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Political Studies as Narrative and Science, 1880-2000

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Abstract

Today we are often skeptical of the role played by representations of the nation state in constructing and legitimating ways of life and public policies. We portray what once appeared to be neutral, scientific representations of our practices and our heritages as contingent historical objects. How did we become so skeptical? The answer has several parts: developmental historicism dominated the human sciences in the latter half of the nineteenth century; the turn of the century witnessed an epistemic rupture and the rise of a modernist empiricism that came to dominate the social sciences; modernist empiricists reformulated their approach during the latter half of the twentieth century in response to alternative visions of social science; and, finally, the close of the twentieth century also saw the rise of a radical historicism that spread from philosophy and literature to history and even social science. In short, we have become skeptical as we have moved towards a radical historicism that challenges scientism and decenters the grand narratives of yore.

Political Studies as Narrative and Science, 1880-2000¹

Numerous human scientists write about the ways in which nation states represent themselves. Many are acutely aware of the role these representations play in constructing and legitimating ways of life and public policies. What is more, their studies often have a skeptical cast. They show how these representations, and the policies based on them, are simplistic, parochial, temporally and culturally circumscribed, and otherwise inadequate. They portray what once appeared to be neutral, scientific accounts of national practices and heritages as contingent historical objects. They debunk elder accounts of the nation by revealing as contingent what these accounts portrayed as natural, and by exposing the contingent historicity of these accounts themselves.

How did we get to be so skeptical? What story might we tell about ourselves? The relevant story is, of course, a history of the human sciences; it concerns the fate of historicism and positivism since the late nineteenth century. This story, as I will narrate it, has several parts: a developmental historicism dominated the human sciences during the latter half of the nineteenth century; the turn of the century witnessed an epistemic rupture and the rise of a modernist empiricism that came to dominate the social sciences; modernist empiricists reformulated their approach during the latter half of the twentieth century in response to alternative visions of social science; and, finally, the close of the twentieth century also saw the rise of a radical historicism that spread from philosophy and literature to history and even social science. This story about the fate of historicism and positivism also concerns debates about the role of narrative and science in the study

of social life. Historicists typically explain our practices in terms of narratives – at first national histories but now narratives of networks of peoples. Modernist empiricists and positivists generally do so by reference to laws, correlations, and comparisons, all of which are more ahistorical. In short, we have become skeptical because of the spread among us of a radical historicism that challenges scientism while also decentering the grand narratives of old.

Our story will soon prove too complex for synopsis. We will come across different concepts of narrative and science at different times and even at the same time. Some concepts of narrative will prove compatible with some of science. Examples of developmental historicism still appear today. Examples of radical historicism can be found in the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, although we might be skeptical of grand narratives with their big aggregate concepts, we should recognize that narratives must deploy aggregate concepts if they are to be more than chronicles of one damn thing after another. What matters is that our aggregate concepts are suitably contingent, historicist, and pragmatic. Think of my story as a series of snapshots of the dominant approaches to political studies from the late nineteenth century to today; each snapshot relies primarily on British and American examples; and each snapshot includes references to its own simplifications.

I. Developmental Historicism, cc. 1880-1920

In the late nineteenth century, few human scientists defined narrative and science in contrast to one another. They thought that valid narratives depended on the systematic, impartial, painstaking and rigorous collection and sifting of facts, and they identified

science with just such inductive rigour.² Often they contrasted their scientific narratives with the more partisan expressions of party politics. For James Bryce, political science took its materials from the historical study of the past before then applying them to the present, and this inductive study of history was an important counterweight to excesses of party.³ The Whig historian, E. A. Freeman famously remarked, “history is past politics; politics is present history.” Such attitudes were not peculiar to Britain. Scholars styled themselves Professors of History and Political Science all across America, from William Sloane at Princeton, through Jesse Macy at Iowa, on to Bernard Moses at the University of California, Berkeley. In their view, historical narratives were integral to a science of politics that was to guide statesmen.

Although human scientists emphasized their rigorous, inductive methods, they typically collected and sifted facts within a particular framework, which we might call developmental historicism.⁴ In Britain, developmental historicism owed much to the conjectural histories of the Scottish Enlightenment. Enlightenment thinkers forged a science of society that explored the development of sociability in relation to a “stadial” Whig historiography, which culminated in patterns of exchange that were understood as analogous to the movement of the planets. Developmental historicism also owed much to an organic or romantic outlook that emphasized the ability of living beings to make and remake social life through their activity, where activity expressed purpose, thought, and imagination. The conjunction of Whig historiography and organicism inspired numerous attempts to study politics within an evolutionary narrative.⁵ Developmental historicists used organic and evolutionary terms to frame narratives of the unfolding of the principles of nationality and liberty along fairly fixed paths. We find such narratives most famously

in the Whig constitutional histories of Freeman, J. R. Green, and William Stubbs. Yet they also attracted both sides in the philosophical dispute between idealists and positivists. Although positivists followed August Comte, J. S. Mill, and, at times, Leopold von Ranke in promoting rigorous scientific methods, they increasingly identified evolutionary theory as the pinnacle of science, and they thus adopted developmental historicism as a suitable setting in which to situate their empirical findings.⁶ It was this evolutionary positivism that Sidney Webb hoped to foster when he founded the London School of Economics in 1895. Likewise, although idealists sought to unpack the absolute as spiritual perfection, they increasingly used Hegelianism and social organicism in ways that made developmental historicism the setting in which the absolute unfolded.⁷ It was this organicist idealism that the Bosanquets drew on when they confronted the Webbs in the great Edwardian debate about social policy.⁸ Developmental historicism dominated the human sciences during the late nineteenth century precisely because it could bring together conjectural Whig histories, theories of evolution, and accounts of the unfolding of divine providence.

