

Charles Merriam, Max Weber, and the Search for Synthesis in Political Science

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Merriam and The Disjunction of Science and Politics¹

This year we commemorate the centennial of Charles Edward Merriam's birth. Year after next we look forward to celebrating the bicentennial of the United States. The central link between these events, perhaps best reflected in his prophetic presidential address to this Association in 1925, lies in Merriam's 18th-century, rationalist-enlightenment faith that science and democratic government are mutually supportive and reinforcing.

Nowadays such a statement of belief has an old-fashioned, even naive, ring. Yet no one was more aware than Merriam of the biological, material, and nonrational components of human personality and society. For him, however, these constituted not ineluctable, immutable causes, but the materials, the tools, with which the competent politician, political scientist, and citizen must work in acquiring the arts and understanding of government. We do not know how early Merriam acquired the "passion for politics," but he certainly exhibited it from the time he took his doctorate at Columbia in 1900 to the retirement years when he campaigned for his son Robert's election to the Chicago City Council. Throughout fifty years of active participation in university, municipal, foundation, and national public service, politics and governance never lost their fascination for him as the primary and natural, if not the most efficient, aspect of man's social relationship.

Analytically, Merriam viewed the exercise of personal leadership, group processes of influence and power, and institutions of public order as the central, determining, "phylogenetic core" of those conceptual structures we call Society, Economy, and Culture. In the personalities of political actors, in the internal struggles of political groups, in the intergroup strategies and settlements of formal and informal public decision, Merriam saw the weaving and devising of those functional

patterns of adaptation in our personal and collective control systems that constitute instrument and phase of human evolution from lower to higher, simpler to more complex, levels of societal achievement.

In the preface to his last major work, Merriam wrote:²

It was a long step forward from politics as custom, symbolism, violence, and superstition . . . to the formulation of theories of government, however crude or obviously rationalizations of power. It was a still longer step from politics as speculation and intuition to systematic investigation of political intelligence in the context of the total physical, economic and social scene.

Even in his own day, many of Merriam's students questioned what they felt to be his overconfident optimism with respect to the relation between science and politics. Some colleagues, inside and outside the profession, rejected his assumption that the data and structure of politics are comprehensible in terms of scientific concepts and methods. Others, young and old, challenged on empirical grounds the results of his efforts to demonstrate that social science research can be significant, indicative, or determinative of the direction and formulation of political events and choices. From another direction, the definitional guns of logical positivism were brought to bear upon Merriam's refusal to accept "the unbridgeable gulf" between scientific political analysis and worthy goals of political action. Then, as today, critics were not lacking to assert that the concept of "politics as science" leads its devotees not only to active rebellion against or conservative acceptance of the established social order and power structure, but also to personal self-deception, moral and material corruption, and to an intolerable pretence to godlike, devilish, superhuman powers of comprehension and manipulation.

Admittedly, Merriam supplied his critics with ammunition. As a political theorist, he sought truth in action more than in contemplation. One of his favorite pedagogical devices was to emphasize the confusion between the use of theory to clarify conceptual points of departure (*credenda*), and its use as myth and justification (*miranda*) for initiatives in interpersonal behavior. With respect

¹ See Merriam's autobiographical sketch in L. D. White, ed., *The Future Government in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942). Also, Barry D. Karl, "The Power of Intellect and the Politics of Ideas," pp. 431-461, in D. A. Rustow, *Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership* (New York: Braziller, 1970); *Charles E. Merriam and the Study of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 10, pp. 254-259.

² *Systematic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), p. x.

to a third function of theory—the rigorous definition of observational categories, and specification of binding methodological rules for assessing reality—Merriam was typically enigmatic, and far too pragmatic for a logician's taste. He cavalierly transposed from necessary conditions of thought to problematic data of observation the famous epistemological issues of idealism versus materialism, rationalism versus empiricism, free will versus determinism, realism versus nominalism, monism versus pluralism. He located his organizing categories in the great historic and contemporary tensions of political life, the contradictions of continuity and change between the public and the private, the civil and the military, the religious and the secular, formal law and substantial justice, individual interest and group solidarity, partisan strife and the common weal. He was fond of quoting Goethe's "gray are all theories, green the shining tree of life" to express his conviction that politics should be studied as it is, rather than prejudged on the basis of a unified World Hypothesis, an explicit ideological position, or even a carefully defined scientific paradigm. Merriam tended to be impatient with legitimate epistemological questions and a priori disputes over preferred methodological technique, regarding them as getting in the way of doing research or of whatever needed to be done. He was inclined to throw both overboard in favor of inquiry into the "actual workings of politics, not from the viewpoint of the particular moment of struggle but from that of broader observation and analysis."

While Merriam made important substantive contributions to several subfields of political science, his most lasting impact was as protagonist for a scientific approach to politics, as advocate of statistical and social-psychological concepts in political analysis, as entrepreneur of interdisciplinary effort to support social science research and research training, and as active participant in multi-disciplinary applications of scientific knowledge to governmental and social problems. He was enormously challenging and exciting to his students, although he deeply disturbed many who saw him as a 20th-century combination of Niccolò Machiavelli and Francis Bacon. "Hard" social scientists regarded him as a philosopher; moral philosophers and logicians viewed him as unsound and tricky; practicing politicians called him "professor." As we listen to contemporary calls for a new political science, it is ironic to reflect on how little is known of his agenda for political research, and how much he had in common with today's rebels against the behavioral political science he did so much to establish.

