# Pluralism and the Fate of Perestroika: A Historical Reflection

*John Gunnell*

Although a great deal has been written about the perestroika movement in turn-of-the century political science its actual place in the history of the discipline has been poorly understood by its founders, defenders, and critics. Perestroika can be best understood as a manifestation of the persistent crises of identity that have characterized the discipline of political science, and it cannot be explained apart from the manner in which it was reflection of issues that attended both the origins of the field and periods such as the 1920s and aftermath of the behavioral era. What has been particularly important in each case has been the impact on both American politics and political science of the ethic of pluralism, which has created significant difficulties for both the practical and epistemic relationship between the discipline and its subject matter. — John Gunnell.

This essay is followed by responses from James Farr, Robert O. Keohane, David D. Laitin, Kristen Renwick Monroe, Anne Norton, and Sanford F. Schram. John Gunnell then offers a response to commentators.

## Looking Backward: 2015–2000

By now, one might very well not only ask exactly what "perestroika" was but what happened to it. A considerable literature has been devoted to this subject, and my concern is not to recapitulate this episode in detail but rather to capture its basic character and to put it in perspective by locating it within the history of American political science as well as in the context of social inquiry as a whole.

Although there are many ways to describe and explain this disciplinary protest, it is best understood as one of the perennial identity crises that have marked the evolution of political science. Such crises are, however, endemic to the social sciences because of the relational character of these fields, that is, the fact that no matter how social science may theoretically construe its subject matter, that subject matter is discursively pre-constituted and autonomous. The consequence is that social science must be concerned with reflecting on its identity and often reforming that identity in the course of confronting its practical as well as epistemic relationship to its object of inquiry. The practical dimension of the relationship has been somewhat accentuated in the case of political science, because while fields such as sociology, economics, and anthropology gained a degree of conceptual distance by conceiving of their subject matter in categorical or generic terms such as society, the economy, and culture, the term "politics" referred to a more specific and distinct practice. Although there was sometimes an attempt to create a sense of unity with politics, as in the case of Woodrow Wilson's designation of the department at Princeton, there was also a concern with establishing an insulated academic space for asserting the scientific authority to speak truth to power.

Despite the particular circumstances in which perestroika arose and notwithstanding the changes in the discipline and profession that might reasonably be attributed to it, it was basically a reverberation of longstanding problems about the relationship between political science and politics and about the tensions between the search, on the one hand, for intellectual unity and, on the other hand, the commitments to both disciplinary and political pluralism. These problems had been present from the inception of the field, but they were most immediately the legacy of the 1960s. They were, however, somewhat obscured by the emphasis on methodological and professional diversity and by the persistent ambiguities in claims about how to make the field more politically relevant. Consequently, while perestroika served to provoke greater mindfulness about these issues, it did not succeed in forcing a direct confrontation.

A person unfamiliar with the discipline of political science might be inclined to ask why this turn-of-the-century bottom-up professional protest was labeled "perestroika," when its namesake referred to a top-down restructuring of the Soviet political and economic order. In Russia, *Perestroika*, along with *Glasnost*, involved

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efforts directed toward increased pluralization, democratization, and transparency, but whatever the social tensions that may have precipitated these policies, they were initiated in the service of structural system maintenance. The "rebellion" in political science originated as a demand from aspiring and dissatisfied young professionals for greater tolerance of methodological diversity in the face of what was claimed to be the growing dominance of the application of quantitative techniques in approaches such as rational choice analysis as well as for greater political significance in substantive research. The methodological bias attributed to the discipline was often understood as associated with elitism in the organization and functioning of the American Political Science Association (APSA) and its publications, which was manifest throughout the field in typical departmental structures and hiring practices. Whether the anonymous "Mr. Perestroika," whose initial e-mail in 2000 sparked the quickly growing social media protest, was motivated by career anxiety, as some have suggested, or by broader and deeper intellectual and political concerns, the discussion that followed soon morphed into the resurrection of long-standing arguments about the nature of political inquiry and about the relationship between political science and politics. Perestroika was, however, distinctly a call for reform rather than a revolutionary challenge to the avowed principles of the discipline and profession, which were, on the whole, relatively quick to acknowledge the criticisms and to attempt to respond to the demands for diversity and relevance.

Although a number of prominent political scientists rose to defend what they claimed had been the recent progress in attaining a unified scientific study of politics, other senior members of the profession almost immediately stepped forward to proclaim their sympathy with the motives and motifs associated with the protest. And others emerged from the shadows to announce that, like a variation on the revelation of Monsieur Perrichon, they realized that they had been speaking "perestroikan" all along. Some of those who became identified with the protest were, despite sometimes exaggerated claims to personal heterodoxy, very much part of the political science establishment, and within a relatively short time, some of the leaders on both sides of the debate had joined one another at an annual meeting of the APSA and, in the typical liberal pluralist fashion of the field, declared, after acknowledging their differences, that, overall, they had similar basic goals and that there was, after all, unity in difference. Such images of conflict and reconciliation had been a recurring event in the history of political science, but by the beginning of the twenty-first century, it was difficult to discern any such unity, despite the claim of the editors of the 2002 edition of *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* that there was an overall sense of identity attaching to the field. By 2005, what may reasonably be designated as the "real" perestroika and glastnost in American political science had begun, and as in the aftermath of 1960s, various reforms were designed and deployed to liberalize and restructure the organization, broaden the image of political inquiry, and speak more directly about the practices of politics. Unlike the fate of the Soviet Union, however, these policies succeeded in maintaining the basic professional and disciplinary system, and any worries about revolution, either intellectual or professional, soon faded away. At the end of the first decade, it was still not easy to specify what trends in the discipline were most significant, as the field looked once again more and more as if it were a holding company for a number of diverse enterprises, and, to appropriate the words of Rogers Smith, "still blowing in the wind" was the search for the "democratic science of politics" that had given birth to the field and that continued to inform its history.

The extent to which important changes in the practices of political science have been effected in the aftermath of perestroika is certainly open to debate, but it is important to recognize that the long-standing concern about practical engagement, and how to achieve this through internal methodological and professional reform, never focused on the extent to which some individual or group might undertake politically significant research or how, either as public intellectuals or producers and purveyors of knowledge, they might participate in or influence politics. The invocation of mantras such as problem-based research, were far from adequate. Some certainly believed that such particular initiatives might trickle upward, but the question was always, as in the case of the political concerns that inspired the formation of the APSA in 1903 and the transition from discipline to profession, that of how the *discipline* as a whole could gain practical purchase. The search for unity had never been simply to win ascendancy for a certain methodological persuasion but rather to vouchsafe the cognitive authority of the discipline, which, particularly with the distance between academic and political discourse in American society, was the only kind of authority that it could reasonably claim.

The fact and value of disciplinary pluralism has not only tended to be subversive of the congenital practical concerns of political science but also an unsatisfactory response to methodological tensions. If, by 2000, there was indeed an incipient intra-disciplinary imperialism, as charged once again as it had been in the 1960s, and even a threat to democratic values implicit in the use of quantitative methods, making more room for varieties of what has been vaguely labeled as qualitative research and interpretive approaches was not a solution to the underlying issues. As during the behavioral era, the attempt to present positivism and interpretism, or explanation and understanding, as complementary approaches only deferred a confrontation not only with the underlying



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practical problem but with theoretical issues revolving around the nature of political phenomena and entailed epistemological imperatives. It is somewhat ironic that although perestroika may have eventually contributed to some serious discussion about the nature of interpretive inquiry, the latter had from the beginning been vaguely specified, and it became more a slogan than the designation of a distinct methodological or theoretical argument. Such arguments were repressed by the enthusiasm for the ethic of pluralism that is so deeply embedded in the field as both a democratic theory and principal of disciplinary organization. It is, however, difficult to resist the logic and value of pluralism. This is not only because it appeared to meet the basic demands of those who initiated the protest but because it served the interests of the APSA in increasing membership and maintaining the hegemony of the organization. Despite all the threats from dissidents during the behavioral and post-behavioral years, even political theorists have not been willing to relinquish the professional benefits of the APSA and pursue the separate intellectual path that they so often continue to profess.

One of the most striking characteristics of the controversy about perestroika was the amnesia that was evident in much of the discussion with respect to the history of the field and particularly the previous generation. For many who had lived through the controversies of the 1960s, it seemed as if it were *déjà vu* all over again. The perestroika controversy evoked the image of the earlier conflict between defenders of the behavioral movement and critics such as those associated with the Caucus for a New Political Science, and perestroika was, in fact, largely another irruption of the issues that had defined what is often referred to as the "post-behavioral" era. The response of the APSA to perestroika was not unlike the embrace of methodological difference and the return to the idea of political science as a policy science that followed David Easton's 1969 announcement of a "new revolution" in political science. What was so prominent in the 1960s, but, however, largely missing in the case of perestroika, were a distinct and focused ideological response to what was happening in American politics; a significant challenge to the theory of democracy that was embedded in the dominant practices of political science; a direct engagement with the issue of the relationship between political science and politics; a coherent and fundamental philosophical challenge to the conception of science that characterized the field; and an alternative account of social scientific inquiry. Although these issues were all intimated in the conversation about perestroika, they were not clearly articulated and confronted, and this was in part because they were sublimated in discussions about methodological pluralism and professional diversity.

