Reflection

Political Theory within and without Political Science

Nathan H. Feldman

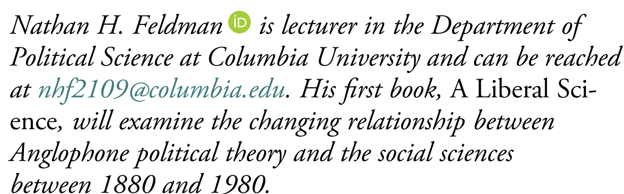
A schism between political theory and the broader discipline frequently shapes political science. How, when, and why did this occur? Deploying new archival evidence, I show how a cadre of leading political theorists between the 1940s and 1970s identified their vocation with humanism, presenting it as eternally opposed to the practices of "positivists" and "methodists." To tell this story, I focus on key figures, Leo Strauss and Sheldon Wolin, and critical institutions—the Conference for the Study of Political Thought and the journal *Political Theory*—to recount how political theory went its own way and the consequences of it doing so.

On the afternoon of December 30, 1967, a freezing day in Toronto, Sheldon Wolin from the University of California, Berkeley, rose to address the inaugural meeting of the Conference for the Study of Political Thought (CSPT), the United States' first organization devoted to the study of political theory. In his speech, recorded by Ellen Meiksins (1967, p. 6), the conference's rapporteur, Wolin demanded that political theory declare independence from political science, insisting that the discipline "has burdened itself with the most pedestrian possible conception of science." Enjoining his colleagues to join this separatist movement, Wolin asserted that now was the time to "make political theory a new and more exciting discipline in terms both of its relationship to contemporary concerns and of the contributions of other disciplines." These were no idle arguments. Wolin, one of the United States' leading political theorists, informed his audience of a proposal that he and a handful of colleagues would shortly present to their university's administration, demanding that Berkeley create a separate department of political and social thought.

Between the 1940s and 1970s, a cadre of leading political theorists identified their vocation with humanism, perceiving it as eternally opposed to "positivism" and "methodism," models of study that sacrificed political judgment for the sake of objectivity. They concurred that major currents of political science were inadequate, especially in the face of gargantuan political concerns. "The crisis of liberal democracy has become concealed by a ritual which calls itself methodology or logic," argued the University of Chicago's Leo Strauss (1962, p. 327): "No wonder then that the new political science has nothing to say against those who unhesitatingly prefer surrender, that is the abandonment of liberal democracy, to war."

These arguments catalyzed events whose effects still linger, although their political valence has dissipated. As Robert Goodin (2011, p. 19) assesses, "Political theory… is only very weakly connected to any of the rest of political science." Andrew Sabl (2015) concurs, characterizing American political science as divided between two cultures: political theory and empirical political science. Following Sabl, I would depict political theory as a humanistic venture committed to critiquing, depicting, and imagining social worlds. It is often an interpretive undertaking: its techniques are frequently literary, and it recurrently provides a normative orientation for political action and analysis. Meanwhile, the other subfields of political science generally coalesce around questions of prediction, cause, and effect. When considering the future, their practitioners bet, rather than speculate or instruct. This cultural schism has institutional effects. Significant departments—for example, those at Emory University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Pennsylvania State University, and the University of Rochester—currently employ just one tenure-track political theorist each, and that scholar's primary appointment may be elsewhere.

Deploying material from Sheldon Wolin's archives and the papers of the CSPT, I ask how political science ruptured. My answer builds on John Gunnell's (1993, p. 7) claim that an American vision of political theory was displaced during the 1940s by a European tradition of inquiry that "conflicted so starkly with the basic values of American political science."[1] Overturning the commonplace contention that political science fractured because empirical scholars



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embraced "positivism," Gunnell (1988, p. 80) insisted on political theorists' agency, depicting political science as having inherited a "split between different conceptions of theory" that was catalyzed by a crisis of liberalism.[2] For him, émigré scholars, most notably Leo Strauss, joined a few Americans in rejecting liberalism and the valorization of science as "the manifestation of political decline" (84). These anti-liberals opposed behavioralism—a collective temperament whose bearers emphasized the study of political behavior and attitudes, asking how they interacted with political institutions; pioneered survey and quantitative methods; and regularly claimed to show how the American political system was liberal, pluralistic, and functional (Dahl 1961b; Farr 1995). And they exiled from the subfield many political theorists who embraced liberalism and behavioralism.[3] Thus, contemporary scholars recall Gabriel Almond only as a behavioralist, even though *The Civic Culture* claims to be a continuation of "classic themes of political science … what the Greeks called civic virtue and its consequences for the effectiveness and stability of the democratic polity" (Almond and Verba 1963, p. vii). After this initial fissure, "professional pressures, under the guise of intellectual principle, continue to push in the direction of separatism" (Gunnell 1988, p. 86).

Although for Gunnell (1988, p. 81) the "imprint of the 1940s was fundamental for the future of political theory," this article focuses on later decades. It draws our eye to the 1960s and 1970s, for which Gunnell (1993, p. 8) described himself as being "too close to, in both time and concern… to be the historian."[4] During this period, critical political theorists associated themselves with humanism and created flagship institutions that still exist: namely, the CSPT and the journal *Political Theory.* Furthermore, and contra Gunnell, I do not read Leo Strauss as an antiliberal. Neither does this article conform to Gunnell's (11) "internalist" methodology, according to which political theory's development is "more convincingly explained by its internal conceptual and institutional dynamics than by its reference to its social and political environment."[5] As Henrik Enroth (2022) powerfully suggests, American political science has frequently revolved around "the question of social order," or what holds together society.[6] I show how practitioners updated their political theories in response to World War II, the Cold War, and the "crisis of authority" of the 1960s.[7] Political considerations canalized disciplinary commitments, and vice versa.

This article does not offer a comprehensive narrative. Commencing in the 1940s and ending in the late 1970s, it chooses not to focus on the founding of political theory as a subfield in the 1890s, the Teutonist theories to which the first political theorists cleaved, and later moments in the subfield, including the reception of Foucault, feminist political thought, and debates on multiculturalism in political theory.[8] Furthermore, it focuses on American political science, dwelling mostly on a handful of elite figures and elite institutions. As John Dryzek and Stephen Leonard (1988, p. 1246) wrote in an article that vindicated disciplinary history as indispensable for understanding contemporary trends, "Political science has multiple histories," and one article cannot recount them all.[9] To mitigate this cropped focus, the References are quite extensive, creating a resource for readers curious about disciplinary history.

Notwithstanding, this article does offer a functional history of the present subfield. Today, political theory is many things. It can be normative or historical, analytic or continental, critical or descriptive. But it is so rarely behavioral social science. I ask how and why this happened and comment on the aftermath of the subfield's decision to go its own way. I begin after World War II, when political scientists' concern with social order presented as an obsession with questions of stability and change. Primed by this normative preoccupation, Wolin, Strauss, and their allies emphasized the value of radical change, proposing radical political philosophies to remedy American political malaises. Meanwhile, other political theorists, now often recalled as behavioralists, stressed the political value of stability.[10] As scholars rehearsed these arguments and established intellectual institutions to support their visions of the subfield, they increasingly associated political theory itself with political radicalism, rejecting as complacent and untheoretical those who normatively prioritized stability. Of course, anti-behavioral political theorists did not speak in unison. They disagreed, sometimes profoundly, about the nature of political theory and its proper relationship to political science, feeling the same pressures that split political theory from the wider discipline. But they knew one thing—that their vocation was not that of their colleagues.

