

## **Aspects of the History and Historiography of *Political Studies*: an Introduction**

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### **Introduction**

It was a coincidence that gave me the idea for a Virtual Issue on this topic. At the end of 2009, I was preparing a paper on the theme of policy learning and transfer and I was struck with a sense of *déjà vu*. Policy learning and transfer (with comparative politics) was exactly the framework of my DPhil thesis carried out some forty years ago. What 'goes round, comes round', I thought. At the same time, former chairs of the PSA were asked by the editors of *Political Studies* each to nominate their 'top ten' articles that would be put to the members as candidates for a Virtual Issue of the journal to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Association. In the course of reading sixty years of *Political Studies* volumes, I was struck by the many interesting articles which were not so much contributions to the stock of knowledge but more about how to understand and explain political phenomena. And it seemed appropriate at the sixtieth anniversary to cast an eye over trends of this type – not as a comprehensive historiography of the discipline but as seen through the pages of *Political Studies*. When I made my suggestion to the editors, they, in agreeing, asked me if I would do it. I felt duty bound to accept the invitation and, indeed, thought of the task with some degree of anticipation. The actual experience of carrying it out has been much more daunting than I had envisaged.

First, there was the sheer volume of the task. There were more than ninety articles, reviews, debates, and other special features that were candidates for inclusion; but space to include only a few of them. Secondly, since the discipline is older than the Association, some reference to the more distant past was needed. Thirdly, the articles were quite varied in their intentions. Some involved arguments about particular concepts and the application of specific theories; and some were about shifts in purpose, methodology and methods - often referring to the influence of

American political science and of disciplines in the natural and other social sciences. Some recounted developments in various branches of the discipline and others brought to the fore ‘silences’ in the discipline.

In order to arrive at a manageable number, I have excluded those that focus on arguments about particular concepts and specialized sub-fields. Instead, I have gone for articles that are more ‘synoptic’. I have chosen to precede them with a more descriptive article by Norman Chester<sup>1</sup> because, conveniently, this reflects backwards from the Association’s twenty-fifth anniversary in 1975 to its beginnings in the 1940s and formation in 1950. The longer history is referred to in some of the articles included here and others referred to in my text. Before introducing the rest of my choices, I draw attention to a number of articles which touch upon the name of the discipline which, itself, reflects debates about its proper scope and methods of activity.

### **What’s in a Name?**

A number of the articles refer to a lack of consensus on what we choose to call our discipline and its main strands. This is most prevalent in respect of political studies or political science, on the one hand, and, on the other, political philosophy, theory, or thought. But there is also one reference to the naming of the international.

The question of political science *v.* political studies is as old as the Association – as seen in the 1975 article by Norman Chester.<sup>2</sup> He notes that, in 1947, it was thought in UNESCO circles that, while political scientists were subject to the risk of ‘subjective political speculation’, there was sufficient evidence of disinterested research worthy of being called ‘scientific’. However, he and

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<sup>1</sup> Norman Chester, 1975, ‘Political Studies in Britain: Recollections and Comments’, 23 (2 and 3), 151-164. Readers might also be interested in looking at an anniversary account of the origins and first decades of *Political Studies* (which first appeared in 1953) by Wilford Harrison, 1975, ‘The Early Years of *Political Studies*’, 23 (2 and 3), 183-192.

<sup>2</sup> Chester, 1975, 151.

Wilfred Harrison<sup>3</sup> both point out, in the latter's words, that there was a 'degree of dubiety' in the United Kingdom in the use of the label 'political science'. In the same volume, S. E. Finer<sup>4</sup> chose 'science' over 'studies', on the ground that political studies 'is delimited from other studies *ratione materiae*, whereas political science is delimited, not only by its subject matter, but also by its distinctive approach'. A more widespread use of 'science' may be coming about in the wake of British participation in the European Research Area where there is no distinction in the application of that label as between the natural and social sciences.

Another question shown in the journal's articles is about the nature of theory in philosophy and its nature in the empirical sciences; and, hence, whether this divided political theory and political science. J. C. Rees<sup>5</sup> argued in 1954 that 'much that normally passes as "political science" ... is unavoidably concerned with evaluation', albeit not with 'ultimate values'. But others noted with regret that approaches seeking to emulate theory and methods practised in the natural sciences had led to an undesirable separation between the study of empirical phenomena and the study of values.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the question of political studies or political science, there has been variety in the use of the labels of political thought, philosophy and theory. Rees<sup>7</sup> pointed out in 1954 'there [was] no standard use of the terms "political theory" and "political philosophy" [as well as

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<sup>3</sup> Harrison, 1975, 183.

<sup>4</sup> S. E., Finer, 1975, 'The Vocabulary of Political Science', 23 (2 and 3), 244-254, at 244.

<sup>5</sup> J. C. Rees, 1954, 'The Limitations of Political Theory', 2 (4) 242-257, at 242.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example: Jean Blondel, 1975, on a divergence between normative theory and the examination of problems in society, in 'Plea for Problem-Oriented Research in Political Science', 23 (2 and 3), 232-243 at 238; and Nevil Johnson, 1975, on a divergence between the empirical study of politics and the analysis of political values, in 'The Place of Institutions in the Study of Politics', 23 (2 and 3), 272-283, at 280. See also J. B. Sanderson, 1968, who drew attention to W. G. Runciman's insistence that (because of 'the close interrelationship between facts and values') 'the practitioners of both political science and political philosophy should be made aware of each other's work and conclusions'. According to Runciman, 'the empirical and philosophical study of politics have more to gain from a maximum contact with each other than many of their practitioners ... have been apt to suppose'. ('The Historian and the "Masters" of Political Thought', 16 (1), 43-54, at 48).

<sup>7</sup> Rees, 1954, 242; see also Sanderson, 1968.