The differences between these debates, separated by nearly half a century, can be attributed in part to the fact that some of the intellectual resources that might have been available to the perestroikan protest had been drained off during the last quarter of the twentieth century as political theorists increasingly, intellectually and institutionally, turned away from an engagement with the discipline and created a separate academic enclave, which appropriated, and to which the discipline was willing to bequeath, normative and philosophical concerns in order to retain the subfield as an element of the profession. And, in somewhat similar fashion, the Caucus was incorporated, like the Furies in the *Oresteia*, as a Section of the APSA. Issues relating to matters such as democratic theory, the philosophy of social science, and the relationship between theory and practice tended to disappear from the literature of mainstream political science. In addition, an increased emphasis, beginning with early graduate education, on professionalism coupled with continuing trends toward greater subfield specialization and accompanying differentiation, inhibited the kind of pointed conflict that characterized the behavioral era. Even though many of those who embraced perestroika did not seem aware of it, the protest reflected the failure of what had been the promise of post-behavioralism, which was a promise of greater organizational and methodological pluralism as well as increased political relevance, but even this promise masked the more fundamental issues. The greatest problem with perestroika was that it (if there was an "it"), or with many of those who identified with or participated in the protest, could not see beyond the limits of that residual promise. Therefore, it is important to recover the genealogy of that promise and a family tree with which many younger scholars were, if at all, only vaguely acquainted.

## The Presence of the Past

The behavioral movement was actually less a revolution than a reaffirmation and defense of a theory of democracy and a complementary pursuit of a scientific theory of politics. What most distinctly prompted this reformation, which had begun in the 1950s, was that it faced a growing, but unconsolidated, insurgency mounted by a variety of dissident political theorists and other political scientists. Although by the early 1960s the particular tenets of behavioralism still did not represent the attitude and practice of most rank and file students of politics, it had begun to achieve a position of orthodoxy in some major departments and in the organization of the APSA, and by the mid-1960s, it was both a clearly self-ascribed identity and a target of expanding criticism, which together had in many respects begun to define the discourse of political science.

Although the critics were philosophically and ideologically diverse, they coalesced around their mutual opposition to the basic values embedded in American political science such as liberalism, individualism, interest-group pluralism, scientism and unity of science, the logical



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disjunction between fact and value, and pragmatic relativism, which were all, in various respects and degrees, elements of what had become a general vision of historical progress in both politics and political inquiry. As this conflict grew, a division between "traditional" or "historical" and "scientific" or "empirical" theory began to emerge as representing the increasingly divisive condition of the field. Indigenous theorists such as Sheldon Wolin joined a variety of émigré scholars such as Leo Strauss and characterized behavioralism as not only reflecting and abetting the decadence of contemporary politics but as representing the declination of the very idea of "the political." And a number of theorists, such as Wolin and Carole Pateman, resurrected a vision of participatory democracy as an alternative to pluralist liberalism.

By the mid-1960s, a decade after offering his own version of the "decline" of political theory as a turn away from empirical to historical studies, Easton, who had emerged in the early 1950s as a principal expounder of behavioralism and a recommitment to appropriating and deploying the methods of natural science, had presented a thorough rendition of a systems analysis of political life, which was becoming emblematic of the substance and style of behavioral theorizing. Although Easton, working self-consciously within the Chicago lineage, had never subscribed to pluralism as a normative democratic theory, by the 1930s that theory had gained ascendancy in much of American political science and had been further refined and codified in the work of individuals such as Robert Dahl. This pluralist/empirical theory of American democracy was in many respects, more than the issue of science, the underlying source of the conflict. If examined closely, the commitments to the concept of system and to democratic pluralism were less than fully conceptually compatible, but any dissonance was submerged in the enthusiasm for disciplinary unity. In his 1965 presidential address to the APSA, David Truman, who early on had contributed to reinvigorating the group theory of politics, cast the history of the field as having undergone a paradigmatic transformation from "non-theoretical empiricism" to a new "disciplinary consensus" based on the concept of the "political system." The following year Gabriel Almond, who had abstracted a pluralist version of American politics as a model for identifying the existence of democracy or a "civic culture" in the study of comparative politics, emphasized again, in his 1966 presidential address, that the idea of the political system was the core of the kind of intellectual transformation that Thomas Kuhn had characterized as a revolutionary paradigm.

By the end of the 1960s, the shaky philosophical foundations of the image of science that political scientists had embraced for half a century had been shored up by the adoption of secondary and tertiary accounts of logical positivism. By this point, however, a thoroughgoing critique of this philosophy had begun to emerge in the work of philosophers of science such as Kuhn, and this dissenting literature, along with new work in the philosophy of social science, laid the foundations for another dimension of criticism of the behavioral program. But one of the most provocative challenges to behavioralism sprung from a growing sense that despite all the talk about science and the difference between normative and empirical analysis, behavioralism had become implicated in an apology for the status quo in American politics and that a distinct but concealed value bias was embedded in both the form and substance of its research.

For many of the founders of behavioralism, the search for the authority of pure science was, as it always had been, to serve the practical purpose of perfecting the implications of left-leaning liberalism. It was, however, now appearing to critics as underwriting Cold War ideology and as fostering neglect of the crises attending contemporary domestic politics. Applications of systems analysis often seemed to be a subtle valorization of the American constitutional structure, and quantitative studies of voting behavior often appeared as reflections of what Dahl had labeled the "American hybrid" that he claimed was rooted in the processes of interest-group politics bounded by an underlying value consensus. Individuals such as Seymour Martin Lipset and Robert Lane claimed that this model constituted something close to what Daniel Bell had described as the "end of ideology" and the post-historical "good society in operation." Given the disturbances related to the civil rights movement, increasing urban chaos, student uprisings on college campuses, the Vietnam War, and the persistence of the Cold War, what purported to be scientific realism in political science seemed quite out of phase with the realities of politics. In addition to the critique of pluralism mounted by political theorists, progressive scholars such as V.O. Key, Grant McConnell, and Theodore Lowi raised questions not only about pathologies in the practices of pluralist politics but about the existence of theoretical flaws in the basic formulation. They argued that pluralism had become not only the reigning academic theory of democracy but an essential part of the American public philosophy, which, despite its ostensible claims to freedom and equality, concealed elements of the very elitism that it professed to oppose.

Many charged that it was not simply the discipline that had gone awry, however, but the profession as well and that elitism was evident in the structure of the APSA. By 1967, increasingly widely shared professional and disciplinary discontents had given rise to the Caucus, which focused attention not only on the conservatism in both the functioning of the APSA and the theory of pluralist liberalism but on what it claimed was, on one hand, the growing gap between political science and politics, and, on the other hand, various forms of collusion between the APSA and government agencies



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such as the CIA. The problems of political science involved commission as well as omission. Many really believed that the stage was set for a professional and disciplinary revolution. The fact that it did not happen, and why it did not happen, is a necessary aspect of identifying and understanding the character and fate of perestroika.

Although Easton was nominated as president of the APSA in 1967 and elected the following year, but in the characteristic internal bureaucratic manner without general member participation, he recognized the depth of the internal and external problems with which the discipline and profession were confronted. At the 1968 annual meeting, the organization had continued to hold the line against dissent, but in doing so it lost considerable support as the base of discontent broadened. In preparation for his year as president, Easton worked intensively to mediate between the APSA establishment and its critics, to counter elitism within the organization and to liberalize Association procedures, to identify and engage all identifiable groups and provide for their participation in the 1969 annual meeting, and to allay concerns about dubious partisan Association relations. This was in many ways an extraordinary accomplishment, but in the end it was yet another example of the limitations of pluralist politics, and it served more to defer than to solve some of the underlying problems. Not unlike the pluralization of the Democratic Party during the McGovern candidacy, the lack of unity, threatened to make it less organizationally as well as politically effective.

In his presidential address, Easton announced that a "post-behavioral revolution" was "underway," and he presented a challenge to what he now, quite suddenly, claimed had become the "behavioral orthodoxy." He noted that the "battle cries" of this emerging movement were "*relevance* and *action,*" which emanated from a broad "aggregate of people" and represented a distinct "intellectual tendency" springing from a "deep satisfaction with political research and teaching, especially of the kind that is striving to convert the study of politics into a more rigorous scientific discipline modeled on the methodology of the natural sciences." He maintained that the path forward was not one of relinquishing the past devotion to "the discovery of demonstrable basic truths about politics" but, at least temporarily, of adopting a "credo of relevance." This entailed putting "substance" above "technique" and recognizing that behavioralism had concealed an "ideology of social conservatism;" had lost touch with political reality; had failed to both study and construct values as well as remain conscious of the values that informed research; had not taken account of the responsibility of intellectuals for defining and defending social values; had become too complacent about interest-group politics, and had not engaged in the kind of "politicization" of the profession that was required in order to fulfill the proper social role of intellectuals. Although Easton still insisted that behavioralism had been scientifically successful in effecting a revolution in the discipline, it had favored "description" over "prescription" and assumed that it was necessary to accumulate knowledge before seeking a practical application. He argued that the enormity of contemporary international and domestic problems required reversing priorities and putting "whatever knowledge we have to immediate use" in order to "respond to the abnormal urgency of the present crises" and attend to the "problems of the day to obtain quick, short-run answers with the tools and generalizations currently available." He claimed that, as the "great political theorists of the past" had made clear, it was morally incumbent on political inquiry to acknowledge the "responsibility for acting" and to begin once more to engage in "speculative theorizing" and to "construct new and often radically different conceptions of future possible kinds of relationships." Although "basic research" should not be abandoned, the emphasis should be on "short-run" concerns and on a shift in research strategy. Just as the discipline required significant "restructuring" in order to restore relevance, it was necessary for the profession to recognize that it was "immoral" not to act on the basis of its knowledge. Ethical neutrality was no longer an option, and it was necessary to return to a more humanist and interdisciplinary perspective. He claimed that too often the profession had served the elite in society rather than the most disadvantaged, but the time had come to redress the balance and to create a social-scientific organization with an interdisciplinary perspective that would consolidate and bring to bear diverse areas of knowledge. He proposed the creation of a Federation of Social Scientists that would identify major issues, recommend solutions to problems, and "press them vigorously in the political sphere" where it would critically confront existing national policies.