In contemporary terms, Merriam was a pragmatic holist who saw politics and the political system as the strategically critical, conditional

factor responsible for "putting it all together"—form and substance, theory and practice, values and skills, knowledge and power. He assumed the interdependence of formal structure and informal function in human personality and organization. He postulated the interaction and convertibility of individual, social, economic, governmental control systems. He asserted the importance and necessity of analyzing long-range trends and short-run factors affecting the stability and survival of social and political institutions. He was materialistic in his perception of individual and group interests, power drives, value-loaded demands, negotiable and nonnegotiable, as the basic data of politics. At the same time, he had the rationalist's passionate faith that reason and intelligence could penetrate the fogs and cruelties of social myth, coercion and propaganda, to overcome individual ignorance, apathy, impatience and self-delusion. He was idealistic in believing that knowledge based on research could improve not only the quality of public policy but the entire process of governmental decision making, including popular participation and understanding of what it takes to realize public goals through political conflicts and political settlements.

In later years, watching the upsurge of polarizing ideologies, each claiming to possess the banner of "true" democracy, Merriam came very close to identifying the bases and agenda of democracy with the root-assumptions of the scientific creed. We should not accuse him of oversimplification. He knew as well as anyone the irreverent, analytical, corrosive cutting edge of science, as well as its synthetic, symbolically creative, constructive function. He thoroughly understood the antagonisms of role and skill between scientists and politicians. But he did say that science *is* intelligence in human affairs, and he was capable of asserting that "we know" the scientific foundation for such concepts and propositions as (1) the dignity of individual personality, (2) the perfectibility of mankind, (3) the equitable diffusion of the material gains of commonwealth throughout the community, (4) the desirability of arriving at governing decisions in the context of widest possible popular participation, and (5) processes of agreement and consent are preferable to physical coercion and violence in making authoritative adjustments of conflicts of interest, opinion, and power.

If Merriam had been willing or able to commit himself to a postulate concerning the conditions under which various types of scientific inquiry could be applied or related to the several modes of political action, or to specify the requisite procedures for settling scientific disputes over factual truth by political decisions, he might have reconciled the two worlds of science and democracy.

But Merriam either would not or could not identify the making of authoritative decisions about what constitutes scientific knowledge with the democratic decision process. He left us his redoubtable faith rather than a satisfactory demonstration of the unity or the correct ordering of priorities between the two worlds. Yet it is exactly our contemporary uncertainty as to what the relationship between scientific truth and democratic decision making means, or requires, that underlies so many of our present professional discontents.

Weber and the Multiplicity of "Political Models"³

In juxtaposing Charles Merriam and Max Weber, my intention is to clarify certain problems raised by the disjunction of science and politics, not to appraise their merits as political and social theorists. Merriam, from his entry into Chicago politics in 1905 to his death in 1953, bespoke the buoyant, optimistic faith of progressive America in increased popular political participation, mediated by the prospects of a beneficent, productive adaptation of scientific knowledge to improvement of the public life. Weber, the German-European, was prophetic analyst and tragic protagonist of 20th-century Western society at war with itself. He was obsessed with the pessimistic suspicion that the closer we come to scientific understanding of the forces at work, the more we doubt the adequacy or relevance of science to provide an acceptable map and guide for the course of human events. He indicated clearly the uses and limits of scientific judgment in dealing with the ambiguities of social choice and political value-conflicts, but despaired of widespread popular or governmental application of such methods. Perhaps more than any other social scientist, not excepting Freud, Weber articulated and forecast the existential contradictions with which the 20th century has been struggling: the anarchic disenchantment and alienation that accompany secularization and rationalization of authority, the idealistic distrust and contempt for the positivistic aspects of science triumphant; the paradoxical

linkages and tensions between economic calculation and religious motivation, bureaucratic domination and charismatic leadership, Marxism and nationalism, and, perhaps above all, personal commitment and analytical detachment.

Although their paths seem to have crossed when Weber visited the United States in 1904, apparently there was little continuing communication or dialogue between them. This is not surprising when we consider, besides their respective ages and statuses at that time, the range and sophistication of Weber's interests in the evolution of capitalism, legal and religious sociology, scientific methodology, and comparative bureaucratic systems. Weber might well have regarded Merriam's revolt against idealism and formalism in political theory, and reforming the American party system through the direct primary and civil service as conceptually particularistic, professionally parochial, smacking too much of applied gadgetry to be intellectually important. Weber did take advantage of his American visit to gather useful comparative data about religious and political organization in a non-European, non-Asiatic social system. The reverse analogy fifty years later, when American social scientists ransacked Europe and the third world for data to flesh out the categories of behavioral science and comparative political development, may not be too far off the mark in illustrating the context of their professional communication, or lack of it.