Developmental historicists told narratives of continuity in the gradual triumph of the principles of nationality and freedom. They believed that historical eras were linked by a commonality of experience that appeared in the present conceived as a culmination of a developmental process. They understand the past by locating it in relation to a larger whole, the content and meaning of which typically derived from contemporary notions of nationality and freedom. Their national histories told of incremental changes in the ideas, institutions, and practices of freedom as they triumphed over those of tyranny. Moreover, even when developmental historicists pointed to threats to freedom, they still conceived

of its triumph as somehow ensured by an evolutionary process. Progress was built into the order of things. Developmental historicists thus structured their national histories by reference to principles that operated in time either as foundational facts or as unfolding ideals. The most important principles included the nation state and democratic liberty, which were intimately linked in so far as the prevalent understanding of democratic liberty was one that suggested it presupposed an organic community that had reached its highest form in the nation state. Whig historians suggested that the English nation had an unbroken continuity located principally within its democratic institutions. American historians drew on their reading of German historicism to argue, as John Burgess wrote, “the national state is the consummation of political history,” and they typically identified the American state with a principle of freedom, as in Herbert Adams’ account of how American democracy had developed out of Teutonic “germs”.⁹ English and American scholars welded their exceptionalisms together by means of a widespread belief in a shared Anglo-Saxon, common law heritage that informed their democratic institutions.¹⁰

The developmental historicists took the nation state to be an organic unit defined by ethical, functional, and linguistic ties as well as by a shared past. Adams argued that the institutions of the state constituted “the all-uniting element of civil society and of the common life of men.”¹¹ Often developmental historicists conceived of national histories in terms of the gradual realization of Teutonic principles. Teutonic principles allegedly had emerged among the tribes and village communities of Northern Europe before going on to flower in England and then perhaps America. The principles supposedly gave rise to representative institutions, constitutional liberty, local self-government, and common law. By contrast, continental Europe, and especially France, was allegedly home to an

unrestricted democracy, centralized authority, and codified law.¹² Despite such contrasts, Teutonism could rely on a historical argument about the evolution of civilizations, not a biological argument about racial characteristics.¹³ Developmental historicists could equate civilizations with shared cultural and moral habits or common social and political institutions. They could locate civilizations at various stages of a hierarchic process of evolution or growth, which was arguably more or less universal. England and America were what they were because of a history that had inspired within them individualism and self-reliance, a passion for liberty, a willingness to pursue enterprise and trade, and a practical capacity that stood in contrast to abstract reason. J. S. Mill, to mention just one example, vehemently opposed efforts to attribute “diversities of conduct and character to inherent natural differences”; he argued instead that they arose from different contexts, some of which provided “a lack of adequate inducements.”¹⁴ Similarly, developmental historicists could understand imperial rule as an attempt to spread liberty and democracy, rather than as an expression of racial superiority. Mind you, local administrators in the colonies all too rarely acted in accord with a democratic spirit if it clashed with a racial one, and even when they did, the distinction was not necessarily one that was appreciated either in theory or in practice by their colonial subjects.

Developmental historicism inspired narratives or national histories that expressed racialist themes in terms of civilizations. A civilization embodied principles that provided a basis for continuity as well as for gradual change in response to new circumstances. In the English case, this national history emphasized that rule was in accord with precedent and convention, rather than a written constitution, and that these conventions protected civil liberty and local government. The constitutional settlement

of 1689 represented the moment when it became clear that the monarch had to obtain the consent of Parliament to raise taxes or make laws. Local government meant that there was no place for a centralized and powerful bureaucracy or police. Ancient institutions, such as the monarchy and House of Lords, had responded suitably to rising democratic pressures thereby ensuring their own survival even as the power of popular institutions grew and the franchise was extended to greater numbers. This gradual evolution had produced a balanced constitution that allowed for popular participation and respected civil liberties even while it retained checks on excessive power and its miss-use. In the American case, the founding of the republic could appear as a continuation of a Teutonic past inherited from England or as the creation of a new utopia.¹⁵ Either way, the American people expressed themselves in the revolution and the Constitution so as to give legitimacy to the offices of state. Thereafter American history had exhibited the development of the spirit and institutions of this founding from the local to the centre – often with the Civil War appearing as the final act of unification – and from a limited republic to the more democratic eras of Jefferson and Jackson.¹⁶

Developmental historicists made sense of their world by means of narratives of continuity and progress. They conceived of these narratives as scientific in large part because they identified science with rigorous, inductive studies theorized in comparative and evolutionary terms. In this view, objective narratives required a rigorous inductive approach to facts. Stubbs wrote that histories should be composed out of painstaking “chronologies of minutae”.¹⁷ These chronologies then could be understood in terms set by a comparison of the origins, development, and present nature of nation states along an evolutionary scale. Burgess described the constitutions and institutions of England,

France, Germany, and America in a manner that purported to show that America had reached the highest stage of development in the evolution of liberty and democracy.¹⁸

Because developmental historicists fused narrative and science in these ways, they almost never made a sharp distinction between political science and history. Political scientists thought of their subject matter as thoroughly historical.¹⁹ Typically they sought to trace the ways in which ideas or principles had unfolded within the historical evolution of the institutions of a state. Introductory texts to politics often explicitly expounded just such principles or categories and the comparative stages of their development.²⁰ Political scientists used the narratives and techniques of developmental historicism to describe and explain political practices, to edify the public, and to guide policy-makers. Most saw themselves as historians as well as social scientists. In America, William Dunning helped to create the political science curriculum at Columbia University, and he was, at the time of his death, president-elect of the American Political Science Association. But he was also a founding member of the American Historical Association who served as its President, and he was one of the best-known historians of the reconstruction era of his time. His works on political science deployed an inductive historical method to trace the history of political thought through to its expression in national institutions. In Britain, John Seeley introduced the inductive study of politics at Cambridge University as part of the History Tripos, and the study of politics at Oxford was situated in the History School until the establishment of Modern Greats – Philosophy, Politics, and Economics – in the 1920s. History was integral to those social sciences that the political and intellectual elite relied on both to make sense of contemporary issues and to frame their responses to these issues.

II. Modernist Empiricism, cc. 1920-1960

Some ideas of the late nineteenth century foreshadow the crisis of historicism that undercut developmental historicism.²¹ F. H. Bradley argued that historical knowledge was always partial and incomplete, that there were no discoverable evolutionary laws, and that we could not predict future events.²² Even the Webbs' evolutionary positivism inspired empiricist studies that paid so much attention to the minutiae of administrative and social affairs that they almost lost sight of Whig constitutionalism.²³ Despite these precursors, modernism flourished only as people struggled to comprehend World War One. The senselessness of the conflict eroded widespread assumptions of continuity, progress, and reason. In Britain and the US, moreover, the Teutonic principle was discredited as a result of its association with the enemy; it became tarred as Germanic absolutism.