Behavioralist Political Theory

As the Cold War dawned, the University of Chicago's David Easton was anxious. A liberal political theorist, he thought that both his ideology and subfield had been weakened to the point of crisis by an inattention to the facts of political reality. Discussing liberalism, which faced "eclipse" after the horrors of total war and totalitarianism, Easton (1949, p. 17, 37) cautioned against an "inundation of lofty principles with scant attention devoted to the crucial problem of how they are to be realized." Rather, he contended that liberals ought to mimic the English constitutional theorist Walter Bagehot, who had revised conservatism, basing the ideology on science rather than speculation and rank prejudice. For Easton, liberalism could only meet the acute challenges of the late 1940s if its adherents "transform themselves into realists, [and] convert their wishful thinking and utopianism to liberal realism" (36).[11]

Easton lamented that political theory could not help orient liberalism to more realistic directions, assessing that the subfield had "declined" since it was first established as a zone of organized study in American political science. He

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castigated a host of disciplinary leaders—William Dunning, George Sabine, and Charles Howard McIlwain—for tracing "the historical and cultural conditions that gave rise to the prevailing political conceptions of an age" (Easton 1951, p. 41). This "historicism" severed political judgments from empirical research, surrendering "theory's traditional task of reformulating the content of values" under the pretense of objectivity. It was a doomed venture, however, because "values cannot be shed in the way a person removes his coat" (45). Thus, Easton joined a chorus of scholars who deemed political theory moribund, giving familiar eulogies (Berlin 1962; Cobban 1953; Dahl 1958; Laslett 1956).[12] But he also proposed a path forward, insisting that political theorists had to articulate a general theory of political behavior, such that their "advice… pass[es] beyond the rank of exceptional common sense" (Easton 1951, p. 52). By better addressing the question of social order, he suggested that political theory could become more relevant.

During this lament, Easton (1951, p. 53) highlighted a set of Chicago-trained political scientists, protégés of "the father of behavioralism" Charles Merriam. An academic entrepreneur who pivoted from the history of political thought, Merriam importantly called for political science to reject formalistic studies and "begin to look at political behavior as one of the essential objects of inquiry" (Merriam 1926, p. 7).[13] Easton credited Harold Lasswell, perhaps Merriam's most significant protégé, with using psychopathology to domesticate elitist conceptions of democracy.[14] Lasswell's *Psychopathology and Politics* filleted the concept of the state, terming it a "manifold of events," a "real subjective unity," and the product of beliefs and behaviors most easily discerned when people "experience [d] … communal unity, when it is manifested by the use of coercion against outside and inside disturbers of communal order" (Lasswell 1930, p. 243). For Lasswell, this shared meaning was produced by political elites, an insight he used as a political cudgel. In *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*, written at the high watermark of American communism, Lasswell (1936, p. 235) chided Marxists for forgetting that "government was always government by the few, whether in the name of the one, the few, or the many." What really mattered was how elites and counter elites battled one another, doing so by manipulating "symbols, violence, goods, [and] practices." Of course, not all elites were equal. As democracies collapsed globally, Lasswell feared he was witnessing the rise of a garrison state, a society ruled by "specialists on violence" (Lasswell 1941, p. 455; 1997). Unsurprisingly, Lasswell preferred the elites who were currently ruling the United States.

Lasswell's elitist writings were warmly received by others, among them David Truman. Another of Merriam's Chicago students, Truman is best recalled as a pioneer of behavioralism, although he also understood himself as a political theorist. In the spring 1961 edition of *Liberal Education*—the Association of American Colleges and Universities' magazine—he published a short article titled "Current Trends in Political Science," which lamented how many of political science's founders in the United States embraced a "crude empiricism" that rendered the discipline "inhospitable to theory of any form" (Truman 1961, p. 296). "Science is theoretical, or it is nothing," he insisted, quoting Hans Morgenthau. Thankfully, for Truman (297), he thought this problem was being remedied, writing, "In almost every sub-field theoretical questions are receiving increasing attention."

Doubtless, Truman thought that his *The Governmental Process* (1951) provided such a salutary theoretical intervention. A totem of behavioral social science, the book charted the impact of pressure groups on representative democracy in the United States. At a key moment, Truman (1951, p. 515) invoked Lasswell to support his claim that the state was an intersubjective experience: it only existed so long as the citizens adhered to "the rules of the game." When these shared rules disintegrated, politics became "morbific," or struck by "revolution and decay" (522). In this moment, Truman invoked Lasswell's theory to underline the importance of stability. Indeed, he was often uneasy with movement politics, even if they were emancipatory. "The emergence in the disadvantaged classes of groups," Truman (522–23) wrote, "that reflect materially different interpretations of widespread interests may encourage conflict and at the same time provide an inadequate basis for peaceful settlement. The appearance of groups representing Negroes, especially in the South… are [*sic*] a case in point."

This resistance was produced by fear (Katznelson 2003; 2013). Truman had experienced the Great Depression, the collapse of the Weimar Republic, and World War II, in which he served, and his scholarship revolved around the question of when democracies functioned or collapsed. Published in 1959, "The American System in Crisis" sounded a note of deep angst. Truman (1959, p. 481) posited that "since World War II the American political system has been subjected to a series of recurrent, almost chronic challenges whose implications may well cause thoughtful men to question the capacity of that system to survive." He described McCarthyism as particularly concerning, because this movement challenged the precept that "American citizens [were] entitled by law to the presumption of innocence and to due process, rightful inheritors of the tradition, without which free government cannot exist, that opposition and dissent are not automatically to be regarded as equivalent to disloyalty" (494). Like Lasswell, Truman (495) emphasized the responsibility of elites who mediated between the government and general population. He was disturbed that these figures were slow to resist McCarthy's demagoguery.

Many behavioralist political theorists shared Truman's concern for stability. Almond's and Sidney Verba's *The*

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Civic Culture (1963, p. 473), which asked why fascism emerged in Europe, valorized "democratic stability," a political culture "that… 'fits' the democratic political system" (Baer, Jewell, and Sigelman 1991b, p. 132). Samuel Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968) revolved around the notion that stability was precious. Justifying this collective sentiment, Robert Dahl (1966, p. 301) rhetorically challenged critics who recalled "the failure of 'stable' democracies to emerge in the USSR, Italy, Germany, and Spain … to scoff at writers who focus on the conditions of democratic stability."