From Merriam's side, our information is mostly limited to what he communicated to his students about Weber's work. In later years he often referred to *Politik al Beruf* and *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. His lectures and persuasive writings are full of applications of Weber's distinction between values as ultimate, personal convictions (*urteil*) and values as standards of reference (*beziehung*). Merriam had no quarrel with Weber's political sociology, particularly his model of the relation between individual interests, ideals, and the bases of legitimate public order; indeed, he considered Weber's analysis superior to that of A. F. Bentley, who was accepted by so many American pressure-group theorists as their patron saint. Like Weber, he repeatedly stripped from Hegelian, Marxian and Spenglerian-type historical constructions their pretenses to scientific certainty and inevitability.

Merriam's differences with Weber for the most part are matters of emphasis to be inferred rather than corroborated by documentary quotation. In one sense, both men used *power* as a residual category. Weber, however, was interested in the classification and normative grounding of authority-patterns in individual behavior, of which the most "modern" type was *Herrschaft*, or rational-legal domination (as opposed to the authority of

³For Max Weber, I have relied primarily on R. Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1962); *International Social Science Journal*, vol. XVII (1965), pp. 9-70, and literature there cited; R. Aron, *Main Currents of Sociological Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1967), vol. II, pp. 177-264; H. S. Hughes, *Consciousness and Society* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1956); G. Lichtheim, *The Concept of Ideology* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967); T. Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1937), vol. II, and translator's introduction to M. Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947).

personal charisma, custom and tradition). Merriam identified power and politics with the activity of governing in both organized states and "stateless" societies, combining the functions of direction and control with the aggregation-mobilization of consent. This led him to classify power not as a derivative of social systems, but as legitimized means of establishing and maintaining authoritative systems of public order, through physical coercion, moral persuasion, and economic sanctions (calculation, allocation, bargaining, withholding resources).

Next, Merriam was radically skeptical of the cognitive status and reliability of *ideal types* as starting points for empirical observation, although he had no objection to the construction of organizing categories for purposes of data analysis, inference and generalization.

Third, for Merriam the scope of politics and the political system could not be confined or delimited to forms of association or collective activities characterized by the criterion of "a claim to a monopoly of legitimate physical force." He granted the empirical and normative ground for Weber's criterion, but he spent most of his life denying its sufficiency.

In more personal terms, Merriam exhibited the rather contemptuous tolerance of the experienced politico for intellectuals and others who forget the discrepancy between their conceptual constructions and reality, who fail to allow for the possibility of error, and who then agonize excessively over the failure of reality to fit the logic of their definitions. Since politics to him was so much a matter of controversial situations, Merriam found little practical use for Weber's distinction between an ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility. The former cannot be expunged from political reality simply by definition. Persons who seek ideal goals do not always act without regard to consequences. The distinction does not adequately take into account the political problems raised by moral insensitivity, cynicism, amorality and absurdity, which by implication are relegated to the realm of abnormal psychology. Finally, Merriam rejected both the definitional and empirical bases of Weber's pessimism about scientists playing an effective or constructive role in politics and policy formation.

Far more instructive than their technical differences, was the way the two men conceived the relation between politics and society, which both saw as the proper context of "the political." This goes far beyond the simple idea that politics is important or unimportant, prior or derivative. Both assumed the necessity of politics, and that the truths of politics are accessible to human comprehension. Weber's question was perhaps more basic: What presuppositions of thought neces-

sarily govern human access to political truth? Merriam's was more direct, action-oriented: What are the conditions, resources, methods and limitations of political thought in maintaining, modifying, and transforming social processes and institutions?

Neither man thought of eliminating or escaping from the conditions that make politics natural and necessary in social life; indeed, both came close to identifying the concept of power in human relations with the idea of action, i.e., the relation of initiating or yielding to others in communicating and choosing among standards and patterns of expected conduct. But whereas Weber sought to explain social action from the standpoint of individual motives and perceptions which justify and sustain authority, Merriam looked at interpersonal behavior in society from the standpoint of the interdependence and mix of the means (physically coercive, normatively persuasive, and rationally calculative) implied in the concept of a mutually-dependent, asymmetric, leader-follower relation between individuals, groups, or nations. At the societal level of integration, Merriam saw politics in terms of a problematic, variable, functional capacity of political systems to adapt to the conditions imposed by their changing internal and external environments. Political legitimacy was thus more than the sum or product of individual perceptions and beliefs politicized by society. It needed to be visualized in terms of the active formative process of public decision, starting from educational strategies of collective action employed by public officials, political leaders and group representatives, proceeding through the limitations imposed by resources, events, intelligence, and the requirements for securing acceptance and support from group members and the public at large.