World War One undermined the faith in progress and reason that had informed developmental historicism. Although images and ideals of progress still appeared after the War, progress was seen more as a contingent victory of human activity and less as an inevitable aspect of history.²⁴ The contingent victory of progress depended, for many, on the promotion of new sciences to guide attempts to resolve social problems. World War One encouraged calls for new sciences even as it eroded the narratives of developmental historicism. The new sciences that arose in this context relied on an epistemology of modernist empiricism.²⁵ Modernist empiricism was atomistic and analytic. It broke up the continuities and gradual change of elder narratives by dividing the world into discrete, discontinuous units. It then sought to make sense of these units by means of impersonal

mathematical rules or analytic schemes. It used ahistorical calculations and typologies to define its narratives, or even to replace narrative as a mode of explanation. As early as 1921, Herman Finer added to his study of comparative government an analytic index of topics designed to enable readers to compare similar institutions across states.²⁶ Before long, Finer, and others such as Carl Friedrich, started to present their studies in analytic rather than historical terms. They proceeded topic by topic, discussing institutions in comparison with similar ones in other countries rather than in the context of a historical narrative.²⁷

The First World War also challenged the principle of the nation state conceived as an expression of an organic unity, which when expressed in popular sovereignty acted as a guarantor of liberty. Even if human scientists still viewed the state positively in terms of the expression of a general will or common good, they typically did so in relation to a society that was itself legitimately pluralistic. Ernest Barker and A. D. Lindsay adapted their idealist inheritance, for example, in ways that gave greater credence to pluralism. The erosion of the principle of the nation state inspired yet other human scientists to try to get behind what they now condemned as constitutional pieties in order to explore what they now believed to be the real back and forth of contemporary politics.²⁸ Some of them believed that social conditions had changed so dramatically that elder principles could no longer serve their purpose. They expounded on the need to explore these new conditions and behavioural patterns so as to craft new principles and institutions for the twentieth century.²⁹ The concept of the nation state gave way to that of government, which lacked the association with reason and morals that developmental historicists had ascribed to the former; government was understood in more neutral terms as an aggregation of diverse

interests and attitudes found in society, or even as the institutions that articulated, managed, and responded to these interests and attitudes.

Modernist empiricists brought atomistic and analytic modes of inquiry to bear on the study of government. They thereby crafted a political science that focused on issues of psychology and process, not history. For a start, where the developmental historicists conceived of action as conduct infused with reason and morals, the modernist empiricists thought of it as behaviour to be examined either independently of any assumptions about mind or else in terms of theories about hidden depths of the mind that often overwhelmed reason and morals. Even when developmental historicists such as Bryce suggested that political science concerned mental habits, they situated these mental habits in the context of historical narratives about organic communities that evolved so as to realize principles of nationality and liberty. In contrast, modernist empiricists such as Charles Merriam and Graham Wallas used surveys and statistics, often informed by an analytic psychology, to reveal atomistic attitudes and opinions. In addition, whereas developmental historicists thought about society and politics in terms of a moral narrative, modernist empiricists did so in terms of interests, processes, and functions. Modernist empiricists even drew on a diffuse functionalism that they took from sociology and anthropology. Of course we can read aspects of functionalist reasoning back into nineteenth century theorists, including Herbert Spencer. Still, it was only in the early twentieth century that Bronislaw Malinowski, A. R. Radcliffe Brown, and others defined functional explanations as scientific in contrast to historical ones.³⁰ The functionalists attempted to explain social facts by reference to the contributions they made to the social order as a whole. At times they paid attention to the relationships between elements of a social whole in a way that

can appear to be at odds with atomization. However, they then conceived of the social whole as an abstract, even universal, framework that made possible comparison and classification of atomized units across diverse societies. Functionalism thereby overlapped with a systems approach to organizations in a way that promised to provide a transhistorical context for atomistic and analytic studies of behaviour and processes.

We should not draw too sharp a rupture between modernist empiricism and developmental historicism. On the one hand, Wallas had notoriously little immediate impact on British political science, while Merriam's supporters spent much of the 1930s lamenting the limited use of quantitative methods in American political science. On the other, Whig narratives still dropped off the pens of Bryce and younger scholars such as Barker, while Charles Beard's historical studies of American politics remained the best selling political science texts of the time and standard text books in many colleges and universities. Even when human scientists remained committed to elder approaches and narratives, however, they generally did so nostalgically. Novelists and poets such as E. M. Forster and John Betjeman, just as much as human scientists such as Barker, wrote in ways that suggested the world to which they referred was somehow a thing of the past. The expansive confidence of the nineteenth century in continuity, reason, and progress was no more.³¹

Modernist empiricists introduced analytic and atomistic modes of inquiry, and new focuses on behaviour and processes. In Britain, Wallas stands out as a particularly forceful advocate of this type of political science. He denounced elder approaches to politics that bore little relation to political reality. He championed instead a political science that deployed quantitative techniques and based itself in a scientific psychology

of habit, emotion, and non-rational inference. However, even if we forget about Wallas, modernist empiricism wrought a shift in the study of the British nation state. The rise of atomization and analysis transformed the Whig historiography of the developmental historicists into the Westminster model. British students of politics had understood their state in terms of a historical narrative. Now they came to do so in terms of an abstract set of institutions that could be compared and classified in relation to other states. Britain was a unitary state characterized by parliamentary sovereignty, cabinet government, party control of the executive, and a loyal opposition. Ironically, just as the Whig narrative got relegated to the background of the Westminster model, so the new focuses on behaviour and process highlighted aspects of British politics that did not fit well with this model. Political scientists noted a decline in the independence of Members of Parliament, the influence of unelected officials, and the activities of pressure groups and the media. The history of British political science is, in many ways, one of successive attempts to locate new data and new concerns in relation to a Westminster model that is itself the legacy of the developmental historicism of the nineteenth century.³²

The impact of modernist empiricism was even greater in America, no doubt in part because history had less cultural authority there. Even before World War One, Lawrence Lowell used his mathematical training to undertake a statistical study of party voting in Britain and America.³³ After the War, Merriam and Walter Lippmann, who was a student of Wallas's, promoted both the use of quantitative techniques and the study of behaviour in terms taken from an analytic psychology.³⁴ They encouraged political scientists to begin to examine electoral behaviour through aggregate analyses of official census data and electoral statistics. The rise of survey research was perhaps an even

more significant development in American political science. The sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld, who had trained as a mathematician, founded the Bureau of Applied Social Research, which generated much of its income by undertaking market research while also writing academic studies of the data thereby generated.³⁵ Likewise, the University of Michigan formed a Survey Research Center where an interdisciplinary group of scholars worked through the 1940s and 1950s on four programmes addressing economic, political, and organizational behaviour as well as methodology. They surveyed public opinion so as to create new unofficial data with which to explore political behaviour.³⁶ All this survey research precluded historical or comparative approaches if only because neither the past nor other countries could offer similar data.