It is sometimes forgotten just how radical Easton's rhetoric appeared at the time. Perestroika could have easily appropriated his essay as a basis of its platform, and although his manifesto was strategically composed as a way of confronting the internal politics of the field, it expressed the remnants of a tradition that was deeply embedded in the history of the field. Although Easton's address seemed to represent a somewhat abrupt change of heart, Wolin, in an article immediately following Easton's address in the same issue of the *American Political Science Review*, presented what may have been heretofore the most scathing critique of the discipline and profession. But rather than calling for disciplinary reform, he invited political theorists to join ranks in a "vocation" that would stand in opposition to the scientific and political failure of mainstream political science. He attacked the vocation of the "methodist" that was represented in approaches such as system theory and the "techniques" of data-gathering and



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analysis which, despite claims to objectivity, constituted a rejection of authentic theorizing and which contained concealed ideological assumptions. Behavioralism, he maintained, reflected the most complacent aspects of what Kuhn referred to as "normal science," and it transmitted that normalization to its account of politics. "Liberal pluralism" had allowed political science to stay on "good terms" with American politics and its inherently non-theoretical and ahistorical attitude. What the study of the "great tradition" of political theory provided was a repository of "wisdom" and "tacit political knowledge" that was the "antithesis of political science" and offered a source of political education as well as a basis for the kind of practical judgment that was needed to address the current social crises and the state of democratic politics. Wolin's article was based on a 1968 paper presented at the Conference for the Study of Political Thought and was interpreted by some as a signal that the subfield of political theory might escape the confines of political science, but the ultimate professional timidity of most political theorists together with a new conciliatory attitude on the part of the political science establishment kept political theory on the reservation. Somewhat like the case of the Caucus, it found a section home in the Foundations of Political Theory. What belied both Easton's vision of political science and Wolin's image of the vocation of political theory was the reality of the lack of unity in each.

It might have seemed at this point that there was a basis for a rapproachment between political theory and political science, since both seemed intent on practical engagement and furthering the cause of democratic politics. By the early 1970s, the tone of disciplinary discourse reflected a diluted image of such a disposition as political scientists sought to reconstitute the idea of the field as a "policy-science" and political theorists embraced the work of individuals such as Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls as a reprieve from the near-death experience many had earlier attributed to normative theory. There is no doubt that there was a heightened self-consciousness about the relationship between the academy and politics as well as about the nature of political inquiry, but the polarized controversy that had characterized the 1960s began to wane, and what might have seemed on the verge of becoming a truly revolutionary epoch in political science failed to develop. As in the case of politics itself, the unity spawned by common opposition is not sustained in the aftermath of polarization. What emerged from this situation was basically a strengthened ethic of pluralism that allowed political science and political theory to remain professionally integrated but intellectually detached, and, with the demise of the academic cold war, both political science and political theory became increasingly internally pluralized. *The* "vocation" of political theory gave way, as Wolin would later lament, to variety of theoretical "vocations" that were driven more by professional concerns than political relevance, and political science increasingly projected an image of itself as a highly eclectic profession and discipline. Although the profession had been created to make the discipline more political, professional concerns, as in the case of perestroika, began to overwhelm political ones.

A sign of the times was that Karl Deutsch, who had been one of those most vocal in driving a wedge between political science and political theory as well as in pursuing the dominance of systems analysis, devoted his 1971 APSA presidential address to elaborating an ecumenical stance that not only welcomed all forms of what could be construed as theorizing but encouraged a bridge between "political theory" and "political action." This spirit informed presidential addresses though the 1970s, but it was increasingly more an expression of unrequited hope than a description of the actual state of affairs. The distance between the profession and politics was increasing, and differentiation within the discipline made it more difficult even to imagine how connections could be conceived and on what basis they could be achieved. Perestroika can be understood in part as the residual aura of the bad conscience that haunted the aftermath of the 1960s. So much was promised but so little was delivered. The answer to this failure is not, however, to be found in situational logic but rather in the nature of the identity crises that have characterized the field of political science and in the pervasive attachment to pluralism, which for three-quarters of a century has informed the image of American democracy as well as the politics of political science.

## Difference and Identity

One problem with both post-behavioralism as well as perestroika was the assumption that reforming the discipline would change not only its epistemic but practical relationship to politics and that methodological diversity was the key to such a transformation. In both cases, the focus was on methodological and professional diversity and on inclusion, and the criticisms of pluralist politics were forgotten. But a discipline without a clear sense of identity was not the solution any more than pluralist politics was the answer to democratic identity. One of the underlying causes of the identity problem in political science is that, somewhat unlike both sociology and economics, for example, political science—notwithstanding the idolatry of the classic canon of political thought—did not evolve and revolve around a distinct shared core of theoretical icons. For example, one would look in vain for a figure comparable to Max Weber or Emile Durkheim. But what political science did share with the other social sciences was the belief that there was an epistemic answer to the practical problem of the relationship between discipline and its subject matter. Whatever the similarities and differences between perestroika and former upheavals in political science, perestroika once again brought this



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issue to the fore. The issue was, however, somewhat clouded by the focus on methods and the claim that a scientific or quantitative approach to inquiry must be complemented by more humanistic and interpretive methods. This issue was further muddied by vague arguments about how the latter were in some way intrinsically more democratic and politically relevant.

While claims about "making political science matter," such as that advanced by Sanford Schram and Brian Caterino, represent an important and successful effort of certain researchers to engage politics, it does not solve the problem of how to make the discipline and profession "matter" and of answering the questions of whose political science should matter and to whom it should matter. Their work is based on seeking a model in something such as Aristotle's account of practical reason or *Phronesis*, but the more temporally and substantively apposite historical examples may be the nineteenth-century practices of moral philosophy and the social reform movements, which together gave rise to the modern social sciences. There was never a time, even during the behavioral era, in which there was not a deep concern about making the discipline matter. The problem that these normative practices ultimately faced, however, was not that they lacked what might be broadly characterized as a phonetic spirit but that they ultimately failed to be bearers of any conventional form of social authority and privilege. In the pursuit of such authority, whether they were conservatives or liberals, they invoked science as a surrogate for religion as a way of compensating for their increasingly marginalized status. For Francis Lieber, who can reasonably be construed as the nineteenth-century founder of what Bernard Crick referred to as the "American science of politics," and figures such as sociologist William Graham Sumner, the answer was to claim the status of science in their pursuit of ideological goals. This was one of the principal reasons that the emerging social sciences both professionalized and gravitated toward a home in the academy. This search for the authority of science, however, paradoxically distanced the social sciences, physically and conceptually, from the very world that they wished to influence, and, at the same time, they became bound to the vagaries of transformations in the images of science to which they were beholden. If we probe and understand this historical background, we can in large measure understand the underlying source of the insecurities that have prompted the crises of identity that have given rise to the basic controversies and transformations that have defined the history of American political science and that continued to resonate in a protest such as perestroika. There is a fundamental paradox inherent in the very idea of a political science, but unless that paradox is clearly recognized, it cannot be confronted. Although this paradox may be particularly apparent and salient in the case of political science, it is ultimately rooted in the fundamental difference between natural and social science.

It would indeed be strange, and even silly, to argue that transformations in natural science are a consequence of changes in its subject matter, because natural science is the theoretical author of the "facts" that constitute its subject matter. The difference between natural science and social science is the difference between presentation and representation. The concept of representation entails the assumption of an original that is represented, no matter how and by what means it is represented. Social science is in the business of representation, but after natural science has presented a picture of some element of world, it makes little sense to ask about the separate identity of that element. Because of this relational character, the social sciences are marked both by their changing perceptions of their subject matter and by a need to consistently respond epistemically and practically to changes in that object of inquiry—or to confront problems that have arisen from a failure to recognize such changes. The case of political science is somewhat unique even among the social sciences. Although for all the social sciences, their relationship to their subject matter is not simply unidirectional, the study of politics has faced a special problem. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the social sciences were not only insecure about both their authority and practical efficacy but faced retribution for meddling in social practices. The university provided some physical distance, while the language of social science offered theoretical distance, but they faced the paradox of wanting to gain proximity and influence but yet escape both the wrath of the natives and the danger of losing objectivity through co-optation. No matter how politics was construed and characterized by political scientists, it was the name of a distinct, specific, locatable, and concrete social practice about and within which people had strong opinions and which was capable of taking considerable umbrage not only regarding the fact that it was being studied but about how it was interpreted and represented. The dangers of studying politics were evident in the late nineteenth century, during the 1920s, and in the 1950s and 1960s when the focus on pure science and objectivity was reinforced and in part instigated by McCarthyism and responses to funding resources.

