why, we may ask, did their question-man choose this question - - to help politicians, to help one kind of politician, to sate his curiosity, to create publicity for the SRC, to advance some basic problem of political science, or to ask an obvious question that was so fashionable that no one would bother to doubt its utility? Thus the question itself brings many queries.

(However, assuming the Truman-MacArthur question to be designed as a contribution to applied science (which it was not, incidentally), now that the finding is brought before a politician, how can he use it? He might take it at its face value. Though it may be devoid of intrinsic meaning, it seems to have propagandistic value for embarrassing the opposition: with perhaps the expert services of a public relations consultant (i.e. a propagandist), he can convert the finding into trouble for his opponents. (We also notice here a sharp conflict emerging between two types of social scientists - - the propagandist and the public opinion analyst. Staff conflict in the political process is common. For example, a finding that all rich men are backing one's opponent may incite

the propagandist to raise the cry of "Wall Street" and the manager to seek deals with at least a few rich men to finance the propaganda.)

In addition, to resume our main line of thought, the politician may also use the finding to orient himself better to public opinion, or may call in his public opinion analyst to help interpret the finding. And the politician as analyst or the analyst as staff must find himself pursuing such questions as "What are the other categories of response to the questions?" "How does this group of response categories relate to the several other questions asked of the same sample?" And then again: how do these responses on the Truman-MacArthur controversy relate to the whole body of what we call public opinion in America, or the fourth district of North Carolina?" Furthermore, we should wish to get some technical information on the reliability of the organization and its techniques. And most importantly, in the end, we shall want to know how the attitudes discovered by this poll will penetrate a political campaign a year later and affect the chances of our politician to gain or hold power.

At some of the end phases of this interpretative series, the politician or other staff services will have to take over the operation from the analyst. The public opinion specialist would have to expand greatly his

fields of responsibility to provide the politician with all the answers he needs to extract from this single survey response. I do not question, however, that public opinion research organizations will indeed accomplish this very expansion. I point by way of illustration to the recent inroads of sociometric studies into the conventional market research areas. I may point also to the well-documented case of the public relations advisor to Senator Butler of Maryland in his campaign against Senator Tydings, who describes with some pathos how he had to become a multiple-function manager to satisfy the voracious appetite of a campaign for skills of social science. Indeed, I should expect

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one of these days to see developed an organization with the primary function of making efficiency studies of applied political science staff agencies. It would do on a continuing contractual basis some of the things that the Social Science Research Council committee on the election polls of 1948 did for the polling organizations.

The picture I draw here is one of increasing complexity in the field of politics. Politics will be technically rationalized and bureaucratized. The politician will have to change his occupational habits or revolt against the trend. There is still, of course, as I asserted earlier, a great potential of anti-science