Dahl (1958, p. 89) considered himself a political theorist, although he acknowledged that "in the English-speaking world, where so many of the interesting political problems have been solved (at least superficially), political theory is dead," reduced to "textual criticism and historical analysis." This textualism prevented political theory from existing "in the grand style," a model of scholarship that could legitimize a political order or provide an "extended super-ego for distinguishing approved actions from wicked ones" (94). Notwithstanding, Dahl refused to relinquish theory, insisting that without moral and conceptual guidance "the social sciences will move haltingly on, concerned often with a meticulous observation of the trivial" (97). Hoping to resuscitate his subfield, he rhetorically asked whether theorists could operationalize their research and "spell out… an adequate test of the truth or falsity of [their] major empirical hypotheses and at least present some survey of the evidence" (98).

Dahl's 1956 *Preface to Democratic Theory* offered such a model of political theory. Asking how ordinary citizens could influence decision making and inspired by Kenneth Arrow's *Social Choice and Individual Values* (1951), *Preface* formalized numerous testable propositions, probing how various models of democracy might operate. Ultimately, Dahl presented the United States as a "polyarchy," a normatively desirable political system characterized by stability, pluralism, and group participation in politics. He continued these investigations in his *Who Governs* (Dahl 1961c), a study of democracy in New Haven, Connecticut, finding that polyarchy there was defined by competition among elites (Piano 2019).

Dahl tacitly resisted programs of radical political change in the United States by minimizing American problems, especially racism. *Preface* blithely assessed that "the full assimilation of Negroes into the normal system already has occurred in many northern states and now seems to be slowly taking place even in the South" (Dahl 1956, p. 138–39). *Who Governs* was almost silent on racism (Hochschild 2015). Most astonishingly, a 1961 essay insisted that "nearly every group, has enough potential influence to mitigate harsh injustice to its members" (Dahl 1961a, p. 89). Commenting on this statement, a young J. Peter Euben (1968, p. 233) wrote in his doctoral dissertation that "there are… some groups who [would] look askance at such a statement, e.g., American Negroes and Nisei."

Shortly after Wolin addressed the CSPT and called for political theory to declare its independence, Euben defended his dissertation, which would remain unpublished. A student of Wolin and Norman Jacobson at Berkeley, he depicted Dahl and the English conservative philosopher Michael Oakeshott as both supporters of a model of scholarship that "threatens to eliminate political imagination and radicalism in the name of 'rationality' and 'stability'" (Euben 1968, p. 26). Subsequently, in a 1970 essay, Euben depicted Dahl and Truman as more concerned with what one could avoid in political life, rather than what one could achieve, because both individuals had enshrined political stability "in the face of Nazism and Communism," stating that "once … American policy was contrasted not with its best self, but with 'totalitarianism' it became all too easy to be seduced into a kind of relaxed complacency" (Euben 1970, p. 7, 12). Although there was no inherent link between behavioralism and complacency, Euben melded methodological considerations with political ones. As he identified these leaders of behavioral political science with political conservatism, he stitched together political theory and political radicalism.

Aristotelian Political Science

"Who is Leo Strauss?" a shocked Merriam, recently retired, reportedly exclaimed on discovering that a relatively obscure German émigré was now taking his chair in political theory at the University of Chicago (Baer, Jewell, and Sigelman 1991a, p. 111). Strauss's appointment marks a new chapter in the history of political theory when the subfield began increasingly associating with sharp critiques of "positivism." In some regard, Strauss's concerns mirrored those of the normative behavioralists. Like Easton, his colleague and interlocutor, he scorned "historicism." Furthermore, writing in the wake of the crises of Weimar Germany, Nazism, and the Cold War, he demanded that academic political theorists become conscripts of a militant liberalism. However, his vision entailed the rejection of behavioralism.[15]

Strauss's critique of behavioralism was wedded to a critique of modernity. Influenced by Martin Heidegger, he feared nihilism, contending that "modern western man no longer knows… what is right and wrong" (S. Smith 2007, p. 112; Strauss 1989, p. 81). Heidegger and Strauss also opposed logical positivism, associating the Vienna Circle with nihilism (Friedman 2000, p. 22). They both insisted that the foundations of science and society, law and politics were more profound than anything humans could produce. Moved by Carl Schmitt, Strauss also believed that liberalism tended toward nihilism (Gunnell 1993, p. 175; Maier 1995). But Strauss's politics differed from that of his teachers, who were both radical particularists and willing Nazis. In contrast, Strauss was both a Jew and a universalist,

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and he decried Nazism as the ultimate expression of nihilism, even if its supporters might possess a "non-nihilistic motive" (Strauss 1999, p. 357).

Strauss left Germany in 1932, scarcely to return. Exiled to the United States and haunted by the destruction of European Jewry, he chose to investigate the ascension of nihilism. Addressing this issue, *Natural Right and History* (1953) presents a tragic history of political philosophy, which—after early modernity—consistently lowered its horizons, becoming relativistic and nihilistic. This fate seemed inescapable. Edmund Burke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau offered opposing arguments. The former contended that political authority was rooted in tradition; the latter valorized the social contract. Nevertheless, according to Strauss, both accounts made justice particular, not universal—dependent on either history or agreement. This rejection of natural right was "bound to lead to disastrous consequences" (Strauss 1953, p. 3). It preceded the Holocaust.

Throughout his writings, Strauss sought to sever liberalism from nihilism, supplementing Enlightenment thought with what he considered an ancient Greek tradition that inquired into the nature of a good regime and cleaved to natural rights. "In contradistinction to communism and fascism," he wrote, "liberal democracy derives powerful support from a way of thinking that can hardly be called modern at all: the premodern thought of our Western tradition" (Strauss 1989, p. 98). Strauss thought Americans a perfect audience for this critical liberalism. The United States had already synthesized modern liberalism with classical values. Most notably, the Declaration of Independence declared a faith in self-evident truths and inalienable rights (S. Smith 2007, p. 167). Although his work became most influential within departments of political science, Strauss labeled this belief in an eternal morality "political philosophy." It was an embattled tradition, one that he characterized as being "in a state of decay and perhaps of putrefaction, if it has not vanished altogether" (Strauss 1957, p. 13).

Strauss detested American political science. *Natural Right and History* indicted it with relativism, depicting it as "dedicated to the proposition that all men are endowed … with many kinds of urges and aspirations, but certainly with no natural right" (Strauss 1953, p. 2). Continuing this argument in "What Is Political Philosophy," Strauss described his behaviorist colleagues as inane. Unable to assert that objective values were real, they could not defend social science. Unwilling to make value judgments, they could not distinguish between "great statesmen, mediocrities, and insane imposters." As such, "they cannot say anything relevant about politics" (Strauss 1953, p. 2).

More than any other text, *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics*—which Strauss published in 1962 with his students Walter Berns, Robert Horwitz, Herbert Storing, and Leo Weinstein—made the Straussian case against political science explicit (Barber 2006). The book insisted that contemporary political science "sacrifice[d] … political relevance on the altar of methodology" (Berns 1962, p. 55). Considering voting studies, Berns (43) chastised Dahl, who left "nothing to the 'common good' [other] than simply the set of subjective preferences that happen to be those of the observer who invokes the phrase." Berns deemed this view misguided. Voters were not merely rationalizing self-interest but were trying to act in accordance with an objective common good.