Although there was the danger that critical discussion and commentary might be inhibited, political science sometimes mustered sufficient courage to provide a touchstone for controversy. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, it was evident that political science was not actually a very politically fearsome practice and that if political scientists were afraid of politics, it was more an acquired trait than a primary genetic propensity. The days when the political establishment was upset by folk singers and political scientists has receded, because they have been disempowered by being treated as irrelevant. For criticism to be effective, it must be taken seriously, and a discipline that seeks its identity in diversity is especially weakly positioned.



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Much of the residual imagery regarding the relationship between political science and politics is the resonance of a distant past, and the history of American political science can be viewed from one perspective as a steadily increasing practical estrangement from politics. Although this is in part simply the fate of accentuated professionalism and the fact that there are few instances in which political scientists and political theorists have actually foregone academic rewards in favor of political engagement, it is also in part a consequence of the nature of the American academy and its historical relationship to American public. But the political theorists of the 1960s did see a problem with the ethic of pluralism, and that ethic continues to confound politics as well as the kind of discussions that characterized perestroika. Perestroika was at once a call for methodological and professional pluralism and for making political science matter, but there was a distinct tension between these demands. At least in the 1960s, there seemed to be two basic choices, as fanciful as either may have been—Easton's Federation or Wolin's vocation, but by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, a discipline based on methodological pluralism was in a poor position even to imagine either, and the resurgence of the theory of democratic pluralism also exacerbated the problem.

By the late 1920s, it seemed that the reality of diversity in American society had undercut what many had begun to refer to as the "democratic dogma" or the belief that an organic American people stood behind both the Constitution and the government. This created a dilemma about the possibilities of fundamental change through public policy, and it seemed that the only possible answer was to find within the interplay of interest groups bounded by a liberal consensus the possibility of a relatively automatic society that political scientists could describe and valorize but not significantly enter except in a limited way as advisors to the umpires in government. This image of beneficent pluralism became the meaning of liberalism for a generation and continued in new renditions to inform behavioral political science through the 1960s when liberalism qua pluralism also became the prime target of a wide range of political theorists who resurrected images of democracy as grounded on a public realm and a participatory constituency. By the middle of the 1980s, pluralism had largely receded as the centerpiece of a theory of democracy in both political theory and mainstream political science, and the policy-turn in the discipline was fading away as a source of professional identity, even though the issue of how to make political science and political theory politically relevant persisted in surfacing. Political scientists had begun to be enthusiastic about the application of economic models of rational choice, but although this promised a new sense of disciplinary unity and identity, it had little to do with the basic issue of the relationship between political science and politics.

In the 1990s, there was a relatively sudden resuscitation of a theory of pluralist democracy. This was in many ways distinctly different from the pluralism that characterized the theory and ideology of behavioralism, but the similarities and continuities were greater than the proponents have been willing to recognize. The historical and intellectual sources of the new pluralism included the collapse of Communism; the growing awareness of multiculturalism; Rawls's revision of liberalism to include a "reasonable pluralism" and an "overlapping consensus"; a pluralist turn in the work of Habermas; and the popularity of various aspects of post-modernism. Despite the loyal opposition of communitarian images of democracy and worries about a decline in "social capital," that, as president of the APSA in 2002 Robert Putnam assumed to be essential to the public role of political science, it was difficult, by the end of the twentieth century, to find a critic of pluralism. In it new incarnation, it had once again become the hallmark of democracy, and it was inevitable that the enthusiasm for pluralism would begin to spill over into the profession of political science. This was certainly one of the factors that gave rise to perestroika, but it also foreshadowed the impotency of the movement.

There are few who have ever suggested that pluralism was not a central attribute of democracy, but it is not easily conceived as the basic principle of democratic governance. From its earliest American origins, political science has been devoted to determining the constitutive principle of democracy and assessing the extent to which American politics conforms to that principle, and disciplinary identity has been ultimately tied to conceptions of democratic identity. The ethic of political pluralism, even in its most recent forms, continues to manifest tensions with the ethic of democracy, but it raises particular difficulties for the relationship between political science and politics. Where and how, for example, does political science intervene if not in the interest of a general public? And how can it speak if it does not have a distinct voice? Some suggest that the task is for the knowledge class to lend expertise to the least advantaged, but whatever practical agenda political science might embrace, it raises the issue of elitism and substituting scientific judgment for democratic judgment. It is also difficult to conceive any form of political pluralism that escapes the pathologies involved in attempting to achieve democratic public policy, which were stressed by the critics in the 1960s. In many respects, the ethic of pluralism, both epistemic and political, was at the heart of perestroika, but this ethic continued to be riddled with problems that make it vulnerable to absorption in the persistent centrifugal forces of professionalism.



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# Methodological Pluralism and Disciplinary Politics

James Farr

> The age of pluralism is upon us. It does not matter any longer what you do, which is what pluralism is.
>
> –Arthur C. Danto

The philosopher Arthur Danto was referring to art—prophetically, "the end of art"—not perestroika or post-behavioralism or political science. But his acerbic comment captures one of the many important things that John Gunnell argues or implies. That is, there is no natural or necessary connection between methodological pluralism and the practical activity of political scientists. Indeed, pluralism has been "subversive of the congenital practical concerns of political science" that, in various forms, have identified the discipline from the beginning. Regarding perestroika, this challenges the perceived sentiment that methodological pluralism was not only a goal in itself, but a critical or contestatory posture with respect to the American polity at large and (especially) the political organization of the profession in terms of the policies of the American Political Science Association (APSA) and the content of the *American Political Science Review* (APSR). While these political aspirations were genuine, they were not realized or even adequately confronted, but rather "sublimated in discussions about methodological pluralism and professional diversity."

Placing perestroika in the longer arc of the discipline's history, as Gunnell does, shows that its particular mismatch of methodological diversity and political identity was not new, however experientially immediate and important it was for the colleagues drawn into its debates. It is rather astonishing, though, that those debates rarely reflected on the history of the discipline, especially what significance its episodes of crisis held for the fate of perestroika. What starts to take shape, looking back, is how frequently methodological debates (even pluralism) eventually got the better of the political identity or practical agenda they were designed to foster. The comparative-historical method outlasted the nationalism of "the state" theorists like John W. Burgess; the psychological perspective on politics, associated with Charles Merriam, lived on after his ill-fated mayoral campaign in Chicago or pleas for international associations for civic revival; and behavioral methods fared far better in the long run when compared to the "consultative commonwealth" inspired by Harold Lasswell and hailed by Heinz Eulau. Post-behavioralism, as Gunnell reveals, is indeed the immediate precursor of perestroika. Might it have been (or still be) worth investigating what came of Easton's appeal for a Federation of Social Scientists in light of the living embers of methodological pluralism?

The behavioral revolution blazed onto the scene with its own variant of methodological pluralism, too. Disciplinary historians Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus amply documented this. Behavioral observations, experimentation, statistical methods, game theory, and systems analysis were all "in," without much skepticism that they did not all "fit" together very well and that no political scientist could embrace them all. Then, too, the actual political commitments of behavioralists varied dramatically, from Robert Dahl's democratic socialism to William Riker's economistic conservatism. Moreover, these political positions were not logically entailed or necessarily required by their respective methodological orientations, underscored by the historical fact that the pluralist theory of Nelson Polsby, Dahl's student and collaborator, was anti-socialist or at least against stratification theories. And "rational choice Marxism" emerged on the scene. The methodological pluralism that morphed after behavioralism might have had a sanguine effect on disciplinary disputes or identity if it entailed a form of toleration that respected difference of Others' methods. But the toleration could be (and mostly was) a live-and-let-live indifference. Or it could respect some difference and prove intolerant of any other. The "great cafeteria of the center" that Gabriel Almond praised in his famous article on "Separate Tables" allowed "in" some methodological pluralism while "outing"

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critical theorists and Straussians to tray tables on the side. The APSA, in the wake of David Easton's presidency, has at least been more welcoming, allowing a hundred sections to bloom. Alas, this could simply confirm "the persistent centrifugal forces of professionalism."

Gunnell does not dictate to the profession "what ought to be done." But one leaves his paper thinking there is still something important about the legacy of a discipline that, in the words of Raymond Seidelman, sought to be "a science *of* politics and a science *for* politics." If, again, there is no natural or necessary relationship between methodological pluralism (or, indeed, anything methodological) and the practical activity of political scientists, then only contingent links and contextual choices remain. Let me ask two questions in this connection, then, the first of which is immediately contextual and professional, irrespective of method. Might the profession, under the auspices of the APSA and its officers, compose a document, if not a manifesto, and solicit signatories from the membership to condemn torture, as recently documented in the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee report? This has immediate precedent in the American Psychological Association's reaction to the issue (and its ongoing web updates), in part because certain psychologists (whether members of APA or not) have a lot to answer for. If any political scientists were involved in the state orchestration of terror, as policy advisers, then this is a direct parallel. If not, the large number of signatories would be nonetheless important, politically and symbolically. This would be an act of "negative" unity, that is, a testimony to what political scientists *as* political scientists are against.