Our natural science brothers are fond of pointing out that social and behavioral scientists are not quite sure of our conceptual points of departure. It is tempting to speculate how Merriam and Weber would have reacted to the modern plethora of models seeking to "explain" politics. There is the ancient view of politics as a simple battle or fight between forces of might. There is the classic-medieval conception of politics as the effort of the political society, or religious commonwealth, to realize its ideals of justice, and the good life. The search for ideal justice and harmony generates the conflict between the cities of God and Man, which gives us the secular image of a moral crusade, uniting or polarizing society by a holy war of ideologies. From Machiavelli, his precursors and successors, we inherit the idea of politics as *Staatswissenschaft*, statecraft, the arts of organizing and coordinating people, resources and public officials, through acceptable rules of collective de-

cision. This view turns politics into a rather special kind of social engineering. Then we have the Greek-dramatic-Shakesperian, and modern advertising, public-relations, view of politics as a form of mass entertainment, a theatrical production, with a playwright, financial and productive organization, openly or behind-the-scenes, staging the plot, scenes and roles for political *dramatis personae* to act out for the pleasure and approval of the mass audience. There is the social contract, Mayflower Compact, town-meeting conception of politics as a sort of mass-participatory, discussion process culminating in an agreement, a vote, or some other method of establishing and renewing popular consent. Finally may be mentioned the utilitarian, free-market paradigm of politics as a transactional game, or series of games, strategies and outcomes for which can be logically calculated according to assigned rules of decision and varying assumptions of resources, costs and benefits on the part of the players.

Merriam and Weber were quite aware of these varying conceptions of politics. In addition, they were concerned (Weber much more than Merriam) with such difficult theoretical problems as whether conceptual thought is determinative of or determined by language, culture, psycho-physical and external, material conditions, and the appropriate relation between concepts, methodological rules, and evidence in communicating and testing theories. I may be wrong, but my hunch is that neither of the two would have felt it necessary to argue that we require advance normative consensus upon a unified, paradigmatic point of departure before we can have an ultimately satisfactory, scientifically productive, or empirically realistic theory of politics.

Like most of us, Merriam and Weber differed about the epistemological context in which scientific propositions about politics ought to be stated, but they were largely in agreement in specifying the substantive data and requirements for analyzing the structure of political life. These consist in the authoritative relations of direction and control among men, the modes of exercising authority by leadership, and the influencing of that leadership by the participating units of society and community that constitute a political system. Political and social scientists select and emphasize different aspects of political structure and process for purposes of simplifying theoretical explanation, interpretation, and action. The central task of scientific political analysis is to explain the conditions and effects under which the continuing, changing relationships of downward direction and upward control between leaders and led, governors and citizens, occur. More generally, and normatively, explanations of the control relations of decision makers and members of the political community

need to be stated in terms of variables affecting the interactions between people acting through units of social and political structure—not only at the given moment or in the short run, but also dynamically, historically, so that action can be more creatively and intelligently directed toward or away from projected trends and contingencies.

No matter how ingeniously expressed in scientific terms of winning fights, games, coalition building, rational calculation of costs and benefits, or transposed into the skills of theater, decision making, large-scale organization and opinion management, no single, simplifying, analytical, metaphoric picture-image of politics is ever wholly satisfactory. We want more than the ideal utopia, the limited-aspect, reality-testing approach of science, or the intellectual-rationalist effort to arrive at political truth by formal reasoning from premises and definitions, empirically based or not. We require cognitive maps of individual perception and learning processes in political situations; we need to know how these affect and are affected by social structure, cultural beliefs and values. We require analytical categories which make the structural conditions and effects of the inclusive authority-system, in which individuals, their groups and values are implicated, explicitly part of the explanation. The difficulty is to find ways of interpreting the whole without attributing qualities to it that are only potential, problematic, or in process of realization. Both Merriam and Weber challenged the idealistic assumption that the presumed inclusiveness, power, or goodness of the group, society, state, or world political system controls everything, and thereby “explains” the molecular actions of individuals and group aggregates. At the same time, neither wholly accepted the lower-order assumptions of biological, economic, or cultural determinism.

With respect to our human desire for an adequate, comprehensive model-assumption clarifying political reality in human societies, Weber’s great contribution consisted in his demonstration of how much, but also the limits to which, human aggregate or system behavior can be explained in terms of a “voluntaristic,” individual theory of action. Merriam’s legacy consisted in the fascination with which he clothed and transmitted the conviction that politics and political-system behavior, while empirically rooted in individuals and groups, cannot wholly be explained as simple, additive relations between individual actors, nor by rational deductions of probable choices from assumptions about individual motives and interests under varying conditions. He anticipated the modern statement of the task of political and social science as that of discovering ways of conceptualizing and verifying the *systemic properties* whereby the relations between the parts consti-

tuting the more inclusive unit-level of integration we call the political system are coordinated and controlled. He rejected the twin assumptions that a science of politics is impossible (a) because human collectivities do not behave or vary according to unalterable, necessary laws derived from history, human nature, or economic conditions, or (b) because a science of political *praxis* based on such laws would be humanly intolerable. Merriam saw the problem of a scientific politics to be that of identifying the strategic system-attributes, qualities, variables; improving our instruments of measurement, and incorporating them explicitly into the explanatory model, along with indices of behavior, belief, and material conditions. While his personal interests in improving the policy process far outstripped his scientific energies, his awareness of the far-from-completed theoretical requirements led him constantly to forecast and welcome many efforts at "resynthesis."