The rise of modernist empiricism did not mean an end to history. What it meant was that history occupied a smaller place in political studies and so in debates about public policy. Social scientists used history more as a source of data than as grounds for explaining that data. Their explanations relied less on narrative and more on atomization, classification, statistical correlations, or even identification of functions within a system. History continued to attract some attention, especially among political theorists.³⁷ But generally social scientists shunned original historical research, relying on syntheses of existing scholarship to provide the data or background to their studies of the behaviour and processes of contemporary politics. Beard actually defended history by arguing that it was a source for data. The more aggressive Merriam argued that it was just a barrier to the rise of a proper science of politics. Contemporary changes in the study of history further exasperated this division between narrative and science.³⁸ Although historians still concentrated on political and constitutional history – in part because they associated

objectivity with the use of well-authenticated archives and documents – they became more convinced of the otherness of the past. Increasingly they argued that we should study the past for its own sake, not to engage present concerns, an argument that had been expressed by Morse Stephens in his retort to Burgess at the 1896 meeting of the American Historical Association.³⁹

III. Varieties of Social Science, cc. 1960-2000

Most modernist empiricists still equated science with the rigorous and impartial collection and sifting of facts. They just detached such rigour from narrative. They tied it instead to atomization, classification, and quantification. By 1960, the social sciences were grappling with a different concept of science couched in terms of universal theories that generated hypotheses, which, in turn, received confirmation from experiments and factual investigations. This positivist concept of science appealed to social scientists in part because it legitimized their claims to expertise. If natural scientists and economists played the fullest role in directing the expansion of state activity after the Second World War, other social scientists also contributed, and a positivist concept of social science helped to legitimate their contributions at a time of optimism about technocratic reform. With state funding for social science favouring scientism and policy relevance, social scientists who defined themselves as delivering such goods were simply more likely to find stable employment. The positivist concept of science also appealed to some social scientists as a way of taking control of the mass of data then being generated. The new techniques and concerns of modernist empiricism had led, in this view, to “hyperfactualism”; social scientists were being overwhelmed by quantitative and

qualitative data in the absence of a theoretical framework with which to make sense of it all.⁴⁰ Whatever its source, the rise of positivist social science led to a further denigration of history and narrative. Now, even when social scientists explicitly champion historical inquiry, they are often merely defending a modified form of modernist empiricism against the more positivistic claims of a universal theory.

The behavioural revolution was the most notable expression of the turn toward positivism. David Easton argued that political science was falsely wedded to “a view of science as the objective collection and classification of facts and the relating of them into singular generalizations.”⁴¹ He argued that a proper science would produce “reliable, universal knowledge about social phenomena”; “the purpose of scientific rules of procedure is to make possible the discovery of highly generalized theory.”⁴² Other behaviouralists too adopted a positivist concept of science as universal, deductive, predictive, and verifiable theory. They denigrated the correlations and classifications of modernist empiricism as lower-level generalizations that needed to be incorporated within a universal theory. Hence they developed various abstract scientific theories, such as systems theory and structural-functionalism, which they hoped would act as general systematic frameworks.⁴³ Although modernist empiricists had used functionalist explanations, behaviouralists consciously crafted functionalist theories and concepts at a sufficiently abstract level to suggest that they had universal applicability. Sometimes behaviouralists sought universality through the application to comparative politics of the types of survey research already being used in the study of American politics.⁴⁴ However, even when they extended techniques developed by modernist empiricists, they often had a different concept of the relationship of theory to data. Whereas modernist

empiricists thought of theory as inductive generalizations, the behaviouralists wanted to deduce hypotheses from their theoretical frameworks and then verify them by reference to data. Behavioralists thus placed the results of survey research within general theories as well as (or instead of) mid-range correlations and typologies.

The universal and deductive pretensions of behaviouralism challenged modernist empiricism as well as developmental historicism. Some modernist empiricists responded to this challenge by redefining their approach in terms of a comparative, historical, and sociological study of states. The state thus became the foci for a diverse range of substantive agendas, including comparative political economy, the political development of America, and the study of revolutions.⁴⁵ This redefinition of modernist empiricism was led by the Committee on States and Social Structures set up by the Social Science Research Council in the early 1980s with Peter Evans and Theda Skocpol as chairs and Albert Hirschman, Peter Katzenstein, Ira Katznelson, Stephen Krasner, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Charles Tilly as its other members. These modernist empiricists complained that behaviouralist attempts to replace the concept of the state with that of “the political system” had resulted in a reductionism that neglected the potential autonomy of the state. Paradoxically they thus tied modernist empiricism to neostatism when in fact it had arisen as social scientists tried to get behind constitutional pieties to examine actual behaviour and processes. Again, these modernist empiricists complained that behaviouralist attempts to deduce universally valid hypotheses from general theories had resulted in a lack of sensitivity to different social and historical contexts. Paradoxically they thus associated modernist empiricism with a historicist resistance to the universal claims of behaviouralism when in fact it had arisen as social scientists

introduced atomization, analysis, correlation, and classification as alternatives to the narratives of the developmental historicists.

The challenge of behaviouralism lead modernist empiricists to define themselves in terms almost diametrically opposed to those with which their predecessors had broken with developmental historicism. Hence the neostatists were seduced by lopsided views of their intellectual history and their preferred methods. They portrayed their neostatism as a radical new paradigm, ignoring the continuities between their work and earlier forms of modernist empiricism, and obscuring the commonalities between their approaches and behaviouralism when located in contrast to developmental historicism.⁴⁶ They described their methods as comparative and historical, ignoring the extent to which their modes of understanding and explanation were correlations and classifications rather than historical narratives. The neostatists were hostile to universal theories based on large-N statistical analyses, but they still explicitly advocated a process of “analytical induction” in which small-N comparisons and case studies would generate mid-level theories.⁴⁷ Moreover, they wanted the case studies to be selected on analytic grounds, and they wanted the mid-level theories to be correlations and classifications couched in terms of quasi-universal, analytic categories. Typically they conceived of history as little more than a series of atomized episodes that could provide data to be absorbed within more timeless variables. The explanatory power of their social science depended either on general relationships between variables or on cross-national typologies; it did not depend on particular narrative histories.