The second: Might political scientists rally around a positive unity in civic education? This is something many claim to do, could do better, and could invite others to contribute (in research, pedagogy, or public action). It is one of the discipline's oldest practical identities. Huge differences notwithstanding, it links Francis Lieber, Merriam, Bernard Crick, Dahl, Amy Gutmann, Robert Putnam, Jane Mansbridge, and scores of others, including many perestroikans. True, "civic education" is a contested if not an essentially contestable concept. It is a "problem" in the robust Deweyan sense for which a problem-orientation is no "mantra;" and methodological pluralism, so directed, could perform practical work. It has received some support from the APSA, and deserves more as a professional commitment. Political scientists need to approach this renewed task realistically, given the discipline's fitful history and the "pluralist" state of affairs in politics. But it is a practical activity and disciplinary identity worth the struggle, for all that.



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# Perestroika and Global Politics

*Robert O. Keohane*

Professor John Gunnell's essay on "Pluralism and the Fate of Perestroika: A Historical Reflection" focuses on one question addressed by modern political science: whether pluralist-behavioral analysis of rich societies with representative government, such as the United States, is adequate. Professor Gunnell is concerned, as the perestroika movement was, with tensions between theory and practice, professionalism and engagement with politics, sophisticated methodology and a focus on crucial issues; and with the connections, or lack thereof, between empirical and normative analysis. He points out that the *mantra* of pluralism within the discipline – incorporation rather than rejection of dissident movements—has often been substituted for searching discussions of these issues.

Although these are surely important questions, it seems odd to me that Professor Gunnell discusses them within a context that is so United States-centered. Much of the perestroika debate focused on the United States, or on the discipline itself, but comparativists and students of world politics were also involved. In these fields, privileging narrowly-defined methodological standards can have great costs in restricting the range of questions asked and excluding important subjects—for which systematically collected and reliable data may not be available. Yet nowhere in his essay does Professor Gunnell mention international relations, or more broadly, world politics, which includes the manifold and expanding activities of transnational actors. Nor does he devote significant attention to comparative politics.

Not even a glancing reference would lead the reader to reflect on how war affects politics—despite major works on this subject in political science and associated disciplines during the past several decades. Nor does Professor Gunnell's essay reveal an appreciation of the broader question of how practices and customs diffuse from one society to another—whether through the internet or by means of the exercise of force. Implicitly, his essay views each polity as sufficient unto itself—a perspective more defensible for students of the United States in the 1950s than for students of any other country at any time since at least World War I, or for students of the United States now. In an era of what is known as "globalization," in which connections among societies are closer than ever before, discussing political science as a discipline without addressing these connections is to ignore "the elephant in the room."

A major issue in political science since the 1960s has been the relationship between democracy and economic development. Is there an income threshold below which democracy does not thrive? Under what conditions do even relatively wealthy states follow non-democratic paths? Can authoritarian elites, including communist parties, devise effective strategies to maintain authoritarian rule even as their societies become wealthy, with highly-educated populations? When are apparent democracies, crafted to look appropriate in the eyes of the West, actually only nominal; and is such a pattern of nominal democracy sustainable? These are pressing questions that have engaged some of the best minds in political science over the past two generations, yet they are entirely absent from Professor Gunnell's essay.

More broadly, the whole issue of *comparative analysis* is missing, although in the perestroika movement concerns about methodological narrowness were especially strong among students of comparative politics. Political scientists are well aware, partly because of the behavioral revolution, of the extent to which politics is embedded in public attitudes, social practices, and norms—which of course vary enormously around the world. So the issue of how democratic and non-democratic polities are affected by the cultural settings in which they are embedded is a pressing one as many countries engage in more or less genuine efforts to institutionalize versions of democratic governance. Since culture implies history, the historical legacies of societies become important explanatory factors for our discipline. Political scientists have wrestled with these questions in recent decades—an enterprise that relies heavily on sophistication in historical interpretation. No wonder that the perestroika challenge to formal and quantitative work as *the* professionally acceptable way to do political analysis resonated strongly among students of world politics and comparative politics.

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Plans for this journal, *Perspectives on Politics,* were already under way before the first perestroika manifesto, but the perestroika movement surely gave impetus to the project of having an official American Political Science Association journal with a broader ambit than the *American Political Science Review,* more open to commentary and to broadly interpretive work. Attempts to think systematically about qualitative methods were also already under way, but perestroika at least reflected a widespread interest in validating such research, and may have contributed to the recent vibrancy of qualitative research, which now has its own section of the APSA.

Nevertheless, the relentless pressure of more and more sophisticated quantitative methods continues. When these methods are connected with a genuine sense of politics on the part of investigators—focusing on important questions, raising original and non-obvious hypotheses, and putting them into historical and comparative context—they contribute to intellectual progress in our discipline. All too often, however, they are used unimaginatively to address, in somewhat more precise ways, issues that are already well-understood, while new or more significant developments, since they seem less amenable to such methods, are ignored. Political science is also at risk of following the path of Economics, in which members of the discipline who focus on specific policy problems are relegated to inferior status, by comparison with theorists and methodological innovators.

In some ways the problem of methodologically-induced narrowness to which perestroika responded remains as strong as ever—perhaps even stronger—despite the incorporation of this counter-movement into the mainstream of the discipline. Political science faces a problem of "nominal pluralization," comparable to the "nominal democratization" that we find in many countries around the world: in the organization of the Association, and in official rhetoric, many flowers bloom, but in actual employment decisions at high-status departments, methodological sophistication and theoretical pretension trump genuine engagement with politics and policy, informed by the exercise of imagination and sophistication about how politics works. We should therefore be grateful that Professor Gunnell, despite the limited focus of his essay, has called renewed attention to this ongoing problem.



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# A Tale of Two Eras: The Caucus and Perestroika

David D. Laitin

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.

–Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

The political science discipline has twice in the past generation faced an insurgency that combined methodological and ideological critiques—the first coming from the Caucus for a New Political Science in the 1960s and the second coming from Perestroika in the 1990s. A comparison of these two eras raises intriguing questions about the role of political scientists as advisors, policy makers, and critical thinkers in a democratic society. One can imagine many roles. Political scientists can emulate the Shakespearian fool, speaking truth to power without any chance of exerting authority, and protected from retaliation for unwanted views by their political irrelevance and university tenure. Alternatively, they can insert themselves invisibly in the circles of power (as do Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, at least in Tom Stoppard's eyes), best to hear without mediation (and without influence) the way policy gets made and to report to others the true machinations in the centers of power. As a third model, now relying on the role of Lewis Eliot in C.P. Snow's *Strangers and Brothers* novels, political scientists can insert themselves in those very corridors and subtly yet resolutely infuse new perspectives into the democratic process. Finally, they can serve as political activists, as did political theorists Sheldon Wolin and John Schaar lecturing before adulating audiences on the University of California–Berkeley campus in the late 1960s. They drew analogies between the egregiously failed campaigns of General Maxwell Taylor (in Vietnam) and Alcibiades (in Syracuse) to mobilize the student masses against a war that was destroying an established democracy rather than constructing a new one. Here political scientists were combining politics with vision. This was the spirit of the New Caucus.

Nostalgia today for the spirit of the 1960's Caucus, however exciting it was, is misplaced. The public role of the political scientist is, and should be, dependent on the broader political context. A changed political context demands different roles for scientists in their orientations toward power.

The era of the Caucus was one in which the U.S. government, in the name of anti-communism, secretly overthrew democratically-elected governments in Guatemala, Iran, and Chile. It was drafting young American men in the hundreds of thousands to fight a war to suppress an insurgency that had far more legitimacy in Vietnam than the puppet governments that American power was inserting. Several of the former confederate states of our union were resisting the fulfillment of voting rights to African-American citizens. Young Americans organized to provide tools to our unregistered citizens to assert their rights in a way far more resolute than did the federal government, unwilling to upset structures of oppression in the American south. Anti-communism and racism were sustained by powerful elites impervious to reason and protest.

Sadly, in this context, American political scientists were effusive in their appraisals of American democracy. Robert Dahl discounted the possibility (save in rare instances) of an ideal democracy anywhere, and argued that the polyarchy (a sort of diminished democracy) that America had achieved was a descriptive model of success. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba glorified America's "civic culture" which was far better than one that promoted full participation of all in a democratic process. And Kenneth Waltz was writing (in a period where American planes were defoliating Vietnamese farms) that the international system in which we lived, and the nuclear bombs we invented, were affording us a thankful era of peace. No wonder young political

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scientists would accuse the disciplinary establishment (and the methods on which they relied) of compromising with power.[1] The Wolin/Schaar stance of political activism—one in which disciplinary cozying up to power was exposed—was certainly appropriate.[2]

Political science's perestroika arose in the waning year of Bill Clinton's presidency. A quite different set of challenges faced our nation: growing inequality, ecological threat, and an emerging Islamicist challenge to secular dictatorships in the Middle East and the Western governments that supported those dictatorships. But to put this last threat in a nutshell, Osama bin Laden was no Ho Chi Minh. For all the brutality of communist regimes throughout the world and the brutality involved in fighting an insurgency first against the French and then the Americans, Ho sought legitimacy among his own population and was intent on governing them. It was impossible for fair-minded analysts to see the National Liberation Front as a threat to the world in which we lived. Yet embedded in our foreign policy establishment was a resolute ideology of anti-communism that was resistant to fair minded criticisms of its inhuman excesses.