In the book's epilogue, Strauss (1962, p. 307) depicted behavioralism, "the new science of politics," as coterminous with logical positivism and with "the crisis of the modern Western World." He went on to argue that "the new political science shares with the most familiar ingredients of our world in its crisis the quality of being a mass phenomenon" (307). This "mass" nature made behavioralists produce insignificant knowledge. Behavioralists "put a premium on observations which can be made with the utmost frequency, and therefore by people of the meanest capacities," and their scholarship "frequently culminates in observations made by people who are not intelligent about people who are not intelligent" (326). What is more, he suggested, because they did not evaluate contrasting constitutional structures or inquire into the nature of a good regime, behavioralists could not address the moment's "important concern"— "the Cold War …. which amounts to a conflict" of unequal regime types (318).

But Strauss did not only braid together his coauthors' arguments. He outlined a preferable Aristotelian political science that was "identical with political philosophy" (Strauss 1962, p. 309). If "the new political science" presented moral attitudes as mere "tastes," Strauss's (310) alternative "necessarily evaluates political things; the knowledge in which it culminates has the character… of exhortation."

Strauss assaulted American political science with a lexicon imported from Weimar Germany that he shared with Heidegger's other "children" (R. Wolin 2001). Strauss knew Hannah Arendt, perhaps Heidegger's most famous student, from Berlin; Arendt also expressed her disdain for contemporary social science, which she said possessed a "repulsive" vocabulary and "frightening" ambitions (Arendt 1958, p. 586–87; Beiner 1990). Just as Arendt (1971, 435) equated positivism with conventionalism, Strauss (1957, p. 21) declared that "social science positivism fosters not so much nihilism as conformism and philistinism." But positivism did not hold great sway over American political science.[16] Programmatic statements, made by Merriam (1925) and Truman (1949), never suggested that behavioralism had significant intellectual debts to either the Vienna Circle or Oxford philosophy. Instead, political scientists borrowed from Boasian anthropologists, statistical methodologists, and sociologists specializing in public opinion. Neither did behavioralists

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pursue “value-free” inquiry, as Strauss alleged. Their work, as we have seen, could be intensely normative.

Perhaps because of its partially anachronistic nature, Strauss’s jeremiad evoked stiff resistance. Sheldon Wolin and John Schaar, the latter also at Berkeley, reviewed the *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics* for *The American Political Science Review*. The tone of their essay was indignant. Wolin and Schaar argued that Berns’s contribution evinced “a very uncertain knowledge of the field under scrutiny”; they considered Horwitz’s portrayal of Lasswell as a manipulative propogandist “so marred by dubious techniques of citation and argument that it cannot stand as a useful and fair treatment of Lasswell’s work”; they described Strauss’s epilogue as “a mélange of invective, innuendo, and bald pronouncement which hardly begins to provide a support for the basic categories of analysis utilized by his collaborators” (Schaar and Wolin 1963, p. 131, 145). Beyond this criticism, Wolin and Schaar elucidated potential connections between theory and the rest of political science: “The political theorist … might be encouraged to attempt a bridge between traditional political theories and the solid findings of such researchers as Dahl, Key, Lazarsfeld, McClosky, and the Michigan group” (125). “The scientific approach,” they maintained, “despite its imperfections, contains no irremediable flaw which vitiates the entire enterprise and renders its findings politically irrelevant” (133).

These were not hypocritical proposals. Schaar coauthored a conceptual critique of anomy with Herbert McClosky, another Berkeley colleague. Together, they marshaled survey evidence to support their claim that “the tendency to perceive the society as normless, morally chaotic, and adrift… is governed not only by one’s position and role in the society but also, in no small measure, by one’s intellectual and personality characteristics” (McClosky and Schaar 1965, p. 38–39). This work blended political theoretic and behavioral research. For his part, Wolin was an early interlocutor of Warren Miller, coauthor of the key behavioralist text *The American Voter* (Hauptmann 2022, p. 142).

This younger Wolin was no enemy of social science. Reviewing Judith Shklar’s *After Utopia* (1957, p. 272), which mourned that “the grand tradition of political theory that began with Plato is in abeyance,” he wrote, “In the literature of social science, organizational theory, and business corporations the traditional issues of political theory are being confronted. These various bodies of literature, therefore, deserve the close attention of the student of political theory” (S. Wolin 1960a, p. 176). Nor did his first book, *Politics and Vision*, suggest that political theory was incompatible with its host discipline (S. Wolin 1960b, p. 288). Although Wolin feared “hostility toward, and even contempt for, political philosophy in its traditional form,” his enemy, for now, was social theory: a desire to resolve political phenomena “into sociological, psychological, or economic components” (308, 314). This attitude would soon change. Politics invaded academic spaces in the form of student protests. At this critical juncture, Wolin argued that his vocation was necessarily politically radical and incompatible with that practiced by his colleagues.

The Divorce

“Last summer I went to Mississippi to join the struggle there for civil rights. This fall I am engaged in another phase of the same struggle, this time in Berkeley,” thundered Mario Savio (1964), leader of the Free Speech Movement (FSM), a student mobilization that marshaled thousands and deployed civil disobedience to reshape the university by enhancing student autonomy. For the FSM, Berkeley was a “factory” whose undergraduates were “student-cogs” deprived of “meaning” and “the freedom to learn” (Hauptmann 2022, p. 153–54). Starting in the mid-1960s, universities became acutely contested political sites. It was not a coincidence that the divorce between political theory and political science’s other subfields occurred against this backdrop.

In addition to politicizing the university, the FSM granted Wolin a national stage, which he used to assail his employer. Writing with Schaar in the *New York Review of Books*, he endorsed the FSM’s grievances, depicting a theoretical Berkeley student as being “confronted throughout his entire first two years with indifferent advising, endless bureaucratic routines, and a deadening succession of textbook assignment and bluebook examinations testing his knowledge” (S. Wolin and Schaar 1965). Worse still, Wolin thought this “tendency towards academic specialization … mirrored the growing meaninglessness of work in American society” (Hauptmann 2004, p. 41). Berkeley thus represented an example of a national malaise. These writings brought Wolin into closer intellectual proximity with Strauss’s émigré milieu. Arendt (1963; 1966; 1972) had known Wolin to some degree since 1955; however, the Berkeley protests brought them into alignment. *On Violence* endorsed Wolin and Schaar’s commentary (Arendt 1969, p. 16, 29, 45). Shortly thereafter, Wolin (1975–78), who had never mentioned Arendt in his scholarship before that point, took diligent notes on her work. Then, starting in the late 1970s, he published frequently on Arendt, his works showing how she increasingly influenced him (S. Wolin 1977a; 1978; 1983).