“political science”]. He used both ‘political theory’ and ‘political philosophy’ to cover such questions as the relationship between order and freedom and others which he listed, while noting that ‘some writers prefer to reserve [philosophy] for that more grandiose type of political theory that embraces the whole of traditional philosophy (ethics, epistemology and metaphysics)’. But the year before, Sir Ernest Barker<sup>8</sup> had confined political theory to being an ‘affair of students’ or the ‘speculation of the enquiring mind’ - while political thought was about ‘the general raising of questions about political issues’, and finding answers.

Debate about political theory, philosophy or thought was still alive in the 1990s, as I found when chairing the group that developed the first TQA Benchmark Statement for Politics. What some called theory, others called philosophy and *vice versa*. What some called philosophy, others called thought and *vice versa*. Was there really a clear distinction between normative and empirical political theory? Was it not unjustifiable to imply that analysts who did not call themselves theorists or philosophers were a-theoretical, and so on? One helpful member of the group said that our attempt to capture what people did in the various strands was recognizable to him, whatever the labels, and, therefore, that insistence on a particular terminology would be misplaced. Others agreed and, hence, to a form of words that took account of differences in preferred terminology as a preface to our account of what took place in the discipline. This secured wide acceptance when we circulated our draft to colleagues at large.

Unlike discussions I have encountered in the naming of departments where how to name the ‘international’ has been disputed, there is little about this in *Political Studies*. However, Colin S. Gray<sup>9</sup> suggested in 1974 that ‘it could be disturbing ... to be employed as a lecturer in

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<sup>8</sup> Ernest Barker, 1953, ‘Reflections on English Political Theory’, 1 (1), 6-12, at 6.

<sup>9</sup> Colin S., Gray, 1974, ‘The Practice of Theory in International Relations’, 22 (2), 129-146.

International Relations by a Department, bearing the same title, when really there is no such animal, only *politics*' (emphasis in original).

### **Political Theory**

It was difficult to choose examples of articles on political theory. Despite David Miller's<sup>10</sup> comparison of 1950-1970 and 1970-1990 as periods of lesser and greater dynamism, I found quite a lot that was of interest in early articles, some of which were cited above or are below. I have chosen Miller's article on 'The Resurgence of Political Theory' for reproduction here, not only for its intrinsic interest, but because it refers to the history of political theory as the context of the transformations he discusses with respect to the later period. The final development of which Miller writes is in applied political theory<sup>11</sup>, including sexual and racial equality, topics that recur in this introduction.

Miller<sup>12</sup> points out that much of feminist political theory 'does not belong to the policy-oriented applied political theory' that he had been considering but consists 'in debate about the best conceptual framework to describe and explain the (subordinate) position of women'. Feminist theory and the revisiting of traditional political thought is the topic of Diana Coole's 'Re-reading Political Theory from a Woman's Perspective'<sup>13</sup> - which also reviews other examples in the journal and elsewhere of the re-reading of classic texts. I had intended to include it here until I discovered it was to appear in the Political Studies Association 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Virtual Issue of 'top articles' voted for by PSA members. So I should like to recommend readers of this Virtual Issue to consult the other one.

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<sup>10</sup> David Miller, 1990, 'The Resurgence of Political Theory', 38 (3), 421-437.

<sup>11</sup> See also relevant earlier articles: R. S Downie, 1973, 'Analogies and Relevance in Political Philosophy', 21 (4), 423-441; Peter P. Nicholson, 1973, 'The Relationship between Political Theory and Political Practice', 21 (4), 467-480

<sup>12</sup> Miller, 1990, 436.

<sup>13</sup> Diana Coole, 1986, 'Re-reading Political Theory from a Woman's Perspective', 34 (1), 129-148.

## International Relations

The articles in the journal on or referring to international relations indicate a sometimes uncomfortable relationship between it and political science. Looking back over the first twenty-five years of the Association, Chester<sup>14</sup> suggested that the development of ‘International Relations as a field associated with, but separate from, Politics’ contributed to the difficulty of retaining ‘an emphasis on a well-accepted core of reading and knowledge’.<sup>15</sup> In 1990, Fred Halliday<sup>16</sup> said that international relations had had ‘an uneasy, marginal when not residual, place in the study and teaching of the social sciences’. It was treated ‘as an appendix to other, more respected, subjects’ (‘the disciplines dealing with national politics, economies and societies’).<sup>17</sup> ‘Appendix’ or not, the field of international relations had featured quite strongly among the journal’s articles.<sup>18</sup> However, Halliday,<sup>19</sup> in noting the rise in the ‘status of the “international” in the past decade or two’, said this had not helped to identify the scope of the field or how to deal with the ‘enduring and central’ question of how domestic and international factors interact.

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<sup>14</sup> Chester, 1975, 163-164.

<sup>15</sup> In reading in 2009-10 what he had said about the teaching of international relations, I was reminded of my own experience. In 1973, I had embarked on a degree in the subject, having applied for that course because my prior experience in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office gave me an interest in the field. More instrumentally, I thought that, as a mature applicant, this experience might make me more acceptable to selectors for that course rather than others. But, after about a term, intuitions led me to my own conclusion that I now see was the same as Norman Chester’s. This is that students needed a thorough training in political theory and institutions as a basis for studying international relations as either part of a degree in political science or at the graduate level after a first degree in political science.

<sup>16</sup> Fred Halliday, 1990, ‘The Pertinence of International Relations’, 38 (3), 502-516.