Behaviouralism had far less of a presence in Britain than in America. However, in Britain too modernist empiricists reacted to behaviouralism by defining themselves

against it in a way that gave them a lopsided picture of their own history and methods. They started to invoke a British approach to political science that was alleged to be sensitive to agency, contingency, and history, in contrast to the positivism that dominated America. They thereby ignored the extent to which British political scientists actually embraced aspects of behaviouralism albeit within the context of an abiding modernist empiricism. Behaviouralism permeated the Nuffield election studies when David Butler began to collaborate with Donald Stokes to make more use of the statistical techniques for studying voting behaviour that had been developed at Michigan. Behaviouralism influenced various attempts to craft a political sociology that would create general or mid-level theories applicable across cultures. And behaviouralism inspired much of the work on behaviour and processes that flourished at the Universities of Essex and Strathclyde under Jean Blondel and Richard Rose.⁴⁸ The impact of behaviouralism generated new data, much of which seemed to be at odds with the Westminster model.⁴⁹ Yet British political scientists often remained wedded to this model, arguing only that the new data showed the need for modernizing reforms to enable parliament better to fulfill its role.

Modernist empiricists redefined their approach yet again at the close of the twentieth century partly in response to the rise of rational choice theory. Rational choice theory replicated many of the features of behaviouralism that had challenged modernist empiricism; it too offered an abstract general theory of more or less universal scope from which other theories or hypotheses could then be deduced, applied, and tested.⁵⁰ Equally, however, rational choice theory replaced the systems-level focus of behavioural theory with one on micro-level foundations. It posed forcefully the question: what micro-theory

could make sense of neostatism – and modernist empiricism more generally – with its dependence on analytic induction, variables, classifications, and correlations. Margaret Levi unwittingly echoed the old behaviouralist complaint that modernist empiricism led to hyperfactualism when she complained of neostatists’ “stockpiling case studies”, but she did so alongside a novel call for more attention to be paid to micro-level theory.⁵¹

Neostatists and other modernist empiricists responded to the challenge of rational choice theory by rearticulating their approach as the “new institutionalism”. But William Riker and others already were calling for a new analysis of institutions through rational choice theory itself.⁵² Hence neostatists and other modernist empiricists quickly tried to distinguish different strands within new institutionalism, identifying with a “sociological” or “historical” institutionalism in contrast to a “rational choice” one.⁵³ Here modernist empiricists defined their new institutionalism using many of the buzzwords with which they had earlier described neostatism. They described it as a comparative and historical approach to the analytic and inductive construction of mid-range theories out of case studies and small-N studies. Once again, however, the self-characterisation of modernist empiricists makes sense only in contrast to a universal and deductive approach now associated with rational choice theory. It obscures the new institutionalists’ continuing commitment to atomisation and analysis – even explicit appeals to dependent and independent variables – as methods of generating correlations and typologies.⁵⁴ The new institutionalists rejection of historicism appears in their characteristic difficulties when addressing the very micro-level issues that rational choice theory poses so forcefully. Sometimes they simply wish these issues away by pronouncing them unhelpful obstacles to our tackling big substantive problems. At other times they unpack their approach in

terms of the micro-theory of rational choice thereby undermining the very distinctions they had been so concerned to draw. They almost never decenter institutions in terms of a micro-theory of contingent and competing beliefs and actions, for, if they did so, they would undermine the possibility of treating institutions as stable objects that can be known through correlations and classifications.⁵⁵

Today social scientists have two dominant ways of studying politics. First, rational choice theorists, like the behaviouralists, explain the character and policies of nation states by reference to universal theories and hypotheses deduced from them. They have even studied the very existence of nations and nationalisms as a species of collective action problem; they try to explain group identities and attachments by reference to the utility maximizing behaviour of self-interested individuals.⁵⁶ More generally, universal theories encourage social scientists to downplay particular national histories, identities, and practices, and to foreground questions of how to locate such particularities within a general theory. Second, new institutionalists, like earlier modernist empiricists, explain the character and policies of nation states in terms of correlations and typologies that provide macro-historical, comparative contexts for diverse cases. Tilly has argued, for example, that all states strive principally to expand, and to protect themselves from the expansion of others. In this context, he continues, the increasingly capitally intensive nature of warfare correlates with the decline of city-states, empires, and the like, before the rise of the now ubiquitous nation state.⁵⁷ More generally, modernist empiricists use collective categories covering diverse states as the main variables or ideal types in mid-level explanations of particular histories, identities, and practices.

IV. A Return to Narrative?

Although social scientists imply the elder developmental narratives are false, their emphasis falls less on such skepticism than on the alleged correctness of their alternative approaches to the study of politics. What is more, even if popular understandings of politics remain attached to elder narratives – and we might question the extent to which they do – the studies that most influence public policy and corporate affairs increasingly consist of the ahistorical typologies, correlations, and models of social scientists. As such, social science is less a source of skepticism than a target for it. The source of skepticism lies in developments within historicism. It lies in a radical historicism that arose as philosophers and human scientists redefined narrative to embrace the absence of assumptions about continuity and progress and the absence of principles of nationality and freedom.

Radical historicism, like modernist empiricism, arose in part as a response to the loss of faith in progress and reason that began in the late nineteenth century and became widespread following the First World War.⁵⁸ Historicists such as Ernst Troeltsch and Benedetto Croce rejected the developmental perspective that tamed context and change by postulating a continuous development of key principles. Equally, however, they had little use for the analyses, correlations, and typologies of modernist empiricists because these rarely allowed adequately for context or change. The radical historicists implied that beliefs, actions, and events are profoundly contingent in that the moment of choice is open and indeterminate. In their view, developmental historicism elided indeterminacy by locating choices in an apparently stable narrative of progress. Because they queried continuity, they raised the possibility of skepticism about the very possibility of objective

historical knowledge. Croce emphasized that history reflects the interests and perspective of the present; in this view, developmental historicism hides its retroactive construction of the stability in its narratives. Radical historicists believed, more generally, that the ubiquity of change meant that the present might have little, if anything, in common with the past – historical events have their own particular contexts. This belief led both to concerns about a corrosive skepticism and to various efforts to avoid such skepticism through appeals to history itself.

Croce's radical historicism had little immediate impact on Anglophone human sciences. Yet it was an important influence on philosophers opposed to positivism. R. G. Collingwood remained a rare champion of a type of idealist historicism, indebted to Croce, at the time when logical positivism swept through Oxford.⁵⁹ Charles Taylor drew on similar idealist, phenomenological, and historicist ideas to challenge behaviouralism.⁶⁰ Later Collingwood and Taylor inspired various Anglophone forms of radical historicism in the human sciences as exemplified by their impact upon, respectively, Quentin Skinner and Clifford Geertz. These latter radical historicists then inspired a return to narrative. To begin, they typically suggested that the ubiquity of change meant that practices, and the clusters of beliefs or ideas that informed them, were specific historical or cultural achievements that had little, if anything, in common with our own ways of life. They renounced the possibility of either a universal theory or ahistorical correlations and typologies. In addition, they argued that if we are to understand and explain actions and beliefs, we have to grasp how they fit within wider practices and webs of meaning. They emphasised contextualisation in contrast to both deduction and atomisation and analysis. Radical historicists thus promoted forms of understanding and explanation that, like the

narratives of developmental historicists, are inductive studies of human life in relation to historical contexts, but which, unlike the narratives of developmental historicists, do not appeal to fixed principles or to reason and progress in order to define the relevant contexts and relate them to the present.