The Berkeley protests made humanism potentially revolutionary. In turn, Wolin began to articulate his vocation in radical terms, distinguishing it from the rest of political science. He unsuccessfully lobbied Berkeley to create a department that would independently house political theory. Two undated memoranda, written around 1967 and 1968, testify to a “poisonous” department ridden by “continuing and debilitating conflict” (Hauptmann 2022, p. 233; “Proposal for a Department of Political Theory” n.d., p. 7). Berkeley’s political theory

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group had only four tenured faculty members, the lowest student-to-faculty ratio, 56:1, of all the subfields, and was having its efforts "to attract new [faculty] repeatedly rebuffed" by the department ("Faculty to Student Ratio" 1967; "Proposal for a Department of Social and Political Theory" n.d., p. 8). One of the proposals warned that "political theory [at Berkeley] is in danger of being choked off" (8). These proposals failed, and Wolin began attempting to find employment elsewhere. "There is a good chance that Sheldon Wolin may leave Berkeley (you probably know as much as I do about the situation in that Department)," wrote Stanford University's Charles Dreckmeier to Arendt in December 1967, when he asked her whether his university should try to hire Wolin. Ultimately, Wolin moved first to University of California Santa Cruz (in 1970) and in 1972 to Princeton University.

Wolin projected his despondency for the future of political theory at Berkeley onto political science at large. Around 1967 he began to state for the first time that political theory and behavioral social science were incompatible. Dropping his objection to social theory, his argument echoed the Straussians' earlier contentions. "Political and social thought forms a tradition of reflective discourse centered on the attempt to understand and assess human group life," one of the proposals insisted ("Proposal for a Department of Social and Political Theory" n.d., p. 2). Meanwhile, it noted somewhat accurately that the social sciences "are increasingly disciplined, specialized, and technical fields of inquiry, modelled on the more advanced physical sciences" (8). Given this divide, it alleged that political scientists rejected theory as an excessively evaluative enterprise and dismissed the canon as a catalog of "outdated" and "abandoned" theories (7). Crucially, the proposal insisted that political theory inquired into "the human significance of politics" (8). Thus, theory provided the meaning for which students yearned.

As Wolin honed this contention, Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) altered discussions in political science. Truman (1965) and Almond (1966) would successively frame their American Political Science Association presidential addresses around the notion that behavioralism was a successful disciplinary paradigm shift. Wolin also appropriated Kuhn, claiming that behavioralists, including Dahl and Truman, were not paradigm shifting but were instead practicing "normal science." They were problem solvers who assimilated facts into antecedent frameworks. Political theorists, however, could be paradigm shifting. Producing "new ways of looking at the political world… Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, and Marx are the counterparts in political theory to Galileo, Harvey, Newton, Laplace, Faraday, and Einstein" (S. Wolin 1968a, p. 140). Yet, even still, this work held that behavioralism and theoretical inquiry might be fruitfully married. "Contrast," Wolin (140) argued, "need not imply a divorce." But Wolin would not remain of two minds much longer: by September 1968, he would be leading a backlash against behavioralism and the newly emerging positive political theory (Amadae 2003).

Wolin's belief that humanism and mainstream political science were in deep tension chimed with new internal dynamics developing within political theory. Throughout 1967, three significant historians of political thought—J. G.A. Pocock, Melvin Richter, and Neal Wood—corresponded with each other and created the first professional association focused on political theory, which they christened the Conference for the Study of Political Thought.

Pocock, Richter, and Wood were an unlikely coalition. Pocock was consistently interested in reconstructing the linguistic context of historical arguments. Richter started as a scholar of Chinese political thought before becoming a close reader of the English idealists and Alexis de Tocqueville. Wood, who studied with Wolin at Berkeley, wrote within a Marxist tradition for which ideologies were often superstructural. Still, these self-declared "founding fathers" of the CSPT found common concerns at the junction between politics and methodology (Pocock 1967a). "The study of politics," an early manifesto declared, "if reduced to a science of behavior, leaves to the demagogues and ideologues that all-important area where ethics and politics converge in the discussion of purposes and goals" ("Conference for The Study of Political Thought" 1968, p. 1). Humanism possessed "more power than any other [tradition] to engage thinking men in rational dialogue about the ends of politics and the means permissible for their attainment." Meanwhile, "those trained without knowledge of this tradition are incomplete as men, citizens, and political analysts" (2).

Like Strauss, the CSPT's founders thought they were leading a rearguard struggle. "We don't have much time left to make our case," Richter (1967c) wrote to Wolin, exhorting him to join the CSPT: "All of us left the APSA meetings with the feeling that something had to be done. The future of political theory within political science will be decided within the next five to ten years, if indeed its fate has not already been determined." For Richter, the perceived hostility to political thought was intolerable: "Kirk Thompson, who gave an excellent paper was attacked by McCloskey"—who had evidently turned from collaborator to enemy—"with quite extraordinary bitterness." This conflagration demonstrated "how far things have gone in your part of the world" (Richter 1967c). Wolin agreed to join the CSPT if he could present a paper at its first meeting (Wood 1967b). The founders acquiesced, and Wolin discussed his proposal for a new department at Berkeley.

The CSPT's papers from 1967 demonstrate how many political theorists felt alone in their discipline. Richter, concerned that the behavioralist Austin Ranney had

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become editor of *The American Political Science Review*, was worried that political theorists would now struggle to publish in its pages (Richter 1967c).[17] Others felt further detached. University of California Los Angeles's Richard Ashcraft (1967) confessed to Richter, "I have a greater interest in the topics to be discussed at the American Historical Association meeting than those discussed at the APSA meetings."

Harvard University's Judith Shklar (1967) could not attend the CSPT's first meeting, noting her sadness that she could not assemble with "like minded people." The "like minded" were various. At Shklar's and Michael Walzer's (1967) insistence, Richter invited the Straussians Harvey Mansfield and Joseph Cropsey, professors at Harvard and University of Chicago, respectively (Cropsey 1967; Richter 1967a). Letters between Pocock, Richter, and Wood reveal that the founders were reluctant to welcome these figures with whom they were personally and politically at odds (Richter 1967b), but anti-behavioralism took precedence. As Mansfield (1967) noted, "Of course I would be interested in an organization to promote—maybe it is now protect—the subject of our profession."

The CSPT's charter members differed on how political theory ought to relate to political science. The organization had attracted figures who wanted to split political theory from political science, alongside Wolin. Mansfield (1967) thought "Wolin's [proposal to create a new department] … may be the necessary recourse of others." Similarly, Wood envisioned the CSPT as prefiguring a new constellation of financial, departmental, and professional institutions that would enable political theory to split from political science. "If only we had a single word for the discipline, our battle would be half-won," he mused in a letter to Pocock. "John, you're a genius at this sort of thing—what about it? I thought of 'nomology,' but it does not quite fit" (Wood 1967a). But Pocock (1967b) challenged separatism: "I'm not sure, I want to get into a war with behaviouralists or launch a general campaign for the splitting of departments. I still think our tactics should be to do our stuff and insist on its relatedness to their stuff, fighting only in self-defense; I don't even see why they should attack us. Peace to men of good will." Richter also had no enthusiasm for a new discipline (Meiksins 1967, p. 8).