The Problem of Interlevel Integration Among the Sciences⁴

Merriam and Weber's work suggests another obstacle impeding re-integration of theory around an agreed-upon, paradigmatic starting-point. That is the interdisciplinary relation among the sciences of human knowledge bearing upon politics, of which the so-called micro-macro problem is a special case. In the 19th century, the distinction between the natural and the cultural (human) sciences seemed to set the limits of discussion, with the natural sciences having nothing to do with society or politics, and the social sciences relegated to speculative hermeneutics, debatable doctrines of interpretation. Again we may point to Weber as anticipating our present-day realization that, in the context of man's collective search for knowledge about the natural world and his place and destiny in it, the choice lies not between a natural-scientific approach and a human-oriented, social-science approach, but between science and nonscience. Weber worked with economic, legal, historical and sociological materials, but Merriam explicitly visualized and welcomed the contribution of physicists and biolo-

gists, psychologists, anthropologists, and statisticians to the quest for political understanding. It seems clear that both men considered, but found little hope in the ideas and methods of those who reject scientific modes of assessing reality, in favor of wholly subjective insight, consciousness, and determination. Merriam in particular had no use for the either-or quality of the unity-of-science assumption versus the anthropomorphic-subjective view. His work on civic education and training suggested that the empirically-important question is to identify the institutional, as well as social-psychological, processes of political socialization, in order that the dialogue between the respective believers, and the conflicts as to correct modes of assessing reality and dealing with change, can be carried on constructively instead of destructively.

Within the "scientific" camp, the micro-macro, or level-of-analysis, problem starts from the investigator's decision as to which unit-level of integration (inorganic, biological, individual, economic, or social-collective) to adopt for purposes of interpreting the complex structure of interacting variables affecting human development. Many social scientists still think of this orientation problem in nominalistic terms of the language we employ to describe the relations between persons acting as individuals, without differentiating such behavior in small and large-scale aggregates and organizations, and without explicit and adequate recognition of the problematic political variables affecting the resolution of conflicts and controversies.

Weber tended to treat the complex level of sociopolitical integration as a residual category of nonrational behavior that either escapes or results from inter-individual efforts toward partial, rational, bureaucratic control. Merriam was characteristically ambiguous as to the logically necessary level of integration from which to understand politics. Scattered throughout his writings, however, are expressions of the conviction that it is theoretically appropriate to analyze human behavior functionally from the standpoint of any observable level or unit of system, or subsystem, organization, provided that the different analytic levels are not confused (consistently differentiated), and relationships between simpler (sub) or more complex (supra) levels of integration are treated as explicit attributes or variables of the system. He knew very well, if he did not emphasize, the practical difficulties in political research of finding or creating varying conditions under which interlevel variables can be treated reversibly as causal, dependent, or held constant.

Another way of stating the "level-of-analysis" problem in scientific research is that we are still uncertain about the appropriate level of integra-

⁴K. Deutsch, "Recent Trends in Research Methods in Political and Social Science," *A Design for Political Science* (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1966); A. Etzioni, *The Active Society* (New York: Free Press, 1968), Part I; H. D. Lasswell, *World Politics and Personal Insecurity* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1935); C. Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); K. Lorenz, *Civilized Man's Eight Deadly Sins* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), chs. 1, 8, esp. pp. 91-98; W. J. M. Mackenzie, *Politics and Social Science* (London: Penguin Books, 1967); J. Piaget, *Structuralism* (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

tion from which to describe the functional linkages or uniformities controlling the behavior of inter-unit variables. If we fail to discriminate, or oscillate between genetic, physiological, individual, and collective levels of integration and control, our estimates will vary as to the predicted consequences of altering or changing the conditions which induce the respective unit-levels possessing autonomous organs of direction and adaptation to act. When we are thinking about the intra- and interlevel relations of the atom, molecule, enzyme, gene, brain, nervous system, personality, economy, or political society, we can perhaps appreciate better why, insofar as possible, we try to explain higher-level units of integration in terms of simpler, more basic units, but also why it is necessary to question the assumption that lower unit-level concepts exclusively or a priori provide adequate premises for explaining behavior at more complex, higher-unit levels. Needless to add, the reverse premise is equally suspect.

Much more could be said on the question of whether political science has, needs, or can achieve a single, unifying, intersubjective, observational standpoint at the political-societal level of integration. If Merriam and Weber are reliable teachers, however, the primary problem is not the dichotomy, but the *interdependence* of fact and value, scientific method and normative theory, knowledge and power. The more proximate, inhibiting factor is the number and Babel of knowledge-models (quantitative-behavioral, bio-psychic, material-cultural, cybernetic-communications, organization-decision, logico-mathematical, and linguistic-metaphorical) competing for attention as the productive guide for research programming and knowledge-based policy. In recent years, some have professed to find in systems theory, others in the history and philosophy of science, an emergent basis for synthesis in political science. Without disparaging the competition of theories as indicative of the absence or failure of science in our discipline (clearly we are more scientific than we were fifty or a hundred years ago), a decent respect for objectivity compels us to admit the prospects for an early resolution of our paradigmatic perplexities are not bright.