The British New Left inspired another strand of radical historicism. There are clear links between the New Left and the radical historicists we already have discussed. Taylor had been active in the New Left, as had Alisdair MacIntyre, a philosophical critic of positivist social science who provided Skinner with a model of how to write a contextual history. Likewise, several members of the New Left drew indirectly on Croce by way of Antonio Gramsci as they sought to develop a dialectical Marxism that broke with mechanical materialism and economism. E. P. Thompson and Raymond Williams granted some autonomy to consciousness, culture, and agency, while still regarding them as sites of the contradictions and conflicts associated with capitalism. Then, in the 1970s, Stuart Hall used such Marxism explicitly to define cultural studies as historicist critique.

Because the members of the New Left allowed autonomy to culture, they focused on the beliefs and meanings that infuse actions and practices. As Williams wrote, “our way of seeing things is literally our way of living”: it is the “sharing of common meanings, and thence common activities and purposes; the offering, reception and comparison of new meanings, leading to tensions and achievements of growth and change.”⁶¹ Because the members of the New Left took culture to be a complex web of meanings and practices, they emphasized the active relationship between meaning and context; they too located beliefs in culture understood as a way of live, although, especially following Thompson’s critique of Williams, they insisted that society contains

struggles and contests between different ways of life.⁶² Here too radical historicism inspired narratives of human life in particular contexts and without reference to the fixed principles by which developmental historicists had tied past contexts to the present. The New Left challenged bourgeois concepts of progress and high culture for imposing a spurious unity on culture and history. It defined culture, in Williams's words, as "part of the general process which creates conventions and institutions, through which the meanings that are valued by the community are shared and made active."⁶³

There are differences between the New Left and radical historicists such as Geertz and Skinner. Perhaps the New Left continued to exhibit a lingering attachment to forms of reductionism, even if they pushed them back to the last instance. Perhaps other radical historicists are too sanguine in their appeals to unity and community instead of conflict and difference. However, despite such differences, they all expressed a radical historicism that has inspired not just a return to narrative but also our skepticism. Their historicist critique of positivism leads to skepticism toward the typologies, correlations, and models of social science; they portray these representations as objectifications that hide the historicity of the objects they depict and the modes by which they do so. Similarly, the radical nature of their historicism leads to skepticism toward the narratives of developmental historicists. Radical historicists replace principles of reason, character, and progress, with sensitivity to dispersal, difference, and discontinuity. For example, they reinterpret Locke's Two Treatises as a party-political pamphlet intended to advance Shaftesbury's opposition to the arbitrariness of the King's policy, rather than the defining statement of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the constitutional settlement of 1689.⁶⁴ Radical historicists also portray the narratives of developmental historicists as products of

particular intellectual or ideological contexts. For example, they narrate the rise of Whig historiography, and later changes within it, as contingent responses to particular debates about matters such as commerce, rather than as the unfolding of historical truth.⁶⁵

While radical historicism constitutes one source of skepticism, another owes little to theorists such as Croce, Collingwood, MacIntyre, and Taylor. Our skepticism derives too from poststructuralist critiques of the structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss and Louis Althusser, which itself arose out of Ferdinand de Saussure's early defence of a modernist science of linguistics that would replace developmental, diachronic studies with analysis and atomization in relation to ahistorical, synchronic typologies, correlations, or systems. The structuralists studied language, mind, and society as objects that were determined by the internal relations among the units within them. They hoped to unravel causal logics based on the often unrecognized categories and frameworks that they associated with these relations. Their poststructuralist critics complained that structures are inherently undecidable and unstable. Jacques Derrida even extended this complaint to cover all of western philosophy; he argued that our philosophy privileges stable origins and presences but it still can not efface all traces of otherness and instability. Poststructuralism thus inspires skeptical attempts to show how typologies, correlations, and especially structures exhibit traces of their own incompleteness. It prompts skeptical studies of the ways the narratives of the developmental historicists elide the violence and arbitrariness of the origins and evolution of the principles that lend to them a spurious stability. Derrida argues, for example, that while the "we" of the American Declaration of Independence purports to speak for a people, the people "do not exist as an entity . . . before this declaration"; the signature invents the subject on behalf of which it claims to speak.⁶⁶

Poststructuralist skepticism often remains indebted to structuralism in a way that distances it somewhat from radical historicism.⁶⁷ Deconstruction in particular takes from structuralism a view of culture as constructed in accord with categories or frameworks; it just unpacks these categories in terms of a logic of otherness rather than one of presence. This logic of otherness informs a largely ahistorical critique of representation; it inspires attempts to show how modes of knowing fail to achieve the closure they seek precisely because they can not escape this universal logic of otherness. Deconstruction exhibits the limitations of a mode of knowing by referring to a quasi-structure that is meant to govern all thought, rather than by appealing to the historical specificity of that particular mode of knowing. Although poststructuralists and radical historicists share a skeptical emphasis on dispersal, difference, and discontinuity, the former often invoke invariant categories, albeit these are often put under erasure, whereas the latter appeal to particularity, change, and experience. What is more, poststructuralists often take from structuralism a related dismissal of subjectivity and agency. They portray their invariant categories as being built into language, thought, or the unconscious, from whence they define human actions and practices. Whereas radical historicists typically portray people as active agents in the making of their own history, the poststructuralists often portray them as bearers of the discourses or quasi-structures that speak and persist through them.

Although radical historicists and poststructuralists differ in some respects, they give us overlapping narratives exhibiting skepticism toward representations of the nation state. We have seen that they offer skeptical narratives of other representations of nation states. They debunk these representations by exhibiting their historical contingency and by showing how they hide their own instability. This debunking appears in studies of the

production of national identities in the heritage industry, the history of historiography, national imaginaries, and popular culture.⁶⁸ Still, such debunking ought not to obscure the fact that radical historicists and poststructuralists also offer their own representations of states, or at least of peoples; after all, the critical tone of their skepticism relies on the implication that other representations fail to capture all of the varied peoples they purport to, and so on a narrative of the actual plurality of nation states.