<sup>17</sup> Halliday, 1990, 556. Something of the issue of which was the ‘appendix’ of which in political science and international relations featured in the deliberations of the Politics and IR Panel, upon which I served, in the 1992 Research Assessment Exercise.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example: Joseph Frankel, 1959, ‘Towards a Decision-making Model in Foreign Policy’, 7 (1) 1-11; Paul Taylor, 1968, ‘The Functional Approach to the Problem of International Order: A Defence’, 16 (3), 395-410 (NB ‘Functionalism, not Structural-Functionalism which recurs in the later section on positivism in political science); and Gray, 1974. Some others are referred to later. Halliday’s section on ‘The Return of International Political Economy’ was perhaps foreshadowed by Roger Tooze, 1984, in his review article, ‘In Search of “International Political Economy”’, 32 (4), 637-646.

<sup>19</sup> Halliday, 1990, 503.

His article, ‘The Pertinence of International Relations’, is included here, partly because of the comprehensiveness of its review of the history of international relations and its methodologies. (Incidentally, like David Millar, Fred Halliday refers to the engagement of feminist writers with the core concepts of international relations theory.) I have chosen it, also, as a mark of respect to the much mourned passing of its author who died in April 2010.<sup>20</sup> The second article in this field is chosen with an eye to Halliday’s ‘enduring and central question’ of how the domestic and the international interact. This is Steve Smith’s 1983 ‘Foreign Policy Analysis’.<sup>21</sup> Its subtitle, ‘British and American Orientations and Methodologies’, indicates its additional relevance to later themes; the relationships between American and British political science in general and between analysts and practitioners.<sup>22</sup>

### **Political Science**

Though I have labelled this section ‘political science’, this is not meant to imply a division between it and political theory and international relations. I use the term here to cover both empirical political science and the discipline at large. Indeed, the questions and developments to which the section draws attention are fairly generic.

### ***Comparative Politics: Distinct Field or Inherent Methodology of Political Science***<sup>23</sup>

To return to Finer’s<sup>24</sup> point about political science being distinguishable from political studies by the former’s approach: that is, it was only by comparison (and a concomitant special

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<sup>20</sup> Readers might also be interested in Richard Little’s ‘International Relations and the Methodological Turn’, 1991, 39 (3) 463-478.

<sup>21</sup> Steve Smith, 1983, ‘Foreign Policy Analysis: British and American Orientations and Methodologies’ 31 (4), 556-565.

<sup>22</sup> Readers might also be interested in a 2009 international survey of international relations faculties; Richard Jordan, Daniel Maliniak, Amy Oakes, Susan Petersen, and Michael J. Tierney, Michael, J., *One Discipline or Many? TRIP Survey of International Relations Faculty in Ten Countries*. Teaching, Research and International Policy (TRIP) Project. Williamsburg, Virginia: The Institute for the Theory and Practice of International Relations, The College of William and Mary.

<sup>23</sup> Another debate that featured in the development of the first TQA Benchmark Statement for Politics, referred to above.

vocabulary), he argued, that ‘uniformities and regularities [could] be established’. Likewise, Harrison<sup>25</sup> drew attention to comparative politics being seen in the United States as the key method in the systematic study of politics, as indicated by ‘the famous report’ in the 1953 *American Political Science Review* of a seminar on Research in Comparative Politics.<sup>26</sup>

As many regularly point out, even ‘single country studies’ have to be at least implicitly comparative, either as against other systems or between different periods within the country under scrutiny. Yet most undergraduate syllabi have courses on Comparative Politics – implying that it is a distinctive branch of the discipline rather than a defining method of political science. And there are articles in the sixty years of the journal whose titles (comparative politics (see footnote 26), legislative studies<sup>27</sup> and/or administration<sup>28</sup>) imply the same.

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<sup>24</sup> Finer, 1975, 122.

<sup>25</sup> Harrison, 1975, 62.

<sup>26</sup> While Smith, 1983, identifies a contrast between American and British foreign policy studies as to their being comparative or not, Edward Page does not find strong evidence of a distinctive British approach to comparative politics; Edward, C. Page, 1990, ‘British Political Science and Comparative Politics’, 38 (3), 438-452.

<sup>27</sup> The one on comparative legislative studies is also about the politics of political science, the concern for political science to be recognized as ‘relevant’ to policy-makers, and the way in which the whole story supported the initiative of what we might now call ‘conditionality’ in foreign aid policy or the ‘Copenhagen criteria in EU enlargement (W. H. Morris Jones, 1983, ‘The Politics of Political Science: The Case of Comparative Legislative Studies’, 31 (1), 1-24).

<sup>28</sup> Public administration, explicitly comparative or not, has a history and historiography of its own. Until the 1970s, the journal carried regular articles or reviews; for example, Dwight Waldo (who identifies the strong links between public administration and political science and other social sciences), 1954, ‘Administrative Theory in the United States: A Survey and Prospect’, 2 (1), 70-86; R. S. Milne, 1962, ‘Comparison and Models in Public Administration’, 10 (1), 1-14; B. B. Schaffer, 1971, ‘Comparisons, Administration and Development’, 19 (3) 327-337; and W. A. Robson, 1975, ‘The Study of Public Administration Then and Now’, (2 and 3), 193-201. And, as R. A. W. Rhodes pointed out, despite the broad nature of public administration as a subject, its original disciplinary home was political science. Still today, public administration is one of the Association’s specialist groups. In his 1991 review, Rhodes drew attention to great changes in the study of public administration which led to a plethora of theories and a shift from ‘administration’ to ‘management’. Noting that New Public Management was ‘here to stay’, he also pointed out that the exegeses of this approach were to be found in government and consultants’ reports, more than academic sources. Academic specialists had no resort but simply to comment upon or resist commentaries from government and consultants. He did, however, make some suggestions about how political science could help public administration return to being an academic subject (R. A. W. Rhodes, 1991, ‘Theory and Methods in British Public Administration: the View from Political Science’, 39 (3), 533-554). A further review of the subject was provided by Andrew Dunsire in 1999 when he said that, as the study of public administration had moved into either public management or public policy (and, according to Rhodes, new institutionalism), the question now was: ‘Does the subject still exist?’. His answer (p. 377) was that, given certain conditions that he stated, it did not matter, so long as ‘someone kept alive the idea of a public sector or “public service” ethic that retained some of the values of *collective* community needs and provision of services’ (Andrew Dunsire, 1999, ‘Then and Now: Public Administration, 1953-1999’, 47 (2) 360-378).