Although most of them reject its validity, our philosophers have discovered the survival-and-use value of the curricular distinction between value and behavioral theory in our institutions for producing and training political scientists. From their side, our scientific researchers have been able to make perhaps too much of a good thing, financially and organizationally, out of the proliferation of specialized methodologies, jobs and facilities for cross-disciplinary communication with segments of our sister sciences. Perhaps an even greater number in our association do not

even worry about research and the theoretical state of our discipline; their primary concerns are their impact on students, teaching materials, and their own political involvements.

If current epistemological and paradigmatic controversy holds out little immediate prospect for conceptual synthesis, at least in one sense we are better able than in Weber's and Merriam's day to recognize the consequences of our behavioral preferences for the principle of analytical autonomy and interdependence within and between the sciences. At least the specialists who investigate factors affecting individual belief, perception, and behavior patterns nowadays seem to be more able to tolerate, find justification for, and even on occasion make use of the activities of specialists who elaborate and apply evaluative criteria to political attitudes, processes and institutions. Both groups apparently see some functional justification for characters who insist upon trying to develop comparative indices for the institutional variables involved in applying knowledge to the resolution of inter-individual, intergroup and cross-national conflicts.

Empirical evidence for autonomy and interdependence between analytical levels and planes of understanding may be found in expanding areas of agreement among all sciences of nature, man, and society:

- (1) value-objectivity in science does not mean value-neutrality; we can all accept, if not take for granted, the insight that the public realm, the political commonwealth, has a stake in maintaining existence of men and institutions passionately engaged in the study and interpretation of social fact whose findings are not contingent upon immediate pressures of partisan interest, opinion and power;⁵
- (2) the scientific outlook is no longer interpreted, by its most distinguished practitioners and exponents, to assume the identity, opposition, or one-to-one relation, between scientific models for acquiring knowledge and practical paradigms for exercising political power and administrative judgment. In other words, "to know the truth" in either sphere does not provide an automatic or necessary premise from which to deduce the necessary and sufficient course of action in the other, whether in the case of conflicting value or conflicting scientific judgments;⁶

⁵ H. Arendt, "Truth and Politics," pp. 3-39, in *Political Theory and Social Change*, ed. D. Spitz (New York: Atherton Books, 1967); J. Bronowski, *Science and Human Values* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959); R. Dubos, *The Dreams of Reason* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961); M. Landau, *Political Theory and Political Science* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), ch. 2; W. G. Runciman, "Sociological Evidence and Political Theory," ch. 2, in *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, 2d series, ed. P. Laslett and W. Runciman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962).

⁶ American Academy of Arts and Sciences, "Science and Culture," *Daedalus* (Winter, 1965); V.

- (3) there is steady and increasing recognition of the central importance of the relation between science and politics, not in the sense of imposing the distinctive value criteria associated with either sphere of activity upon the other, but in the "policy science" sense that science has a contributory responsibility to improve the controversial process of discovering the appropriate means and mix of intellectual, technical, bureaucratic, political and popular judgment in the search for public truth.⁷

The Politics of Public Truth⁸

Regardless of whether we decide with Weber, in relating science to politics, that man and society are prior and politics and people merely technical instruments, or with Merriam, that politics is "the name of the game" and man and society are variable and conditionally controlling, many if not most political and other scientists have yet to learn what is involved in reconciling the scientist's duty of clarifying the necessary conditions attached to realizing the truth of things, with the political actor's duty to make decisions according to one or more criteria of public good. In a way, the problem resembles that of the child's discovery of what society does to him when he learns to face the unpleasant options required in the process of discovering that his cognitive reality-map is not only incongruent, but often abhorrent to his "others." Naturally, some individuals prefer not to make the choice, deny the distinction, and refuse to make the effort at reconciling differences.

Bush, *Modern Arms and Free Men* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949); J. B. Conant, *Modern Science and Modern Man* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952); S. Lakoff, *Knowledge and Power* (New York: Free Press, 1968), pp. 1-58; A. Leiserson, "The Politics of Science," *Polity*, VI (1973), 122-134; M. Polanyi, *Science, Faith and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946); E. Shils, *Criteria for Scientific Development* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1968).

⁷J. Ben-David, *The Scientist's Role in Society* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1971); H. Brooks, *The Government of Science* (Boston: M.I.T. Press, 1967); Y. Dror, *Public Policymaking Re-examined* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1968); C. E. Lindblom, *The Intelligence of Democracy* (New York: Free Press, 1965); R. M. Merton, *The Sociology of Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973); H. Orlans, *Contracting for Knowledge* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973); D. K. Price, *The Scientific Estate* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965); E. Shils, *The Intellectuals and the Powers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973); N. W. Storer, *The Social System of Science* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966).

⁸"Only he has the calling for politics who is sure he shall not crumble when the world from his point of view is too stupid or too base for what he wants to offer." Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," p. 128, in H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills, *From Max Weber* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946). See also, *ibid.*, "Science as a Vocation," pp. 129-156.