Still, Wolin followed a warlike path, insisting that political events demanded a theoretic response. At the CSPT's second meeting in 1968, he presented "Theory as Vocation" (S. Wolin 1968b), which was rewritten and published in 1969 as "Political Theory as a Vocation" (S. Wolin 1969). "Theory as Vocation" revolved around Max Weber. Mirroring Strauss, Wolin invoked the specter of Weimar Germany, comparing it to the current state of US politics: "Weber's Germany defeated and humiliated by war and wracked by internal turmoil, might seem to contrast strangely with the … position of contemporary America. And yet if loss of confidence in conventional political methods, structures, and leaders is a fair characterization of Germany it is not so far-fetched to suggest points of similarity" (S. Wolin 1968b, p. [1]).

Subsequently, Wolin used Weber as a foil. Why did Weber write "no single sustained attempt to view the political system as a whole, to grasp systematically its interrelated parts, to characterize the generality of its life, and to project its possibilities?" (S. Wolin 1968b, p. 7). This rhetorical question had two answers. First, for Weber, "the world had become impervious to theory," which "made rational attention seemingly impossible" (7). Second, by the early twentieth century, "the place of theory was taken by the idea of method." This choice to "model… the study of politics on the concept of method," Wolin noted, "is directly relevant to this meeting, because of the predominance of that concept in the contemporary direction and organization of political science. The so called 'scientific behavioral revolution' is fundamentally a revolution in a special sense: not the sense in which it has become a nom façon de parler, namely, a transformation of theoretical paradigms; but rather of a standardization of techniques and methods" (8). Political scientists emulated Weber. "Today," Wolin continued, "the study of politics is essentially methodological, not theoretical" (9).

For Wolin, "method is as old as philosophy itself. Methodia, like philosophia, was often used in connection with the notion of a way … to the truth." A theorist found truth by "'blazing' a trail." Meanwhile, methodists followed "a prescribed sequence of mental steps" and "follow a beaten path" (S. Wolin 1968b, p. 10). Descartes, Wolin's paradigmatic methodist, had "shrug[ged] off … acquired habits, beliefs, and rules" to find the "primordial truth of the cogito whose sum stands now bereft of its cultural heritage" (12). And "where Descartes had sauntered social science has passionately joined" (13). In the name of objective inquiry, behavioral scholars had adopted a technical "kit," comprised of "scaling, survey techniques, statistics, psychology, etc." As Wolin concluded, "It needs no complicated analysis to perceive that these techniques are being introduced into graduate education and, at my own university—if that is the proper word—some during the undergraduate stage" (15).

Wolin (1969) slightly amended this argument in the published version of "Political Theory as a Vocation." He almost completely expunged Weber, foregrounded Descartes, and integrated his writings on the sociology of science. However, the thrust of his argument remained constant. Indeed, Wolin's arguments increasingly mirrored those of the Straussians. He excoriated behavioralists, including Almond and Dahl, and rational choice theorists—most notably, William Riker—for working within a conservative framework and for methodism. He would now have concurred with Berns that political science "sacrifice[d]… political relevance on the altar of methodology."

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We cannot disentangle these arguments from politics, especially questions of social order. Both Wolin and leading behavioralists characterized student unrest, movement politics, and the emerging New Left as potentially revolutionary forces.[18] They drew, however, different conclusions. In April 1968, Truman's career crashed on the shoals of undergraduate unrest. Opposed to the Vietnam War and Columbia University's encroachment into Harlem, Columbia students protested and occupied five university buildings, capturing a dean, Henry Coleman, for twenty-six hours. The sit-ins only ended after a week when, as provost, Truman authorized the New York Police Department to come onto campus and remove students by force. They injured hundreds. Nine months later, Truman resigned. Disqualified from becoming Columbia's president, a position he sorely coveted, Truman instead became president of Mount Holyoke College.

Shortly after the protests, Truman (1968) remarked that specific tactics adopted by Columbia students "reminded me too much of Germany in the '30's." Subsequently, prefacing a second edition of *The Governmental Process* in 1971, he reaffirmed the importance of stability, insisting that "were I rewriting the book today I would give the theme of elite responsibility in the face of the collapse of common meanings considerably more prominence" (Katznelson 2003, p. 174). Both Truman and Wolin deemed US politics sickly and compared its situation to Weimar Germany, but this shared belief drove their scholarship in different directions.

In his 1969 APSA presidential address, Easton recognized that his discipline was politically divided. Detecting a "post-behavioral" revolution in political science that melded empirical and normative concerns, Easton (1969, p. 1052) acknowledged a widespread sentiment that "behavioral science conceals an ideology of empirical conservatism" and mourned that "political science… failed to anticipate the crises that are upon us. One index of this is perhaps that in the decade from 1958 to 1968… [*The American Political Science Review*] published only 3 articles on the urban crises; 4 on racial conflicts; 1 on poverty; 2 on civil disobedience; and 2 on violence in the United States" (1057). In the end, Easton argued that a synthesis between "creative speculation" and behavioral methods could prevent empirical studies of political science from lapsing into complacency. But the last thing many political theorists wanted was a synthesis with behavioralism.

Among the great theoretical behavioralists, perhaps Dahl came closest to endorsing the students' ambitions. Even then, he was no tribune for their movement. In *After the Revolution* (1970, 81), which responded to campus events, Dahl depicted radical arguments for participatory democracy as restating a long-standing Rousseauian tradition that possessed "much moral and psychological validity" Still, he disputed a great deal that Wolin then held dear. Just as the Berkeley protests decried technocracy, Dahl's small book turned on the role of expertise in politics. Although he emphasized the importance of voting—something Dahl termed the "Criterion of Personal Choice"—he also introduced a competing "Criterion of Competence," a mechanism for imputing consent whereby an expert judgment was "exactly what I would want were I competent to make specific judgements in that domain" (132). Although this was not an argument for philosopher-kings and even underpinned an ambitious argument for industrial democracy, it chafed with Wolin's vision.

Tracing a path "from principles, to problems, to proffered solutions," Dahl (1970, p. 166) spoke of problem solving and trade-offs. Although "the optimum," he wrote, "will not look like anyone's ideal form of government… it will be better than anyone's ideal government put into practice" (52). For Wolin, such arguments resembled normal science. Theory was, by contrast, "an epic" tradition. "By an act of thought," Wolin (1969, p. 1078) declared, "the theorist seeks to reassemble the whole political world." This paradigm-shifting theorizing was named a "thought deed" or "a series of mental acts which pre-form in thought precisely what actors, when they are acting rightly, perform in fact" (S. Wolin 1970, p. 9).

If Wolin's (1970, p. 29) political theorist was a "heroic" revolutionary, then Wolin wanted a revolution in America. Even though the published version of "Theory as a Vocation" no longer compared America with Weimar Germany, it still depicted America as in crisis. Wolin's (1969, p. 1081–82) language remains striking: "American society has reached a point where its cities are uninhabitable, its youth disaffected, its races at war with each other, and its hope, its treasure, and the lives of its young men dribbled away in interminable foreign ventures.… Mobs burn parts of our cities, students defy campus rules and authorities, and a new generation questions the whole range of civic obligations." Political theory was required to forge a better order.