I have chosen two to represent the place of comparison on the basis that one of them represents the spread of activity that takes place under the heading of ‘comparative politics’ and is relevant to my introductory point about policy learning and transfer. This is Richard Rose’s 1991 article, ‘Comparing Forms of Comparative Analysis’.<sup>29</sup> The second tackles the question of whether comparative politics exists in its own right or is a method for political science in general. This is Jean Blondel’s ‘Then and Now: Comparative Politics’.<sup>30</sup> Blondel provides us with something of the more distant general history of the discipline, as well a ‘stock-take’ of the modern period up to 1999. He refers to a shift from seeking global models to comparison at the middle range in the form of ‘new institutionalism’ and rational choice approaches, both of which recur. Readers might also be interested in Bertrand Badie’s 1989 article<sup>31</sup> which also deals with loss of confidence in universalistic explanatory paradigms and is prescient about themes, history, culture and context, that emerged in the 1990s and 2000s for new directions in the discipline.

Though Finer<sup>32</sup> said that all he, himself, was concerned to argue was that the establishment of uniformities and regularities, through comparison, is what distinguishes political science from political studies, he noted that ‘many self styled political scientists would go far beyond this’ and claim that what they seek to do cannot properly be called a ‘science’ unless it has a ‘predictive capacity’. Thus, it is necessary to consider what the journal tells us about attempts to be scientific in this sense.

### ***The Search for a Predictive<sup>33</sup> Approach in Political Science***

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<sup>29</sup> Richard Rose, 1991, ‘Comparing Forms of Comparative Analysis’, 39 (3), 446-462.

<sup>30</sup> Jean Blondel, 1999, ‘Then and Now: Comparative Politics’, 47 (1), 152-160. Over the years, the journal has published several useful ‘Then and Now’ reviews of aspects of the discipline. See, for example: Robson and Dunsire, noted above; Nevil Johnson on institutions and on the British constitution, discussed later in the text; and David McLellan, ‘Then and Now: Marx and Marxism’, 1999, 47 (5), 955-966.

<sup>31</sup> Bertrand Badie, 1989, ‘Comparative Analysis in Political Science: Requiem or Resurrection’, 37 (3) 340-351.

<sup>32</sup> Finer, 1975, 122.

<sup>33</sup> Or at least should political science make conjectures and prognostications? See Benjamin Akzin, 1966, ‘On Conjecture in Political Science’, 16 (1), 1-14.

This theme involves the relationship between American and British political science and international relations,<sup>34</sup> the adoption in the United Kingdom of approaches initiated primarily in the United States and the demise or transformation of systems analysis and behaviouralism. Though these approaches have lost their appeal as a means of realizing a (positivist) scientific understanding of politics, systems and behaviour remain, of course, part of the lexicon of the discipline.

The American search for ‘a systematic science of politics’, based on ‘the formulation of a general, descriptive theory of human behaviour was outlined by Henry S. Kariel in 1956<sup>35</sup> and, in 1954, Dwight Waldo<sup>36</sup> referred to similar trends in public administration. (The fate of public administration in the United Kingdom is outlined at footnote 28.) Waldo touched upon the relationship between American and European sociology of knowledge. He<sup>37</sup> quoted Robert Merton’s observation that an American sociologist of knowledge would say: ‘We don’t know that what we say is particularly significant, but it is at least true’. The European would say: ‘We don’t know that what we say is true, but it is at least significant’.<sup>38</sup>

Though Gray<sup>39</sup> referred rather scathingly in 1974 to British immunity (stemming from that issue of significance) to systems and behavioural approaches in international relations, other articles in the journal indicate something rather different. Systems analysis brought political science and

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<sup>34</sup> While the reference here to American political science is about its methodological influence in Britain, Dennis Kavanagh wrote an article about interest among American political scientists in the substance of British politics and their dominant place in the literature on British voting behaviour, political culture, parties and pressure groups and policy-making; 1974, ‘An American Science of British Politics’, 22 (3), 251-270. I mention this in view of the death in 2009 of the ‘towering’ Samuel H. Beer an obituary for whom, by Robert Benewick, was published in the journal in the same year, 57 (3), 692-696.

<sup>35</sup> Henry S. Kariel, 1956, ‘Political Science in the United States: Reflections on one of its Trends’, 4 (2), 113-127.

<sup>36</sup> Dwight, Waldo, 1954, ‘Administrative Theory in the United States: A Survey and Prospect’, 2 (1), 70-86.

<sup>37</sup> Waldo, 1954, 85.

<sup>38</sup> Waldo, 1954, also noted Merton’s wish for something of a coming together – rather parallel to Runciman’s view referred to at footnote 6. But the wry joke about American truth and European significance finds an echo in the (British) L. Johnston’s, 1968, comments on the pitfalls of ‘equat[ing] the scientific with the good’ (p. 388), ‘A Defence of Public Law’, 16 (3), 384-392.

<sup>39</sup> Gray, 1974, 136-37.

international relations into debate in the journal. In Peter Nettl's critical review in 1966 of the concept of system,<sup>40</sup> he identified four forms of it and argued that there was a case (with reservations) for its sociological 'structure-functional variant'.<sup>41</sup> His doubt about its usefulness in 'chaotic' international relations and conflict relationships brought a reply the next year from M. B. Nicholson and P. A. Reynolds<sup>42</sup> that defended David Easton's view that the international was 'just another system at a different level of organization' and 'amenable to investigation through the same conceptual apparatus as that used with respect to domestic political systems'.<sup>43</sup>

To represent the demise of positivist approaches during the life-time of the journal, I have chosen a review of behaviouralism by Bernard Susser.<sup>44</sup> While the quest for a positivist political science borrowed ideas about theory and methodology from the epistemologies of other disciplines, more recent interest in other subjects has a different motivation. I return to this in the last section. In the meantime, I move on to what were, or are now, emergent spheres and modes of enquiry.