In the context of political action and choice, the value-relativism issue boils down to the question: at what level of existence are we willing to "settle" in resolving the tension between trying to make our personal cognitive models come true by political means, on the one hand, and accepting the "truth" imposed by the requirement of adjusting our own to the cognitive maps of others, and deriving such satisfaction as we are able "from being good" with others on mutually tolerable terms? When we discover that "adjusting the wind to the sails is not the same thing as adjusting the sails to the wind," some of us prefer to become critics, part of the permanent opposition, finding pleasure in a self-sacrificial struggle against the wind, validating our preferred cognitive maps at least in our own eyes. Others adjust to the map, either by changing the point and time of destination, by modifying the map itself to take into account factors it overlooked or could not control, or by devising strategies of adjustment to the conditions to which the model applies. To complete the metaphor, some of us stop struggling, throw away all maps, and relinquish the effort to strive, to understand, to control and guide through knowledge.

To put it mildly, political scientists have a problem in relating our self-images to the requirements imposed by the public images held of us by our fellow-politicians and citizens. We can do something to modify those stereotypes, besides acting violently, argumentatively, or by deliberately cultivating a counter-cultural contempt. Again the comparison of Weber and Merriam is instructive, largely because both have been so extraordinarily misinterpreted.

Max Weber did *not* stand for value-neutrality in either scientific or political action. On the contrary, he showed as clearly as anyone ever has why scientists cannot be value-neutral, and that while in politics values in one sense have to be treated as data in order to analyze and deal with them as objectively as possible; that does not mean that values can be regarded only or merely as instrumental means to one's own purposes. Weber warned that the practice of science was all-consuming. To him, the "calling" of science requires the scientist to practice science consistently all the way through from the selection and conceptualization of problems through data observation, analysis, conclusions and generalizations of fact, and specifying the implications of findings for personal behavior and public policy. He taught that the image political scientists should try to act upon and present to the public was their self-image as scientists, not as hardcase professional politicians, nor as amateurs who act on the premise that politics consists in openly arguing one's personal political opinions as often,

as passionately, and attracting as much attention as one can.

Merriam was not as rigorous and self-limiting as Weber on the problem of relating his personal and public images. Like many political scientists, he wanted to do both. I trust I do not do him injustice in saying the impact of his teaching was that scientists in their public life should maintain a distinction between their concepts and methods of observation and inference, on the one hand, and the motives, criteria, and ends by which they apply that knowledge on the other. He felt that by participating in politics one could maintain his private self-image as scientist and still advance his public image as politician. He was only partly successful, but there is no doubt that he regarded himself and achieved considerable stature as a member of several of America's elite groupings. We do not have to charge him with self-deception and corruption in order to concede the validity of his point that scientists need to acquire political *competence* if they wish to see their knowledge put to appropriate public purposes. The lesson of Charles Merriam's life is that if one fails to acquire the public image necessary to remain in elective or governing politics, he can find other active roles in which to satisfy his personal image of being an effective protagonist in using his scientific knowledge for public good.

This is not the argument that a good scientist cannot be a good politician. The point lies in the question of whether the individual can surmount the intrapersonal strains of sacrificing his self-image as scientist in order to act successfully in meeting the public expectations and requirements of the politician. At the same time, it suggests that the scientist should not throw over his scientific attitudes and become as completely value-absolute, value-relative, or anti-scientist as any professional politician or fanatic reformer. The task is far more complex than the McLuhan-Goffman, Nixon-Haldeman thesis that the political test of public truth is what other people do or can be persuaded to believe. As a public figure, a man must not only act in such a way as to be true to himself; he must also be comfortable with the truth he arrives at after adjusting his original compulsions to act in the light of the conflicting expectations and obligations of the several publics to whom his public image is important. In our public lives, the conflict of gods is within us as well as in our interpersonal relations. In the human world, the test of truth lies in the balance we establish between our private and our public images.

The history of politics, as well as that of science, suggests that factual truth is not identical with what people believe it to be, and cannot be arrived at by bringing it to a vote of all the members

of the political community. When we organize into scientific societies, we do not submit the question of the best, most productive, or most socially acceptable theory of energy and matter, organic life, human personality, economics, or politics to a majority vote of our memberships. We investigate, publish, and exchange results of our research, much of which as individuals we regard as obnoxious, uninteresting, irrelevant, or just plain wrong. We confine our official, collective activities as scientists to such mundane purposes as exchanging information, improving our teaching, increasing opportunities for creative and productive research. We try to raise standards of practice and performance, to make the job market more efficient, and conditions of employment more just and equitable. In general, scientific societies as such do not tell citizens and public decision-making bodies what the discipline regards as the correct view of truth and public policy. Such societies seek to reconcile their internal and external images by protecting the right of the individual member to join others in voluntary groups to act on such matters in their own name and status, not in the name of the educational or research institution, the scientific or professional society.

How the whole body of scientific associates decides on what is truth, or the correct way of ascertaining it, is a debatable, empirical question; I do not here attempt to describe or evaluate it. However in fact it is decided, it is not done by the explicit democratic method of ascertaining majority opinion on the appropriate research design, conceptual approach, or findings of fact. We assume there is such a thing as scientific knowledge, but except in extraordinary situations, we do not find it necessary by a political act to declare what that truth is, or what it requires us to do in political cases and controversies. That is why it is disturbing, and perhaps damaging to our public image, when sizeable minorities among us are openly contemptuous and disparaging of science, deny that scientific knowledge of politics is possible, and argue that the proper public image of science is one in which the members behave publicly like nonscientists, organizing into a number of minorities, each asserting the priority of their personally-satisfying cognitive maps, and trying to make the discipline behave publicly as divided along partisan or ideological lines like any other political group. If we hold and act upon such a public image, we may indeed confirm the self-image of those who regard subversive and destructive effects on public attitudes toward science as desirable. Whether the public good is advanced by persuading nonscientists that such a public image is accurate is quite another question, one that is also highly debatable.