After 9/11, in contrast, few Americans—not even Jane Fonda—could stomach an image of cheering on the Islamicists organized around al-Qa'ida. Moreover, despite the deliberately deceptive intelligence that justified the war in Iraq, and the unbearable scenes of torture in prisons overseen by U.S. forces, few Americans were on the side of Saddam. The war to overthrow him was immensely imprudent, revealing both ignorance of the social cleavages in the Arab world and a considerable degree of post-Cold War hubris. But there was hardly an elite consensus blind to the failures of our occupation. In fact, both the Pentagon and the CIA reached out to the social science community in search of a way out of their military morass.[3] On the domestic front, the liberation of women and gays is proceeding without an Orval Faubus, Governor of Arkansas, ordering his minions to hose down activists seeking to advance their liberationist agendas. To be sure, economic inequality today rivals the injustices of the 1960s in terms of human suffering. But, as sadly seen in the "Occupy" movement, ignorance about proper remedies rather than resolute elite action holds back reform.[4] In our era of lingering perestroika discontent, there is no embedded structure of power deaf to protest and reason. In light of this different context, what critical message linking American political science to power is appropriate?

To answer this question, consider Max Weber's distinction between the "ethic of responsibility" and the "ethic of ultimate ends" that he draws in his "Politics as a Vocation" lecture from 1919 in a moment of revolutionary student ferment in Germany.[5] The ethic of responsibility takes into account the likely consequences of the means that are oriented towards desired ends to see if those means can be justified. The ethic of ultimate ends uses direct means even if those means undermine the desired ends. Although Weber derided those who abided by the ethic of ultimate ends as political "infants," he recognized that in certain times there is hardly an alternative course. He tragically sees this possibility when opponents to power can reasonably retort, should their political action backfire tragically, that "the world is stupid and base, not I."

From a perspective of the Caucus years, and blind to the logic of cause and effect, activists blocked the entrance of the Oakland induction center only to have their heads smashed with police batons, voted for "Peace and Freedom" (the party of candidate Eldridge Cleaver), and engaged in other such acts even if they would bring the more Hawkish candidate for President (Richard Nixon) into power and thereby delay the inevitable acknowledgement of American defeat in Vietnam, thereby adding tens of thousands of cruel deaths to the cost of that war. And activists registering African-Americans in the south were morally justified even if it would provoke deathly violence. These social movements appeared obvious answers to a state impervious to political reason. Indeed, if the evils of government action were so deeply embedded in American institutions, undermining the structures sustaining them rather than altering policies seemed compelling. Here, an ethic of ultimate ends, an ethic that was derided by the leading political scientists of that time, does not seem infantile, but historically sound. And the call for methodological diversity in political science was equally sound, with the goal not so much to advance knowledge, but to undermine the complicity of our discipline with unyielding structures of power.

An ethic of ultimate ends in today's world, one without a resolute class of politicians blind to public outrage, cannot be justified. Here the ethic of responsibility ought to be preeminent. For that, in Weber's words, "what is decisive is the trained relentlessness in viewing the realities of life." This implies a disciplined approach to the consequences of our political actions. In our era, the political science discipline, with its methodological obsession to trace the consequences of political treatments, has relevance for the vocation of politics. In our discipline, many are seeking to develop techniques to determine such things as how best to incentivize the unrepresented to vote; how best to win hearts and minds in the battlefield against murderous fanatics without killing the innocent; and how best to integrate culturally despised immigrant groups into modern democratic polities.[6]

Any reader of our journals will know that our techniques are jejune and our answers insufficiently cogent. But what is the alternative? Railing against American imperialism, American failures to fully accept gay marriage, American heartlessness in ignoring the long-term plight of the unemployed, has little value. Movements such as "Occupy" drawing attention to inequality can hardly demand tearing down the Fed. After having raised



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public consciousness about the skewed income distribution in our country, which it has successfully done, it must identify the mechanisms driving the separation of the top one-tenth of one percent from the rest of the population. The organization "350" seeking to bring rapid change in environmental policy cannot beat their collective heads against a resolute structure of polluters as no such structures have compelling force; rather they need to think beyond changes in public consciousness of long-term threats and begin to advocate a program of policy transformation. In partnership with organizations such as "350"—or the International Crisis Group promoting the responsibility to protect citizens all over the world against torture—political scientists can now deploy their disciplinary tools to help learn what policies work best to maximize societal impact.

In sum, there is one form of politics justified when the principal enemies are within embedded structures that are resistant to change (i.e., an ethic of ultimate ends). And another form of politics is justified when the centers of power are diffuse, open and ineffective (i.e., an ethic of responsibility). I make no claim as to whether we live in more or less evil times; and I don't want to say that the political science discipline has miracle tools. Nor do I want to claim that useful answers are on the horizon. As Weber warned, political action guided by an ethic of responsibility is "a strong and slow boring of hard boards." Finally, I make no claim that the present disciplinary leaders in political science are optimally deploying their tools to resolve fundamental problems. Rather we have some tools to advance an ethic of responsibility, and we shouldn't shy away from or seek to discredit them. And as long as the dominant voices in political science refuse to accommodate themselves to the realities of structural evils, our discipline can advance even in more challenging times.

From this viewpoint, the Perestroika movement is an anachronism. Its focus on methodological diversity is misplaced. Political science is not as a discipline complicitous with power. Now is the time to hone down on our disciplinary advances to address the fundamental problems that face our society and the wider world. Our failures as a nation to address these problems are due in part to ignorance, inertia, and polarized sentiments, but not an entrenched elite defending antediluvian structures with the political science discipline taking comfort in the status quo. Perestroika's attack on the disciplining of political science ignores the demands of the era-appropriate ethic of responsibility and a discipline less tied to the structures supporting oppression. And hopes to regenerate the spirit of the 1960s is equally an anachronism, as we no longer face resolute enemies hiding within unyielding structures of power.

## Notes

1 Dahl 1956, ch. 3; Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba 1963; Waltz 1967, 199–211.

2 For the tenor of this disciplinary critique, see Wolin 1969. To be sure, there were deep divisions among those combining critiques of the discipline and the structures of power. For a challenge to Wolin, see Gunnell 1986, 116–33.

3 For an example of research funded in the Minerva program of the Department of Defense, one that helped show the effects of certain kinds of development programs to marginalize insurgents, see Berman, Shapiro, and Felter 2011.

4 See David Grusky et al. 2013. In my essay in that volume (137–154), I elaborate on the lack of a political program of reform within the Occupy movement.

5 I rely on the translation available at http://anthropos-lab.net/documents/archive/politics-as-a-vocation. Weber's essay sees the two ethics as supplements that should, for any man with a "calling for politics," work in "unison." However, the timing of his talk before activist students suggests to me a concession by Weber to an ethic of ultimate ends appropriate for those deeply difficult times.

6 I defend the disciplining of political science in Laitin 1995, 454–456.

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# What did Perestroika Accomplish?

*Kristen Renwick Monroe*

John Gunnell's piece provides a useful occasion to reflect critically on the impact of "perestoika." In doing so, I use the term perestroika to refer to the spontaneous movement, fueled by discontent and demands for reform, which originated in 2000 with an anonymous e-mail, signed "Mr. Perestroika" and sent to seventeen recipients who were encouraged to forward it to others. The e-mail advocated "dismantling ... the Orwellian system" in the American Political Science Association (original perestroika letter) and, in particular, increasing methodological pluralism to make political science more relevant and accessible to non-specialists. The movement originated in what perestroika considered the perceived effort by practitioners of quantitative/mathematical work to establish hegemony over publications and appointments within political science and, more broadly, an arrogant and narrow understanding about what constituted good scientific work. perestroika's main goals were to broaden the type of methodological work deemed "acceptable" and to increase diversity within the APSA power structure by including in the profession's decision-making structure scholars who did more varied work, on a wider range of topics, utilizing an expanded range of methodologies, and who included political scientists outside the traditionally prestigious colleges and universities. The name *Perestroika Glasnost*—roughly "warm house"—was meant to signal the movement's desire that political science as a discipline be more welcoming to diverse types of work.

What did perestroika accomplish? A lot. Its most critical triumphs were its successful challenge to the view that there was only one way to do political science and its legitimization of the view that political science was a humanistic as well as a scientific discipline. In the ferment of perestroika, APSA established a new journal—*Perspectives on Politics* (POP)—designed to be edgier, more creative, controversial, and less tradition-bound than the *American Political Science Review* (APSR). The first editor, Jennifer Hochschild, did an excellent job searching out more innovative work. Her followers continued this tradition. Now widely respected, POP is read by many political scientists in preference to the APSR. Hochschild herself is the APSA's President-elect.

Both the existence and popularity of POP and the professional prominence of the journal's founding editor are emblematic of a deeper change achieved by perestroika: the shift in the discipline's attitude toward methodological pluralism. My sense is that debates—fights, if you will—between quantitative and qualitative political scientists are largely a thing of the past. To newly-minted Ph.D.s, arguing over the superiority of quantitative versus qualitative analysis seems what it always should have been labeled: silly. I do not say this cavalierly; a residue of arrogant disdain for scholarly work that does not have a number attached to it remains a pernicious, ugly part of some political science departments. Perestroika's concern with an artificial and narrow conceptualization of what is good "scientific" work was and is an important one. But perestroika shifted the battle, with more scholars, especially younger ones, now realizing there are many ways to examine a political issue and that good work will address a political problem using all the appropriate instruments available in the methodological tool-kit.