### *Developments in Other Areas of Enquiry and Methods*

Some developments seek to bring into political science consideration of the absence of enquiry in the discipline into some forms of political experience. Others seek to recover fields of enquiry from their fate under the dominance of positivist political science. Yet others, while accepting the reaction against this pursuit of a science of politics, still strive for some other unifying approach. Each of these is dealt with in turn.

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<sup>40</sup> Peter Nettl, 1966, 'The Concept of System in Political Science', 14 (3), 305-88.

<sup>41</sup> A legacy of structural-functional approaches is seen in one form of new institutionalism; see later.

<sup>42</sup> M. B. Nicholson and P. A. Reynolds, 1967, 'General Systems, The International System, and the Eastonian Analysis', 15 (1), 12-31.

<sup>43</sup> Nicholson and Reynolds, 1967, 12.

<sup>44</sup> Bernard, Susser, 1974, 'The Behavioural Ideology: A Review and a Retrospect', 27 (3), 271-288. See also Jeffrey Stanyer, 1976, on behaviouralism and other aspects of the search for 'a science of politics'; 'Irresistible Forces: the Pressures for a Science of Politics', 24 (3), 237-252.; A much longer and broader sweep of the epistemology of political science is provided by Mark Bevir, 2006, 'Political Studies as Narrative and Science, 1880-2000', 54 (3), 583-606.

### *Absences*

I have mentioned acknowledgements of feminist thought in political theory and international relations. John Solomos<sup>45</sup> touched upon gender when noting in 1986 that there was only one book in British political science on the politics of racism. Instead, the study of racism had remained in its original disciplinary homes of anthropology and sociology where little attention was paid to questions of political power and action or political structures and institutions. (In contrast, he said, there was a political perspective in American sociological approaches.) His call for ‘a more critical and reflexive debate about how we study the politics of racism’ has been heeded – to judge from the appearance of more articles on the topic since. Solomos also noted that gender had begun to be placed on the political science agenda; and, indeed, there had been some review articles on women and politics in the journal already. A more comprehensive tackling of the topic came in 1991 with Vicky Randall’s<sup>46</sup> review of the implications for political science and its methods of feminist thinking. I have chosen to include it here as it and Diana Coole’s article on political theory complement one another. As with race, many more articles on gender and ones where gender is treated as in the ‘mainstream’ have been published in the journal since 1991.

### *Recoveries*

Reaction to systems analysis and behaviouralism re-invigorated interest in the institutions, the state and constitutions. These pre-occupations are now reinforced by debate about the post-modern idea of ‘governance’, in which responses to the idea assert that there has been little change in the workings of institutions and states.

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<sup>45</sup> John Solomos, 1986, ‘Trends in the Political Analysis of Racism’, 34 (2), 313-324, quotes from 321 and 322.

<sup>46</sup> Vicky Randall, 1991, ‘Feminism and Political Analysis’, 39 (3), 513-532.

In arguing in 1975 against the ‘intellectual history of the social sciences for the previous thirty years, Nevil Johnson<sup>47</sup> proposed that ‘political institutions, if properly understood’,<sup>48</sup> should constitute ‘the primary elements in any account of political action’ and its contexts. Institutions (and contexts) feature in John Dearlove’s<sup>49</sup> 1989 call to bring the state and constitutions back into political science (see also Blondel, 1999). Johnson, too, considered the constitution and constitutional theory in a 2000 review.<sup>50</sup> He suggested that, with few exceptions, studies in political science of the British constitution had been confined largely to the workings of institutions. It was academic lawyers, rather than political scientists, who addressed issues of individual rights and the control of powers as exercised over citizens.<sup>51</sup>

Since Dearlove’s article and overlapping with Johnson’s, the journal has carried numerous articles on constitutional questions (and related ones on rights),<sup>52</sup> including a Special Issue with articles on history, theory, institutions, the constitutions of particular states, and constitutional aspects of the European Union. A later article was on constitutional issues at the international level.<sup>53</sup> Admittedly, reflecting earlier practice, several of the authors were distinguished academic lawyers but their appearance in the same pages as political scientists and political theorists seems to me to be part of a trend to overcome a sometimes too strictly defined borderline between aspects of law and political science (see final section).

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<sup>47</sup> Johnson, 1975, 273. Moreover, as noted above, he thought that a return to the study of institutions would provide ‘an opportunity for reintegrating the empirical study of politics with the analysis of political values’, at 280.

<sup>48</sup> See F. F. Ridley, 1975, for a view of what the ‘proper’ study is – as opposed to approaches which abandon the term in favour of organizations, structures and the beliefs and behaviours of those who inhabit them; ‘Political Institutions: The Script not the Play’, 23 (2 and 3), 365-380.

<sup>49</sup> John Dearlove, 1989, ‘Bringing the Constitution Back In: Political Science and the State’, 37 (4), 540-561.

<sup>50</sup> Nevil Johnson, 2000, ‘Then and Now: the British Constitution’, 48 (i), 118-131; see especially pp. 119-120, and 121-125.

<sup>51</sup> Dearlove, 1989, had made similar points in quoting Jack Hayward’s view, expressed in 1982, that the study of the formal constitution had ‘declined almost to the vanishing point’ and by referring to the role of academic lawyers at pp. 531, 535-536.