Does this private-public image problem, then,

add up to nothing more than a basic postulate of scientific or professional competence, with the corollary that individual political scientists must specialize, limit themselves to some aspect or segment of political knowledge and behavior they can be "good at," be willing to take jobs as teachers, budget, personnel, public relations or management experts in government, industry, and education; become reporter-writer-commentators for the mass media; prepare for the practice of law, or go into the political process itself as opinion surveyors, analysts, consultants, party and elective office workers, or do research and write for interest group and mass "causes"? In part, the answer is yes, but that alone is not nearly enough.

Two attributes of professional competence are needed, beyond the basic level of skill required to be a "pro" at one of the wide variety of jobs for which political science is good preparation. One goes to the professional's orientation toward "class collaboration"—an old socialist term referring partly to the individual's self-image as a member of one of the influential groups participating in the value-consensus that holds society together, partly to his sense of responsibility for the intellectual training of future citizens and leaders of his society. Alienated intellectuals often seem to assume that the only legitimate function of a self-respecting professional is the critical, corrosive, destructive role, and that scientific societies and organized professions of medicine and nursing, law, engineering, divinity, psychiatry and administration (including the military) are necessarily allies and corrupt tools of the "establishment." Not only is the relation more complex than this, but it is not always realized that the professional's experience with his "social service" function often makes him more critical and aware of what is wrong with existing social institutions than the intellectual who has given up hope and knows the system is wrong in its entirety. At any rate, one quality of the professional, however he places himself on the ideological spectrum, is his usefulness in knowing how to proceed in helping laymen to cope with the system's malfunctioning, including efforts to reform and improve it at strategic, critical points. It is impossible to over-emphasize the political significance of research and evaluation of the reproductive, educational and standards-improvement functions of scientific and professional associations.

One other attribute of the scientific calling's political involvement goes beyond the demand for qualifications to perform jobs perceived as socially useful, and the requirement that the intellectual-academic-professional classes face up to responsibilities of educating their students and successors for political participation. Political scientists do

both these things, and in my opinion we are getting better at them, but not because our research methodology is more sophisticated or we know better what the political good requires than our intellectual forefathers. Our progress as a scientific discipline and professional calling is significantly related to our ability in example to convince our fellow citizens and scientific brethren that there is a body of knowledge and analytical skills for dealing with the political aspect of social living. This is not the same as mastery of the *law*, knowledge of *psycho-cultural-social conditions* of stability and peace in voluntary group association, or the rational balancing of *costs and benefits* in choosing alternative ways to allocate material resources for the national or world benefit.

The political aspect of social life concerns the institutional (stable and dynamic) conditions under which authoritative rule is carried on subject to consent and opposition from the influential segments of opinion, interest, and power in society. What everybody needs and wants to know about politics is how better to associate the several powerful, conflicting elements of supportive and dissenting opinion in a civil-adversary process with the officially responsible centers of public authority and rule. This may take many forms, of which the separation of powers, free press, consultation of group interests, commissions of inquiry, staff planning and advisory arrangements, are but a few. Underlying them all is the problem of organizing consent out of controversy, coordinating the several modes of exercising power, improving and remaking society's procedures of representing and adjusting conflict. These are the continuing tasks and skills of the professional political calling—not to hold out the impossible dream of eliminating conflict and controversy, but how to make it possible for conflict and controversy between powers to be carried on by political means.

In that task we are not required to accept the premise that either the scientist's facts must be made controlling over the politician's values, or vice versa. We cannot wait upon realization of the philosopher-scientist's insight that the unity of knowledge and action requires prior agreement upon some internally consistent, objectively operational, subjectively-satisfying, Archimedean standpoint. Max Weber warned that from the standpoint of either the individual or society, there is no guarantee that the public good will follow if we resolve the opposition-tension between the scientist and politician within each of us by the comforting assumption that everyone wills the good and must do what he thinks is right. We may well *believe* in that assumption, but in political situations where private and public values conflict, the will to realize private truth alone is

not a sufficient condition. We need, in addition, the presumption of Charles Merriam: "The poisoned world calls for us all to become politists in the true sense of that term—philosophers, scientists, technologists (politicians), and politically-sophisticated peoples."⁹ In particular, as we political scientists improve our professional habits and skills of analysis and communication with our fellow-politists, we help to increase the factual-

scientific component in public value-controversies, and thereby the public's understanding of and reliance upon it. Upon that foundation may be built the road leading to that "politicizing the masses"¹⁰ of our fellow-citizens, upon which our collective capacity to clarify and exercise some choice over our common, human destiny, depends.

⁹C. E. Merriam, *Prologue to Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 91.

¹⁰J. Habermas calls this condition "depoliticization." *Toward A Rational Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), pp. 103–104.