I note one example. One of my students, Bridgette Portman, examined the psychological underpinnings of political belief systems, asking whether ontological and existential differences exist between liberal and conservative politicos. Rooted in terror management theory, Portman's thesis utilized multiple methodologies—interviews, surveys, content analysis of speeches and public documents—to reveal the psychology of activists involved in politics in the United States, including their belief systems, personality traits and senses of individual and collective identity. By approaching a political problem using such diverse methodological tools, Portman was able to discern various facets of the diamond, not just to present a one-dimensional analysis. In this, Portman followed in the tradition of V.O. Key's *Southern Politics*, itself a methodological masterpiece and one suggesting perestroika's demand for increased sensitivity to how methodological pluralism can enrich our substantive analysis is not a radical change so much as a reminder to do good, methodologically-rich scholarly work.

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Insofar as this change is a generational one—and I hope it is—perestroika has been wildly successful, and should be applauded by the discipline as a whole.

Perestroika's success in challenging the existing power structure is more difficult to assess. In part, it did succeed. Certainly several of the scholars whose work initially was lauded by perestroika—Susanne Rudolph and Jim Scott—were given top offices in the APSA, Scott on Council, Rudolph as APSA President. Yet the APSA power structure itself remains surprisingly staid. Part of what perestroika desired was an opening of that structure to include people not automatically embraced, whose work might not immediately be seen as relevant for political science.[1] In this, the APSA remains elitist, still dominated by the traditionally-prestigious universities. (Both Rudolph and Scott were at high-status universities, the University of Chicago and Yale, respectively.)

At a 2014 APSA panel organized on equality and exclusion in political science, Rodney Hero noted that he is both the first Latino *and* the first APSA president ever to attend a junior college. While the APSA has responded well to demands for inclusion from many excluded groups—Latinos, women, African-Americans, LGBTs, women of color, and others—it has so far failed to address the issue of socioeconomic class.[2] The APSA should do more to select as Council members and officers—including especially the presidency—political scientists who are not at prestigious Research 1 universities, or who do not work in academia at all.[3] I hope this is changing. Hero has put this topic on the official agenda, and has scheduled a theme panel on inclusion at the 2015 meetings, noting that who is allowed in the discussion greatly influences how the discussion gets structured, and that many disparate voices need to be heard. The panel honors David Easton, who saved the APSA from splintering into two groups, one an academically-isolated professional association and the second a more politically or policy-oriented one, in the 1960s, when similar issues of relevance were raised by a group of so-called radical scholars.

Will the profession listen, and respond to the demand that a wider-range of scholars be included at the table in which decisions are made, with all the implications that has for how we define the very nature of our professional work and life? This remains an open question. In this regard, perestroika's call to open the profession to all—as a welcoming warm house does—constitutes a battle that even now remains to be fought. Sadly, it can still be lost, to the detriment of us all.

## Notes

1 *POP* ran my article on gender inequality within academia as the lead article, after the editor of another journal refused even to send it out for review, claiming the topic of gender equality in the academy was "not political."
2 Progress even for these minorities who did crack the power structure remains mixed. It took years of pressure for the APSA to regularly include women or blacks as president, and even now their numbers remain low. Hero remains the only Latino president.
3 Ironically, a perusal of the APSA presidents reveals a more open decision-making structure in the early days of the APSA, when it was not unusual for APSA presidents to be chosen from outside academia proper.



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# Perestroika and the Struggle for Politics

*Anne Norton*

John Gunnell's account of perestroika is written in the shadow of earlier efforts to reform the discipline. "Perestroika was," as Gunnell writes, "distinctly a call for reform rather than a revolutionary challenge." His recollection of the more revolutionary challenges raised in the midst of the greater struggles of the 1960s reminds us of a more radical set of proposals and debates.

I am less interested in the discipline of political science than I am in politics. Consequently I did not realize that the threatened secession of political theory was central to the conflicts Gunnell describes. It was evident, however, that the passion for politics that had animated disciplinary struggles in the 1960s was absent from perestroika. Should political theory be part of the discipline of political science? Should politics be part of political science? These questions are, I think, dependent on one another. The field of political theory belongs in the discipline of political science, I would argue, only while politics is primary.

No one needs to be told that political theory lives uneasily in the discipline. The coda "except for political theory" is ubiquitous. Political theorists could be quite comfortable outside the discipline. The history of political thought could be readily accommodated in history. Normative political theorists could be, with a bit less ease, taken into philosophy. Comparative political theorists, if they have a regional specialty (as they generally do) could move to into area studies, Near Eastern languages or (in some cases) religious studies. Many of us have joint appointments. Many have had the opportunity to move to another discipline. Most of us have not. The problem is power.

Political theorists are bound to each other, and to the discipline, by a common set of central concerns: power and resistance, legitimacy, efficacy, dominion and oppression. A little time in departments of history or comparative literature or philosophy reminds us that questions like the form of the novel or the metaphysical foundations of modal semantics do not command our attention. Theorists are not confined to a single place or period. For theorists, the questions that matter are questions concerning power: questions that are, or once were, or ought to be at the heart of political science.

The enduring irony is that while political theory has remained in political science to study the political, other subfields have attempted to excise politics from political science. It is possible, in some circles even desirable, to come to political science from economics, or math, or computer science with a "tool box" and without knowledge of the political institutions, texts, practices, history, or present struggles of any place or people.

This imperative (the imperative to cleanse political science of politics) is a legacy of the profound misunderstanding of Weber that drove debates over "facts and values." Certain forms of behavioralism and positivism, afflicted with imperial ambitions, have from time to time attempted to separate political science from the political. Indifference to immediate political concerns became the mark of the political scientist.

Political theory has widened when political science has narrowed. People who once might have been accepted in the fields of Comparative or American politics have, from time to time, been obliged to find a place in Theory. They are generally not much disturbed by this. The company is good in theory, and if the salaries are a bit lower, the prestige is high. The discipline, however, is damaged. The intellectually straitened subfields, "cleansed" of politics and committed to technical prowess, become arid and parochial. Their connections to other disciplines are diminished, or disappear.

Perestroika was a victory for reform and, like most reformist victories, it resulted in disappointment. A few doors were opened, a few careers were advanced. A few more journals were marked as appropriate venues for publishing, a few more methods taught in methods courses. These were small gains, but they have been transformative, permitting a slightly (though only slightly) more open, adventurous, and at the same time rigorous political science. Perestroika made life easier for scholars whose work is valuable. It made things harder for those who sought to claim the mantle of science without satisfying the demands of science: who claimed title to rigor on the basis of an aesthetic formality and the

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concealment of carelessness in numbers. But these are dark times and that is not enough.

Political scientists can no longer insist with any decency that they are engaged in forms of research whose distance from political concerns cleanses and clarifies them.

Let me be clear. I have nothing but contempt for the "scholar-activist" for whom all questions are subordinated to a cause. No one among us knows enough to give that kind of unquestioning allegiance. This is not a matter of serving a master. It is a matter of refusing all masters in the pursuit of the knowledge we need. Weber wrote that politics is "the slow drilling through hard boards." The study of politics demands the same patience and sacrifice but offers nothing of the camaraderie and glory of political work. Scholars are obliged, from time to time, to tread heavily on dreams they share and hopes they can no longer sustain. Yet it is still the long struggle for the political that drives most of those who study politics.

A political science that turns away from politics in the name of science is no place for political theorists. In such a case, the best service political theorists could give would be to raise again the possibility John Gunnell recalls, and establish an alternative venue for studying politics. Political theory could be the field where political questions are pursued. Those who once were ranged under different subfields, but remain committed to the struggle for the political could find a place there, as so many already have. The rest would remain, mocked by the name of the politics and the sciences they have abandoned.

Perhaps, however, it remains possible for political scientists to acknowledge the primacy of the struggle for politics. Perhaps ours could become a different disciplinary unity: more dangerous, more demanding, more contentious, and more useful. Perestroika also gave the discipline *Perspectives on Politics,* and with it a vision of what the discipline of political science might become. The range, power, and salience of the journal point a way forward, one that binds diverse forms of theoretical and empirical work in a common enterprise. The diverse approaches in political science, born of different circumstances and different intellectual genealogies can find their unity not in method but in substance and commitment. There would be great conflicts, but those conflicts would concern what matters most. The reformist pluralism of perestroika could become a revolutionary force in a quiet struggle of very longue durée.



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# A New Paradox: Political Science in an Age of Political Denial

*Sanford F. Schram*

Back in 1991, when presenting a paper at the University of Havana, I began provocatively by saying we lived in a post-Marxist world (only when I finished my presentation did my hosts return my passport—and then everyone in the audience laughed, but I could only chuckle nervously). In that august academic setting, I argued that the collapse of the Soviet Union had forced Cuba to reconsider what Marxism would look like going forward (both in theory and in practice). I noted that this meant that Marxists unavoidably had now become the objects of their own inquiries (having studied with Jack Gunnell, I was prone to such verbiage and the tendency to place debates about scholarly pursuits in a broader historical context). Post-perestroika in political science, this self-reflection is now also true for those who participated in this most recent effort to revitalize the discipline.

As a longstanding member of the Caucus for a New Political Science and the Foundations of Political Theory section of the American Political Science Association, I have continued to try to work through the issues Jack Gunnell first introduced to me in graduate school and which he so insightfully dissects in his essay. I took what he taught seriously. I was active in the perestroika movement to revitalize the discipline and to open up the dominant approaches to the study of politics to interrogation in order to create opportunities for political science research to be more politically efficacious. No doubt there have been failures along the way, and in fact much of what perestroikans sought (individually and collectively) has not transpired. Political science is nonetheless better for this latest installment of the ongoing struggle in "making political science matter."