<sup>52</sup> The Constitution in Historical Perspective, 1996, 44 (3) and Special Issue on: Human Rights in the Study of Politics, 1995, 43 (1). See also articles in, for example: in 2001, 49 (5) (Matthew Flinders on Britain, 23-42); in 2002, 50 (5) (Justine Lacroix on Europe, 944-958); and in 2004, 52 (1) (a debate between Lacroix and Richard Bellamy and Dario Castiglione, 187-196).

<sup>53</sup> Neil Walker, 2008, ‘Taking Constitutionalism Beyond the State’, 56 (3), 519-543.

The journal has come to reflect new theories of institutionalism (if not those of what, by implication, might be dubbed the ‘old institutionalists’). Three forms of this approach were identified by Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor;<sup>54</sup> historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism (see also Blondel, 1999, who treats new institutionalism and rational choices approaches as distinct). Again, I had intended to include the article by Hall and Taylor here before discovering it would be in the Anniversary Virtual Issue. I had two reasons. One is that, as they say, new institutionalism is a reaction to previous behavioural approaches; yet, as their article also indicates, the models are less rejections of and more like selective outgrowths from the approaches to which they are a reaction. And, or so it seems to me, new institutionalism has pervaded a significantly broad range of fields of enquiry, including the new ones, in political science, as well as being part of the story about public administration (see footnote 28).

According to Marinetto<sup>55</sup>, some new institutional theory (that which asserts a shift to a de-centred polity), shares with the post-modern ‘Anglo-Governance School’ an affinity with Foucault’s conception of political power as fragmented. The idea that ‘government’ had shifted to ‘governance’ was introduced to *Political Studies* by R. A. W. Rhodes<sup>56</sup> in 1996, in a Special Issue on Groups and Governance where he argued that there was a ‘new process, [or ‘method’] of governing’ at national and international levels. Notwithstanding Marinetto’s critique that the ‘Anglo-governance school’ ignores continuities in institutional power and behaviour in the

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<sup>54</sup> 1996, ‘Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms’, 44 (5), 936-957; see also a debate on the historical variant between them and Colin Hay and Daniel Wincott, 1998, 46 (5), 95—962.

<sup>55</sup> Mike Marinetto, 1993, ‘Governing beyond the Centre: A Critique of the Anglo-Governance School’, 51 (3), 592-608.

<sup>56</sup> R. A. W. Rhodes, 1996, ‘The New Governance: Governing without Government’, 44 (4), 652-677, quotes from 652-653 and 657-658. What Marinetto calls the ‘Anglo-Governance School’ also features in an article by Stephanie Lawson to be discussed shortly. Both Marinetto and Lawson refer primarily to the work of Rhodes with various partners.

United Kingdom, ‘governance’ (or Foucault’s ‘governmentality’) has appeared in the titles of many articles.

Some of these do, indeed, focus on alleged changes in the workings of British institutions and policies<sup>57</sup> but others critically apply the approach to other countries and the EU.<sup>58</sup> Only one tries to operationalize the approach on an extensively comparative canvas. This is ‘The Rise of “New” Policy Instruments in Comparative Perspective: Has Governance Eclipsed Government?’ by Andrew Jordan, Rudiger K. W. Wurzel and Anthony Zito.<sup>59</sup> They examine the question of ‘government or governance’ through the prism of environmental policy instruments in eight states and the EU. As the most ‘synoptic’ account of the question, it is included it here. The work of Rhodes and his various partners on governance is treated as an ‘interpretative approach’ in a 2008 article by Stephanie Lawson, which leads to the final part of this section.

### *Alternative unifying endeavours?*

It is clear that reactions against approaches modelled on the natural sciences (and more positivist social sciences) are no less concerned to conserve some form of general paradigm in the study of politics. The need or preference noted by others for the reintegration of empirical political science and the study of political values was reflected by Hugh V. Emy in 1988 in a proposal for

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<sup>57</sup> E.g., in 2000, 48 (1) (B. Salter and T. Tapper on higher education, 66-87); in 2001 49 (2) Mike Marinetto, himself, on devolution, 306-322); in 2001 (4) (Vivien Lowndes and David Wilson on social capital and local government, 629-647); in 2003 51 (2) (Ian Bache on education policy, 300-314); and in 2008 56 (4) (Stephen J. Ball on education, 747-765 – along with a debate in 2009 between him and Mark Goodwin in 57 (3), 680-691).

<sup>58</sup> E.g., in 2002 50 (2) (Raymond L. Bryant on NGOs and governmentality and the indigenous peoples of the Philippines, 268-292); in 2003, 51 (1) (Paul Magnette on democratic deficits and participation in the EU, 144-160); in 2007 55 (1) (Rachel Parker on ICT networks in Limerick in Ireland and Karlskrona in Sweden, 113-132, - along with a reply by Dimitrios C. Christopoulos in 2008, 56 (2) 475-481,); and in 2009, 57 (3) (Fritz Sager on alcohol policy in the Swiss cantons). Incidentally, governance, and ‘governmentality’, is another area of enquiry that, without the prefix ‘Anglo’, attracts legal scholars, as well as political scientists; for example, John Morison, who has published extensively in this field in journals other than *Political Studies*.

<sup>59</sup> 2005, 53 (3), 477-496.

a new unifying rationale for the discipline.<sup>60</sup> He suggested that the growth of fields and sub-fields made it ‘unclear how far these can form a common intellectual enterprise with generally agreed aims and parameters’ ‘What is meant’, he asked, ‘by speaking of a *discipline* of Politics’ (emphasis in original). Accepting the shortcomings for a ‘common intellectual enterprise’ of attempts in the 1950s and 1960s to use models drawn from the natural sciences, he proposed that cultural science could provide a new rationale (as Badie did for comparative politics the following year).