Radical historicists and poststructuralists offer new narratives of nation states. They do so using the same themes of dispersal, difference, and discontinuity with which they challenge principles of reason, character, and progress. Dispersal implies a concern to explore scattered regions and domains within a nation state: the history of the British state is now that of four nations, not one, while the early territoriality of the American colonies appears as that of regional folkways, each of which had a distinct British antecedent.⁶⁹ Difference implies a concern to explore how dominant identities elide, or even define themselves against, competing ones of, say, religion, gender, and race: British and American identities were forged in opposition to a Catholicism associated respectively with the French and Mexicans.⁷⁰ Discontinuity implies a concern with the ways in which all these varied identities are created and transformed over time. Shifts in the British nation appear to involve novel projections back on to the past, not a continuous development of core themes; they take us from the sense of Englishness forged in Tudor times through the Britishness that arose in wars against France on to the invention of an Imperial mission, the elegiac invocation of the shires, and, we might now add, New Labour's vision of "Cool Britannia".⁷¹ Similarly, the American nation has projected its past discontinuously as a puritan elect, virtuous and civic minded small-

farmers defending liberty, an Anglo-Saxon peoples pursuing national-origins legislation, and, we might add, the comparatively recent dominance of a melting-pot.⁷²

Because radical historicists and poststructuralists often represent the nation state as dispersed, differentiated, and discontinuous, their narratives can appear to be beyond or without the nation state. In this view, radical historicists and poststructuralists offer narratives of networks of peoples. Their use of dispersal challenges the nation state by highlighting transnational links. Ideas, customs, and norms flow across boundaries. Peoples are embedded in all kinds of traditions and practices that are themselves located in overlapping local, regional, and global contexts.⁷³ The concern with difference decenters the nation state into pluralistic peoples. When human scientists invoke collective categories – the principles and characters of developmental historicists or the institutions and ideal types of social science – these categories are liable to hide, willfully or otherwise, the diverse beliefs and desires that motivate the people they purport to cover. Peoples include racial and gender differences, and differences within races and genders, that are neglected if we lump them together as a more unified nation.⁷⁴ The interest in discontinuity challenges the nation state by revealing as contingent and contestable any identity it might appear to possess across time.⁷⁵

V. Conclusion

We have today an increasing number of skeptical studies of the ways in which the allegedly fixed characteristics of states are actually historical constructions that tend to elide the facts of dispersal, difference, and discontinuity. This skepticism inspires new narratives that are post-national and perhaps post-statist. It represents networks of

peoples through new narratives that stand in contrast to the typologies, correlations, and models of social science, and to the elder narratives of a gradual unfolding of principles or character. Its leading motifs are dispersal, difference, and discontinuity, all of which appear in the prominence given to transnationalism, pluralism, and contingency.

However, while this new mode of knowledge is now a common way of comprehending our world, it is neither devoid of ambiguity nor the only possibility currently on offer. To conclude, therefore, I want briefly to mention two of the main challenges that confront those who deploy such skeptical narratives.

One challenge is to clear up an ambiguity about the dispersals, differences, and discontinuities they invoke. As we have seen, there is a tension here between radical historicism and at least some types of poststructuralism. These skeptics agree that a belief in dispersal, difference, and discontinuity derives from philosophical principles. Thereafter poststructuralists are inclined to identify the content of particular instances of dispersal, difference, and discontinuity as themselves consequences of the internal relations of a discourse or language or even as built into the nature of representation itself: the east is defined structurally against the west, or male against female. In sharp contrast, radical historicists typically ascribe such content to the activity of agents who use and deploy language to express ideas and beliefs albeit that they reach these beliefs only under the influence of an inherited tradition or discourse. We need, it seems, to be clearer about what, if any, role we would ascribe to agency.

Another challenge is effectively to engage social scientists, most of who still favour typologies, correlations, and models, rather than skeptical narratives. Many social scientists are aware that their modes of knowledge create distortions and simplifications.

They just regard these problems as necessary consequences of crafting generalizations that are capable of guiding action in the world. It is not effective, therefore, to point to the elisions of dispersal, difference, and discontinuity in their work: they know these are there; they just do not see any alternative. What is more, poststructuralists and radical historicists would appear to agree with these social scientists in so far as their skepticism implies that all representation elides dispersal, difference, and discontinuity. We need, it seems, to be clear how our skepticism might connect to alternative modes of knowledge and so alternative approaches to public policy.

¹ I thank all those involved in the project on “Historicizing Politics” for discussions that helped me to think through many of the issues discussed here. Alas this general acknowledgement will have to suffice since my debts to them are far too numerous and complex to be individuated. For details of the project see R. Adcock, M. Bevir, and S. Stimson, eds., Modern Political Science: Anglo-American Exchanges since 1880 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming). Despite my massive debt to them, they should not be held responsible for what I argue here; from the same discussions I know many of them would disagree with significant portions of my argument.

² On the triumph of a Whigish inductive approach over a Benthamite deductive one see S. Collini, D. Winch, and J. Burrow, That Noble Science of Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

³ J. Bryce, “Presidential Address to the Fifth Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association”, American Political Science Quarterly 3 (1909), 10-16. For a longer exposition of these themes see W. Lecky, The Political Value of History (London: E. Arnold, 1892).

⁴ For an explicit statement of the importance of “philosophy” in ordering historical facts see J. Burgess, “Political Science and History”, in Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1896 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1897), pp. 201-20.

⁵ Compare J. Burrow, Evolution and Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966); J. Burrow, A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Collini, et. al., Noble Science, chaps. 6 and 7.

⁶ M. Bevir, “Sidney Webb: Utilitarianism, Positivism, and Social Democracy”, Journal of Modern History 74 (2002), 217-52; S. Collini, Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); and D. Ross, “On the Misunderstanding of Ranke and the Origins of the Historical Profession in America”, in G. Iggers and J. Powell, eds., Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), pp. 154-169.

⁷ S. den Otter, British Idealism and Social Explanation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

⁸ A. McBriar, An Edwardian Mixed Doubles: The Bosanquets versus the Webbs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁹ J. Burgess, Reminiscences of an American Scholar (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), p. 247; and H. Adams, “Special Methods of Historical Study”, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science 1 (1884), 25-137. On the idea of the state see J. Farr, “Political Science and the State”, in J. Brown and D. van Keuren, eds., The Estate of Social Knowledge (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. 1-21. On German historicism see J. Herbst, The German Historical School in American Scholarship (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965).