Many Perestroikans wanted political scientists to resist the complacency that comes with pursuing "knowledge as an end in itself" and emphasizing theory and method over substance. Instead, political scientists should be more interested in conducting "problem-driven" research that contributed to ongoing political struggle, recognizing that relevance should neither imply being a handmaiden to power nor diluting scholarship just to make it more accessible to ordinary people.

Gunnell's grasp of political science's history and its relationship (or lack thereof) to the political world it seeks to understand continues to inspire me with its mastery of the issue. His historical perspective helps understand how perestroika involved a reenactment of the challenges associated with prior efforts. Yet I would argue that his analysis shows that while the struggle may be Sisyphean, it is the right struggle nonetheless.

I do not know how many of my compatriots in the perestroika movement were ignorant of the extent to which we are replicating earlier efforts to make political science be more true to its founding. And while I at times may have forgotten or even never appreciated the full extent of our roles as replicants, it was hard for me to deny it given what I had studied in graduate school and with whom. The fact that we were risking been seen as people who failed to learn from history did not deter many of us who openly discussed this issue as we struggled to revitalize our chosen field of scholarly endeavor and reimagine it in ways that would enhance its political relevance. The prior failures to realize a more *political* political science did not undermine our efforts as much as remind us that we were involved in a venerable tradition that spoke to issues that went to the very heart of what political science was about.

The fact of the matter is that pushing for change is ineliminably iterative, more cyclical than linear, as Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward famously argued. As the forces of resistance inevitably reassert themselves, we are pushed to re-engage the battle, sometimes to reclaim the very same terrain that had been gained and then lost.

I do think that Gunnell raises a number of critical points that must be kept in mind whenever working on

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this issue. Prominent among those expressed in his essay is the profound paradox that political science looks like a field where political authority was sought by way of wrapping itself in the mantle of science. Claiming objectivity and impartiality by way of scientific inquiry only meant that the discipline had to further remove itself from the political field to ensconce itself in the halls of the academy.

Yet I disagree that this is a problem unique to political science. In fact, I remember first learning in graduate school from Gunnell himself that Max Weber's concern about the vocation of science in contrast to the vocation of politics produced a similar irony: academics generally needed to be impartial in order to achieve the needed political legitimacy that could help save politics from the foreboding image of a bureaucratized world with its "polar night of icy darkness." The social sciences *in toto* have been grappling with this critical paradox from Weber on. A society left to fend for itself without opportunities for critical reflection would come to be dominated by those who claimed to only be carrying out orders. The case of political science is, however, paradigmatic in the way it heightens the paradox. How does being impartial about politics help one become politically efficacious? As we struggle with the risks of repeating past mistakes about making political science matter, we might need to think through this profound paradox in different ways that allow for better answers.

While perhaps pluralism is not the best answer especially for an individual political scientist, it may have been an effective legitimating agent for the discipline as a whole at various points in its history. An open field of study amenable to diverse perspectives and methods is less vulnerable to being dismissed as ideologically biased. It is, however, very much an open question whether this is either a credible or effective stance today in an era of extreme ideological polarization and resulting political gridlock. How can even the most relevant political science research make a dent in the political field if it is populated by people whose minds are already made up and are prepared to dismiss even the most scrupulously conducted empirical research as politically suspect because it does not fit a pre-conceived political agenda?

Yet just because the relationship of political science to politics may now be more fraught than ever, it may mean it is time to ever more urgently revisit this persistent anxiety about political science's problematic relationship to politics. If we do not, we risk being complicit in the politics of denial and the disrespect for legitimate scientific inquiry that has overtaken the existing political system in recent years, on any number of issues ranging from global warming to voter fraud. While political science research might not be able to prove global warming is real, it can help show how vested interests systematically seek to discredit legitimate scientific research on the topic. And political science research is already effectively showing the same about the fraud of voter fraud as an issue, as well as its deleterious effects on U.S. elections.

In an age of increasing inequality, where higher and higher concentrations of wealth among an elite few are used to dominate the political system, political science research that speaks truths to these issues of power is needed now at least as much as before. Working to ensure that political science gets to play its part in the broader field of political struggle is still an effort well worth repeating.



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# A Response to Commentators

*John Gunnell*

I am gratified that those who responded to my essay were prompted to formulate thoughts of their own. I appreciate the contributions, and I have no significant disagreement with the comments.

Although Robert Keohane takes me to task for not dealing with issues such as how war affects politics and for not discussing the work of internationalists and comparativists, this was neither the purpose nor purview of my essay. Distinguishing subfield reactions to perestroika would, however, be an important element of any full analysis of the movement.

Kristen Monroe is quite correct in emphasizing the many professional and disciplinary changes effected by perestroika, and I believe that these changes were salutary and responsive to growing concerns within the field. My argument was that perestroika was limited by its lack of historical perspective and particularly by a failure to recognize the extent to which it was replaying themes from the 1960s but still assuming that methodological pluralism and ecumenism were an adequate answer to problems such as the relationship between political science and politics.

David Laitin's provocative essay claims that the difference between the political contexts of the 1960s and the beginning of the twenty-first century indicates a need, at the present time, to adopt what Max Weber claimed was an ethic of responsibility rather than pursuing an ethic of conviction or ultimate ends. For Weber, these were, however, not so much alternatives as complementary elements of a properly conceived vocation of politics. If one assumes that this ethical balance also applies to the vocation of studying politics, one might reasonably be skeptical about whether the contemporary political context indicates that the discipline should simply settle down to the "slow boring of hard boards," even though that might well be the place to start.

James Farr reminds us that part of what inspired the creation of political science as both a discipline and profession was a commitment to civic education. Farr has examined the history of this vision, including both its past aspirations and deficiencies, and it would seem that it might be propitious to consider once again how political science pedagogy might offer the possibility for a connection to political life as well as a way to pursue a democratic science of politics. Thinking about the role of civic education also might prompt us to remember that individuals as ideologically diverse as John Burgess and John Dewey recognized that democracy requires a measure of unity among democratic citizens, which goes beyond the pluralist image of an underlying consensus about the rules of the game.

I agree with Sanford Schram that the concerns of perestroika were laudable and that the discipline is better off after perestroika, but despite some affinities and shared sentiments between perestroika and Schram's vision of "making political science matter," I am not convinced that these involve the same spirit and strategy. The concern with making political science matter seems to me to more closely reflect the Progressive belief of the founders of the American Political Science Association that political scientists can significantly intervene in the public arena and enhance the quality of political judgment and that it is possible to join scientific investigation to democratic purpose.

While I am sympathetic to Anne Norton's concern about political science's alienation from politics, I am less sanguine about her claim that political theory has remained a redemptive beacon. It may be instructive that four decades after Sheldon Wolin proposed the "vocation" of political theory as an antidote to the apolitical "methodism" of mainstream political science, he concluded that we were now faced with a condition of "overtheoretization" and "multiplicity" that requires an "invocation" of what has been lost. He worried that the "proliferation" of theory reflected the disintegration of the political itself and that the vocation was in danger of losing touch with the "'real' political world," and that it might "lapse into dilettantism" or "harden into professionalism" and become an array of diverse "postpolitical" perspectives. I am also sympathetic to Norton's claim, like that of Laitin, that maybe we could find a new unity of purpose in the "slow drilling of hard boards" that serious study of politics requires. Although Norton believes, maybe quite correctly, that our problems are in part the legacy of Weber's distinction between facts and values, it is important to remember that Weber's argument, like those of others involved in the origins of the modern social sciences, was that it was necessary to separate facts and values in order to get them back together on a proper footing and that the

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authority of science was the answer. The tragedy was that along the way, as Easton had noted in 1969, political scientists had begun to forget why they were pursuing the authority of science. It would, parenthetically, be interesting to know who would exemplify the "scholar-activist" for whom Norton has "nothing but contempt."

One lesson we might derive from reflecting on the perestroika controversy is how it once again illustrated the distorting character of the categories in which some of the debates in the field still tend to be cast. They remain mired in a tired and obsolescent discourse about such things as positivist and scientific approaches versus qualitative and interpretive studies. We might have learned by now that there is no such thing as a positivist approach to inquiry and that science cannot simply be identified with an attribute such as quantification. Positivism is a largely discredited philosophical argument about the nature of scientific explanation, and even if it were not discredited, the philosophy of science is not the foundation of scientific inquiry. Similarly, interpretation is not a method. There are various philosophical accounts of interpretation, but all political inquiry, from rational choice analysis to history, is interpretive. While natural facts are specified and identified in terms of the theories of natural science, social inquiry is directed toward discursively and theoretically autonomous phenomena. We can, and should, argue about what is the best approach to interpretation, and this is where the issue of pluralism is relevant. In choosing a language of interpretation and representation, it is dangerous, as Weber emphasized, to limit inquiry to one ideal-type. It is necessary to formulate models that are adapted to the historical and cultural particularities under investigation.

A problem with the contemporary ethic of pluralism in inquiry is, however, that just as in the case of its manifestation in post-behavioralism, it often tends to suppress critical discussion and to divert attention away from basic theoretical issues about the nature of politics and political inquiry. Without pluralism, there would be a lack of contestation and progress, but it is mistake, in both science and politics, to assume that the existence of pluralism indicates a self-correcting mechanism. To criticize pluralism, in either politics or the study of politics, is not to endorse its opposite but only to recognize its limitations.



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