Culture, history and context are critically reviewed by Stephanie Lawson<sup>61</sup> in her 2008 account of the ‘contextual turn’ in political studies. In drawing attention to ‘the contextualism that underpins reactions to positivism and modernist empiricism’, she argues that much of it is ‘mired in difficulty’. All the same, she sees ways of ‘preserving what is valuable in methodological and normative contextualism as a standing critique of the shortcomings’ of the approaches it reacts against, ‘without undermining its own logic’. Her review implies a degree of cohesion in the discipline at large in that she shows how ‘the contextual turn’ has been taken in political theory, international relations and empirical political science. Hence, it seems a fitting choice for my penultimate choice of article to include here – and it is related to the last one (see below).

Finally, I turn to two other preoccupations that have emerged which go beyond the strictly internal concerns of the discipline and consider what has been said about them (or not) in the journal over the years.

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<sup>60</sup> 1988, ‘From a Positive to a Cultural Science: Towards a New Rationale for Political Studies’, 56 (3) 188-204, quotes from p. 188.

<sup>61</sup> 2008, ‘Political Studies and the Contextual Turn: A Methodological/Normative Critique’, 56, 584-603, quotes taken from p. 599.



## **Beyond the Discipline**

In this section, I draw attention to two topics; inter- or multi-disciplinarity and relations between political analysis and political practice.

### *Relations between Political Science and Other Disciplines*

As noted earlier, political scientists borrowed methodology and methods from other disciplines in efforts to bring about a general theory of politics. Inter- or multi-disciplinary approaches have become attractive in the last fifteen years for a different reason. This is, perhaps, comparable with the motivation behind 'joined up government'. Cross cutting issues that are inadequately captured by departmental 'silos' may also be better understood through cross-disciplinary lenses. Thus, I thought it would be of interest to see what the journal told us about inter-disciplinarity from the time of the foundation of the Association.

On the one hand, Barker's<sup>62</sup> article in the first volume of the journal referred to a history (before the 1950s) of the bringing together of political science and moral philosophy, psychology, history and economics. But he also suggested that economics had 'now become so self-absorbed' that it was unlikely to contribute to political theory. This particular unease had wider counterpart in Harrison's<sup>63</sup> account of the origins of the journal. 'The new political scientists and the historians looked askance at one another' There were 'philosophers, who probably looked askance at both and also at sociologists and psychologists and others ...'. Economists (and other social scientists) far from being 'self absorbed', could 'appear to be ready to put forward take-over bids by suggesting that whatever it was that political scientists were trying to do it could be done better by the practitioners of some other discipline.'

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<sup>62</sup> Barker, 1953, 7-8 and 10-11.

<sup>63</sup> Harrison, 1975, 185-186.

On the other hand, an approach, comparable with what we are familiar with today, was sketched out in 1955 by a lawyer – an appreciative participant at PSA and BSA conferences - J. L. Montrose.<sup>64</sup> While criticizing political theorist, J. C. Rees, for his inadequate understanding of legal theory,<sup>65</sup> Montrose, himself, suggested that the distinction between legal theory and political theory was a ‘pedantic product of the organization of the schools’. He pointed out that it had long been recognised that a full understanding of legal institutions required both a philosophy and a sociology of law – and that both were equally necessary to the understanding of political and social institutions.

Thereafter, there is little in the journal about inter-disciplinarity in this sense until the 1990s.<sup>66</sup> Then, according to Pippa Norris and Ivor Crewe,<sup>67</sup> ‘[t]he inter-disciplinary nature of political studies [was] confirmed by the high rankings given to journals with a principal allegiance to other disciplines, such as *Ethics*, the *Historical Journal*, and *International Organisation*’. This evaluation of political science journals occurred in the middle of a series of pieces in *Political Studies* reviewing and, as appropriate, recommending journals from other disciplines for political scientists.<sup>68</sup> The one substantive article – by Dennis Kavanagh<sup>69</sup> in 1991 – is included here. I have chosen it because of its scope which ties it in with other themes in this introduction and in the discipline at large; comparison, positivist approaches, institutions and institutionalism, and

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<sup>64</sup> 1955, ‘Legal Theory for Politicians and Sociologists’, 3 (3), 211-221, points of reference are at pp. 211, 212, 213-214 and 218-220.

<sup>65</sup> The criticism was made in respect of Professor Rees’ conference paper of 1955. His 1954 article (*op. cit.*) appears to be on similar themes, albeit with a different title.

<sup>66</sup> In exception were two articles by Stephen Ingle on politics and literature: 1974, ‘Socialism and Literature: The Contribution of Imaginative Writers to the Development of the British Labour Party’, 22 (2), 158-167; and 1977, ‘Politics and Literature: An Unconsummated Relationship’, 25 (4), 549-562.

<sup>67</sup> 1993, ‘The Reputation of Political Science Journals: Pluralist and Consensus Views’, 41 (1), 5-23; quote from taken from p. 13.

<sup>68</sup> E.g. ‘History Journals for Political Scientists’, John Ramsden, 1992, 40 (3), 554-560; ‘Psychology Journals for Political Scientists’, Kathleen M. McGraw, 1993, 41 (3), 506-515; ‘Geography Journals for Political Scientists’, R. J. Johnston, 1994, 42 (2), 310-317; and ‘What Economics Journals should Political Scientists Read?’, Bruno S. Frey and Angel Serna, 1995, 43 (2), 343-348.

<sup>69</sup> 1991, ‘Why Political Science Needs History’, 39 (3), 479-495.

debates in political theory about how to understand the ‘Masters of Political Thought’.<sup>70</sup> It also happens to foreshadow a debate about history in a Special Issue of the journal in the first year of the Association’s next sixty years!<sup>71</sup>

### ***The Relationship between Political Analysis and Politics in Society***

In the last twenty years, the social and political relevance of research came to the fore in financial support for it. The ESRC initiated ‘thematic priorities’ as a framework to steer the submission of eligible applications.<sup>72</sup> And the involvement of, or relevance to, ‘users’ became a criterion in decisions about individual funding applications. Recently, it has become incumbent to demonstrate the (beneficial) impact of social science research on society at large.<sup>73</sup> So, as before, it seemed interesting to consider what the journal tells us about such matters over the years.