Critically, Wolin (1969, p. 1065; 1973) was motivated by American concerns. Similarly, in its early years, the CSPT did not address significant international phenomena, most notably decolonization. Neither did a 1970 book of essays, *Power and Community: Dissenting Essays in Political Science.* Compiled by allies, colleagues, and students of Wolin, this tome was saturated with concern for what Schaar (1970)—one of the contributors—described as a crisis of authority. In turn, these dissenting voices highlighted politically salient issues, including student protests, working-class politics, poverty, and civil disobedience, that they claimed their colleagues had studied improperly (Green and Levinson 1970). But these dissidents' eyes were mostly draw to American political issues.

This overwhelmingly domestic focus also distinguished political theory from the broader discipline. Modernization theorists and their critics vigorously discussed the Global South in other venues from these new formed

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organs of political theory (Almond 1969; Almond and Coleman 1960; Emerson 1960; Huntington 1968; Pye 1958; Pye and Verba 1965). It is in *World Politics*, a journal of comparative politics and international relations, rather than any outlet for political theory, that one finds Kenneth Grundy's (1966) "Recent Contributions to the Study of African Political Thought" and Ali Mazrui's (1968, p. 83) insistence that "current theories of modernization do have ancestral ties with earlier notions of social evolution and Darwinism." Indeed, until the rise of "global justice theory" a decade later—especially through the writings of Brian Barry, Charles Beitz, and Henry Shue (all of whom mostly published in philosophy journals)—professional political theorists left almost all analysis of the Global South to their discipline's social scientists or to other disciplines altogether (Forrester 2019, p. 140–72).

Entrenchment

The CSPT begat other institutions. In 1970 *Political Theory* was established to "build bridges during a graduate student meeting of the Columbia University Chapter of the Conference for the Study of Political Thought." The founding editors declared, "We would hope … to … stimulate thought, produce controversy, clarify issues, foster understanding, and give rise to new perspectives in the articulation and realization of political ideals. For these, we believe, are the original motivations responsible for our common interest in political philosophy" (Lamb and Odajnyk 1973). Wolin became the journal's editor for "comparative theory."

Political Theory's earliest articles frequently insisted that "mainstream" political science had taken a wrong turn, becoming "value-free," and that political theory offered a distinct and preferable alternative. Giovanni Sartori (1973, p. 1974), a leading scholar of democracy, penned a two-part article in *Political Theory*'s first and second volumes that repeated familiar tropes. By using sociological causes to explain political phenomena, "the behavioral persuasion leads, in the end, to the disappearance of what is political, to taking politics out of politics" (Sartori 1974, p. 157). In another early article, Quentin Skinner (1973, p. 301), excoriated Dahl, claiming that Dahl's effort to construct an "operational" theory of democracy was inherently conservative and trivialized the concept: "The speech act potential of the term democracy… means that, when it is applied to describe… existing polyarchies, the act of commending their arrangements is thereby performed." Berns would have recognized this criticism.

Political science's schism became yet clearer as *Political Theory* remembered the subfield's luminaries. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Arendt had become a hero to many younger theorists, including Kirk Thompson (1969; the subject of McCloskey's "bitterness"), Margaret Canovan (1974; 1978), George Kateb (1965; 1971), Bhikhu Parekh (1964; 1979; 1981), and Hanna Pitkin (1972).[19] After Arendt died in 1975, *Political Theory* published a lengthy obituary by Morgenthau (1976) and a sizable article by Kateb (1977) in her honor. Meanwhile, Lasswell, the editorial board's only behavioralist, received only a sentence-long note when he died in 1978 (Barber 1979). Strauss, who died in 1974, also received an extended eulogy, penned by Allan Bloom. Little wonder that Bloom (1974, p. 374) took this as an opportunity to celebrate victory, gleefully reporting that "the criticisms of behavioralism that Strauss initiated became highly respectable as certain of the consequences of the new social science became evident."

The political theorist could not be a "positivist." Adhering to this battleline, many political theorists who admired John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* used the book as a cudgel against behavioralism and rational choice theory. For C. B. Macpherson (1973, p. 347), who, like Wood, strove to articulate a Marxist reading of the history of political thought, *A Theory of Justice* outlined "a more realistic humanist political theory." Similarly, Schaar (1974, p. 76) demanded that political science follow Rawls's inquiry "into the nature and possibility of the just polity." Schaar even adopted Strauss's anxieties about the Vienna Circle. "From its beginnings right up until our own century, political theory was understood to be inextricably connected with moral philosophy," he wrote. "That marriage was broken early in this century by the positivists, and contemporary political science is the orphaned child of the divorce" (75–76). But if Rawls was adopted contra "positivism," others also attacked him for being a "positivist." In *The American Political Science Review*, Bloom criticized *A Theory of Justice* in familiar terms. "One finds," he insisted, "no reflection on how Rawls is able to break out of the bonds of the historical or cultural determinism he appears to accept, and no reflection of how philosophy is possible within such limits." Just as Strauss deemed political science trivial, Bloom (1975, p. 648) regarded Rawls's theory as similarly inane, because it "speaks to men with the souls of tourists." But if political theory was not behavioralism, then what was it? On this question, political theorists could not and still cannot agree.

An Anarchic Subfield

After his protest, Wolin was certainly an influential figure. A 1978 poll of APSA members found him to be among the most influential political scientists of the 1960s (Roettger 1978, p. 9). He sat at the center of a Berkeley school that often characterized political theory in the United States. Tracy Strong (2017, p. 801), longtime editor of *Political Theory*, remarked that, even though he did his graduate work at Harvard, "Berkeley was in the air that gave me intellectual life." Eulogizing Wolin, Anne Norton (2015) avowed that he had "restored political theory, recovering its authority in the discipline and, more importantly, restoring theory as a practice necessary to politics itself." Ronald Beiner (2006, p. 483) recalled Wolin as someone

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who, “at a time when large segments of the political science profession were ready to jettison political theory, in favor of a rigorously value-free social science… prove[d] that political theory was an academic discipline of great potency.” William Connolly (1987, p. xiii), one of the first to bring Michel Foucault to mainstream American political theory, acknowledged a “special debt” to Wolin. Indeed, in 2001, Connolly edited Wolin’s *festschrift*, crediting him for revitalizing political theory in the 1960s and suggesting that Foucault would have been less readily received in American political theory if not for “Political Theory as a Vocation” (Connolly 2001). Wendy Brown (2016, p. xvi), perhaps Wolin’s most eminent student, introduced a revised edition of *Politics and Vision* by telling a familiar story: political theory was emaciated in the 1960s, under assault by “positivism, empiricism, and behaviorism,” but Wolin enabled the subfield’s survival.

Yet Brown added a bitter note. Mourning that Wolin was not even more influential among political theorists, she castigated the followers of John Rawls and Quentin Skinner for having “severed the history of political thought from contemporary political theory,” in essence depoliticizing the history of political thought (Brown 2016, p. xvii). Brown is surely correct to note that in many regards Wolin was an exceptional, rather than an emblematic, theorist. The extraordinary circumstances of the late 1960s heightened the political stakes of scholarship. But thereafter the fissure between political theory and science became self-propelling. Indeed, given Wolin’s original complaint, it is ironic that disagreements between political theorists and scientists would often be methodological, not political.

