

THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF AMERICAN
SCHOLARSHIP IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

(Prospectus for an Article)

The social sciences or as they are sometimes called now the behavioral sciences, in America, have been undergoing a rather complete transformation that is probably not fully appreciated in other parts of the world. American social sciences are changing their substantive emphasis, their internal organization, their methodology, their research organization, and their position with respect to financial support. The changes, besides having great effect on the theory of human behavior, are producing a new human product and some problems of consequence to academic freedom in a democracy.

The ruling disciplines of the human sciences are shifting. Philosophy, history and economics have been subjected to great pressures from psychology, including social and political psychology and anthropology. Historians and philosophers have retired in numbers to general courses on the social sciences and the development of Western Civilization. Peripheral substantive units, of considerable power, have been established in such areas as public administration, international relations, journalism, business schools, and schools of education.

Transformations have also occurred within the several disciplines. A few sentences will illustrate this fact regarding philosophy, history, political science, economics, anthropology, sociology, and the peripheral fields named above.

Underlying these special trends of the several disciplines are two universal tendencies. The first is an abandonment of purely empirical concern for a great concentration of interest in a wide variety of methodological and technical problems. The second is a change from philosophy

in a broad sense to operational theory as the tool of all behavioral sciences.

There has also been a remarkable change in the social organization of research. The fate of the individual scholar is *hotly* debated. There is a wide-spread feeling that the individual scholar of the classical type will become an anomaly. Interdisciplinary research, with various meanings, has become fashionable but in many cases quite unsuccessful. More importantly, group research with increasing mechanization and bureaucratic organization, has assumed a dominating role.

The resources of scholarship in social science are varied and some sources are widening and others ^{narrowing} ~~declining~~. The American university, relatively rich by contrast with European universities, allocates a minimum proportion of its resources to social science and humanities. Private corporations are taking a stronger hand in the financing of social science scholarship. Government aid and contracts have become important. The foundation has become a rich and complicated separate estate of great concern to universities and individual scholars. Scholarly publishing in America is lagging considerably, both relative and absolute terms.

All of these new developments are ~~tending to be~~ ^{bring forth} a new human product of the social science faculty. There is a loss of classical roots, a great increase of technicians, an emphasis upon application of science, and a creation of productive but limited theorists.

The problem of academic freedom has been broadened and made more complicated by these developments. The relationship of the new social sciences to democracy and leadership also requires examination.