In the first volume of the journal, Barker<sup>74</sup> drew attention to early political theorists and historians who were ‘steeped in the general current and sweep of affairs’ and to nineteenth century figures who, in one and the same person, were both politicians and philosophers. Between the two world wars and in the early days of the Association, the link between theory and practice seems mainly to have related to the training of public administrators. For example,

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<sup>70</sup> This is a theme which has run throughout the period particularly in political theory. In addition to Sanderson, 1968, see also, for example, Andrew Lockyer, 1979, ‘Traditions’ as Context in the History of Political Theory’, 27 (2), 201-217 and, for a summing up of the theme, see David Miller, 1990, included here. It is also a question that engages political scientists more widely; see Lawson, 2008, also included here.

<sup>71</sup> On Dialogue and Innovation in Contemporary Political Science, 2010, 37 (2); articles by Ann Norton and Iain McLean – respectively, ‘Politics Against History: Temporal Distortions in the Study of Politics’, 340-353, and ‘Political Science and History: Friends and Neighbours’, 354-367.

<sup>72</sup> In my time on the PSA Executive Committee and beyond, the Association was active in ensuring that the thematic priorities were defined broadly enough to provide opportunities for the wide range of activity, including political theory, that characterizes the discipline.

<sup>73</sup> See the ESRC on Impact Case Studies, available at:

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/strategicplan/achievements/default.aspx>; and the Academy for the Social Sciences, Making the Case for the Social Sciences, available at:

[http://www.acss.org.uk/docs/Making%20the%20Case/wellbeing\\_brochure\\_view.pdf](http://www.acss.org.uk/docs/Making%20the%20Case/wellbeing_brochure_view.pdf)

<sup>74</sup> Barker, 1953, 7.

Chester<sup>75</sup> refers to the pre-war BA in Administration at Manchester University, taught in the evenings and supported, through willingness to pay fees, by the city corporation.

In the mid-seventies, a degree of pessimism about the relationship was expressed by Chester<sup>76</sup> when he observed that the expansion of the discipline from the 1950s had not brought about demands for the professional services of political scientists, except in the ‘new countries’ (see also footnote 27). The idea of a close link was rejected in 1973 by Downie.<sup>77</sup> In noting that there was a ‘strongly held view’ among ‘many students and some staff’ that ‘their discipline should be “relevant”’, he stated that ‘the view mistakes the kind of service which a faculty of arts can provide’. In contrast, Blondel<sup>78</sup> made a powerful and prescient case in 1975 for the need urgently to review the relationship between the discipline, politics as practiced and the general public.<sup>79</sup> Johnson<sup>80</sup> noted in 2000 that the ‘critical mood’ of the 1960s and 1970s and the growth of demand for constitutional reform in the 1980s and 1990s provided more opportunities for academics to work with government or other actors in policy circles. But he also sounded notes of caution about the explicit advocacy of change and the demands of modern mass communication for instant and simplified answers or judgements.

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<sup>75</sup> Chester, 1975, 156. Robson (1975, p. 194) argued that the subject of public administration was about public administration rather than for practitioners of it but also refers to its role in the training of local government officers, as does Dunsire (1999, p. 363) in respect of preparing them for recruitment and promotion (in the UK and in former colonies).

<sup>76</sup> Chester, 1975, 161.

<sup>77</sup> Downie, 1973, 435-436.

<sup>78</sup> Blondel, 1975, 232-243.

<sup>79</sup> Many articles refer why American policy-makers ‘needed’ political scientists in the first half of the twentieth century more than was the case in the United Kingdom. Smith, 1983, explains why they also needed specialists in international relations. While Gray (1974, 138-139, 141) wrote of potential pitfalls in the idea that international relations scholars could offer advice to policy-makers, he argued that specialists could (and in some Congressional committees did) provide advice on the arms race. Other scholars of international relations deal with specific tools and techniques, such as operations research and simulations, offered by analysts to policy-makers and their use in government, though, admittedly, their examples again tend to be American (and German); Stafford Beer (an OR not IR specialist), 1966, ‘An Operational Research Approach to the Nature of Conflict’, 14 (2), 119-132 and Michael H. Banks, A. J. R. Groom and A. N. Oppenheim, ‘Gaming and Simulation in International Relations’, 1968, 16 (1), 1-17. Though Paul Taylor, 1968, refers only to the potential usefulness of Functionalism, it is clear that this theory (and related or competing ones) was explicitly in the minds of those who constructed the European Union.

<sup>80</sup> Johnson, 2000, 122-126 and 129.

## **Conclusion**

I began by recognizing the complexity of the task I had brought upon myself. I end by saying that, in retrospect, I quite enjoyed it. Doing it served as a kind of review of my own experience, making it a bit of a 'swan song'. Some of this is evident in passing in the text or footnotes. As I was writing, I was also thrown backwards into the raging debates about 'grand theories', the philosophy of science and the sociology of knowledge. I was also reminded of my more recent past in trying, with colleagues in other schools, to develop at Queen's University Belfast an inter-disciplinary Institute of Governance and practices that would bring together analysts and people – in and outside government – engaged in policy-making. As one particularly thoughtful civil servant then observed, they needed help, not only in the answering of questions, but, more importantly, needed people to identify questions that they would not have realized existed, let alone needed answering. So, doing this has reminded me of the privilege of having been able to spend a good part of my life in an interesting and challenging endeavour, made all the more so by the company and collaboration of colleagues in my various universities and in the Association.

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