During the 1970s, debates over the nature of political theory and its relationship to political science exploded. Although the subfield had defined borders, its interior was anarchic. Wolin broke with Skinner dramatically at a 1977 APSA meeting when the two men shared a panel discussing “a new history of political thought.” Skinner (1977, p. 6) contended that it was not enough for historians of political thought to read canonical texts and “assess their value in relation to our present political concerns”; they also had to understand texts in their context. Wolin objected. He pointedly underlined passages of his copy of Skinner’s paper that endorsed the idea of a “methodology,” as well as a passage in which Skinner insisted that historians of political thought should begin their analysis with three steps: identify the concerns and interests of their subjects, ask how a “rational agent” would argue their case if “he had a desire to forward such concerns and interests,” and finally compare the results of this thought experiment with the actual text (11, 22, 24). “The first casualty of Skinner’s approach is theory itself,” wrote Wolin (1977b, p. 5) in response. For Wolin, reading political theory was a presentist enterprise, because all political theoretic texts necessarily transcended their contexts. As he wrote, “In this respect all political theorizing is radical: it seeks to constitute the root-conditions of political life” (19).

Similar divisions abounded. Although Pocock (1975, p. 391), under duress, invited Mansfield and Cropsey to the CSPT, in 1975 he lambasted Straussian scholars for being “immoderately contemptuous of all historical exegesis.” Pocock attacked Strauss too, believing that his arguments all too frequently lapsed into “conspiracy thesis and nonrefutability” (399). The next year, Wood (1976, p. 104) reviewed Pocock’s *The Machiavellian Moment* in *Political Theory*, criticizing it along methodological lines: “Past political theorizing has been more than a language game.” By not attending to the socioeconomic roots of political thought, Wood charged that Pocock had “depolitiz[ed] political theory” and “dehumanized history.” These ruptures only multiplied and deepened. Wolin (1994, p. 23) later attacked Rawls through the prism of antimodernity, claiming that his “formula, ‘a well ordered democracy’ is not congenital with the turbulent history of democracy: not with fifth century Athenian democracy… [or] the politics of the sixties.” Today, political theory is a profoundly divided subfield—split between historical and normative scholars, as well as between innumerable schools of thought. Given his distaste for normal science, it is perhaps fitting that Wolin never created a paradigm of scholarship.

Conclusion

In the fall of 2007, Pennsylvania State University eradicated political theory as a subfield in which it would train graduate students (Rehfeld 2010). The wheel of history had turned 180 degrees; attempts to remove political theory from political science were now coming from outside the subfield. Emblematizing this historical irony, Benjamin Barber, *Political Theory*’s longtime editor and Wolin’s onetime ally, wrote an open letter pleading that “it is essential to the well-trained political scientist and teacher, whether in American, Comparative, IR, or Public Law, that they have a training that includes an underpinning in political theory” (465). Yet, as Andrew Rehfeld noted in the pages of this journal, Barber’s argument left something to be desired. He never argued why political theory belonged in political science.

Since the 1960s and 1970s, political theorists have increasingly emphasized their field’s differences from political science, rather than looking for common ground and identifying political theory’s place in the discipline’s pin factory. As a result, traditions of political theory that seek to be congruent with the rest of the discipline have remained marginalized. In different ways, Michael Dawson (1994), Michael Doyle (1986; 1997; 2015), Jane Mansbridge (1977; 1980; 2003), Partha Chatterjee (2004; 2011; 2020), and Ian Shapiro (2002; 2011) work within a tradition of inquiry that can be traced back through Dahl, Easton, and Truman and have frequently attended to the

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lapses and silences that blemished these earlier figures' scholarship (R. Smith 2004a). But none of these bridging figures have defined the practice of political theory. Indeed, they have been frequently swimming against political theory's current, battling waves created by upheavals in the 1960s. Although political theory is not the house Wolin built, we still live with the impact of a moment when he came to the subfield's center, when he was believed—as Pocock (1967a) wrote to the other founders of the CSPT—to have said "too many of the things which ought to be said."

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Conflicts of Interest

The author(s) declared that there were no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship or the publication of this article.

Notes

1 Similarly, Adcock and Bevir (2007) suggest that an American tradition of "ideas and institutions" was replaced by an "epic tradition," which they associate with émigré theorists and Wolin.

2 Gunnell contradicted Ricci (1984, p. 135), for whom "the scientific method works only well when applied to… facts. The consequences were severe for political values, which are the very stuff of political theory." Ricci's argument resembled Crick's (1959) account. These anti- "positivist" arguments continue into recent decades (Ball 1995b, p. 39–61; 2007; Connolly 2008; Dryzek, Honig, and Phillips 2011, p. 64; Saxenhouse 2008).

3 Gunnell (2004a) explores liberal, behavioral models.

4 Katznelson (1997), R. Smith (1997), and Forrester (2019) also discuss these later decades.

5 Gunnell (1988, p. 85) had earlier acknowledged that émigrés' political thoughts were shaped by "political… and professional insecurity."

6 Enroth is explicit in his debts to Bartelson (2001, 2009).

7 "Crisis of authority" was coined by Schaar (1970).

8 For further examination of these areas of study, see Adcock (2014), Furner (1975), Goldman (1998), Haskell (1977), Jewett (2012), and Ross (1991) on the formation of American social science. Blatt (2018), Hanchard (2018), Robinson (1980), Vitalis (2015), Shilliam (2021), and R. Smith (2004b) analyze political science and the race concept. Khachaturian (2016, 2017) analyzes statism in early and recent political science.

Neither will I ask whether the behavioral revolution constituted a paradigm shift in political science. Gunnell (1993; 1995; 1996; 2004a; 2004b) argued that it did not; Ball (2007), Dahl (1961b), Farr (1995; 2003), Katznelson and Milner (2002), and Lindlom (1997) contend it did.

9 Farr (1988) also importantly vindicated disciplinary history.

10 Ball (1995a) similarly focuses on stability. Ross (1991), Seidelman (2015), and Jewett (2012) also address the relationship between political science and politics, but end their histories in the 1950s.

11 Shilliam (2021) critiques Easton for eliding how Bagehot's racism fed into his "scientific" conservatism.

12 Adcock and Bevir (2007), Condren (1974), and Gunnell (1993) discuss this perceived crisis.

13 Gunnell (2013) discusses Easton. Karl (1975) authored Merriam's definitive biography.

14 Piano (2019) discusses Italian elitism and American political science.

15 Oren (2003) discusses the relationship between American political science and American foreign policy.

16 Although the discipline's increasing emphasis on studying observable political phenomena and crafting falsifiable hypotheses, exemplified in Dahl's (1957) conceptual analysis of power, somewhat resembled positivism.

17 These fears were misplaced (Kettler 2006).

18 For instance, see Huntington (1975).

19 Arendt had spent many years on political theory's margins (Katznelson 2003, p. 52–53). J. Roland Pennock (1964, p. 689)—longtime editor of *NOMOS*, the yearbook of the American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy—described her in *The American Political Science Review* as a "sociologist." Interestingly, many behavioralist political theorists respected Arendt (Almond 1956; Truman 1960).

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