¹⁰ R. Cosgrove, Our Lady the Common Law: An Anglo-American Legal Community, 1870-1930 (New York: New York University Press, 1987).

¹¹ H. Adams, “Is History Past Politics?”, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science 3 (1895), 171.

¹² A key figure here was, of course, Henry Maine with his theory of progress from status to contract and his account of village communities. See H. Maine, Ancient Law (New York: Dutton & Co., 1917); and H. Maine, Village Communities in the East and West (London: John Murray, 1871). For just one attempt to locate these English characteristics at the founding of America, see J. Bryce, Modern Democracies, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1921), vol. 2, pp. 7-8. For American versions of the argument see H. Adams, “The Germanic Origins of New England Towns”, John Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science 2 (1882), 5-38; and J. Burgess, Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law, 2 vols. (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1891). On the transnational links at play here see S. den Otter, “Freedom of Contract, the Market and Imperial Law-Making”, in M. Bevir and F. Trentmann, eds., Critiques of Capital in Modern Britain and America (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 49-72.

¹³ On civilizational and racialist strands in developmental historicism see respectively P. Mandler, “‘Race’ and ‘Nation’ in Mid-Victorian Thought”, in S. Collini, R. Whatmore, and B. Young, eds., History, Religion, and Culture: British Intellectual History 1750-1950 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 224-244; and J. Stapleton, “Political Thought and National Identity, 1850-1950”, in S. Collini, R. Whatmore, and B. Young, eds., History, Religion, and Culture: British Intellectual History 1750-1950 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 245-269.

¹⁴ J. S. Mill, “Principles of Political Economy”, in The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963-91), Vol. 2, p. 319.

¹⁵ America even appeared as both inheriting the English love of liberty and as being a utopian beginning when it was argued that the early colonists had been, through a process of self-selection, precisely those English who most loved liberty and so most desired to escape the yoke.

¹⁶ An early example is G. Bancroft, A History of the United States from the Discovery of the American Continent to the Present Time, 8 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1860-74).

¹⁷ W. Stubbs to E. Freeman, 13 April 1858, cited in S. den Otter, “The Origins of A Historical Political Science: Britain 1900-1914”, in Adcock, Bevir, and Stimson, eds., Historicizing Politics.

¹⁸ Burgess, Political Science.

¹⁹ On historico-politics in America see R. Adcock, “The Emergence of Political Science as a Discipline: History and the Study of Politics in America, 1875-1910”, History of Political Thought 24 (2003), 481-508; and D. Ross, The Origins of American Social Science (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). On the Whiggish nature of the study of politics in Britain see Collini et. al., Noble Science.

²⁰ See, for example, J. Seeley, Introduction to Political Science (London: Macmillan, 1896).

²¹ W. Everdell, The First Moderns (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

²² F. Bradley, “The Pre-suppositions of a Critical History”, in Collected Essays (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), vol. 1, pp. 1-70.

²³ See, for example, S. and B. Webb, The History of Trade Unionism (London: Longmans, 1894).

²⁴ Compare J. Kloppenberg, Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and D. Rodgers, Atlantic Crossings: Progressive Politics in a Social Age (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

²⁵ Compare Everdell, First Moderns; T. Porter, Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Ross, Origins, chaps. 8-10; and M. Schabas, A World Ruled by Number: William Stanley Jevons and the Rise of Mathematical Economics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

²⁶ H. Finer, Foreign Governments at Work: An Introductory Study (New York: Oxford University Press, 1921)

²⁷ H. Finer, Theory and Practice of Modern Government (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1970); and C. Friedrich, Constitutional Government and Politics (New York: Harper, 1937).

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- ²⁸ See, for example, G. Wallas, Human Nature in Politics (London: Archibald Constable, 1908).
- ²⁹ Examples include C. Beard, An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution (New York: Macmillan, 1961); and especially G. Wallas, The Great Society (London: Macmillan, 1914).
- ³⁰ The classic example of this contrast is A. Radcliffe-Brown, “The Mother’s Brother in South Africa”, South African Journal of Science 21 (1924), 542-55.
- ³¹ For studies of this nostalgia see S. Pederson and P. Mandler, eds., After the Victorians: Private Conscience and Public Duty in Modern Britain (London: Routledge, 1994); and J. Stapleton, Englishness and the Study of Politics: The Social and Political Thought of Ernest Barker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- ³² Compare M. Bevir and R. Rhodes, Interpreting British Governance (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 24-31.
- ³³ A. Lowell, Public Opinion and Popular Government (New York: Longmans, 1913).
- ³⁴ See, for example, C. Merriam, “The Present State of the Study of Politics”, in New Aspects of Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), p. 63; and W. Lippmann, Public Opinion (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1922).
- ³⁵ For an example of his work in political science see P. Lazarsfeld, B. Berelson, and H. Gaudet, The People’s Choice: How the Voter Makes up his Mind in a Presidential Election (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1944).
- ³⁶ See, most famously, A. Campbell, W. Miller, and P. Converse, The American Voter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).
- ³⁷ D. Boucher, Texts in Context: Revisionist Methods for Studying the History of Ideas (Dordrecht: Kulwer, 1985); and J. Gunnell, The Descent of Political Theory: The Genealogy of an American Vocation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
- ³⁸ Compare Adcock, “Emergence of Political Science”; and D. Ross, Origins. The idea of objectivity at work here has been explored by P. Novick, That Noble Dream: The ‘Objectivity’ Question and the American Historical Profession (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988). On the sense of the otherness of the past see P. Blaas, Continuity and Anachronism: Parliamentary and Constitutional

Development in Whig Historiography and the Anti-Whig Reaction between 1890 and 1930 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978).

³⁹ H. Stephens, "Remarks upon Professor Burgess's Paper," in Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1896, pp. 221-8.

⁴⁰ D. Easton, A Framework for Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1965), p. 134.

⁴¹ D. Easton, The Political System (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 65-6. On historiographies of behaviouralism see J. Farr, "Remembering the Revolution", in J. Farr, J. Dryzek, and S. Leonard, Political Science in History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 198-224.

⁴² Easton, Political System, pp. 24 and 25.

⁴³ See Easton, Political System; and G. Almond, "A Functional Approach to Comparative Politics", in G. Almond and J. Coleman, eds., The Politics of Developing Areas (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 3-64.

⁴⁴ G. Almond and S. Verba, The Civic Culture (London: Sage, 1989).

⁴⁵ See P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, and T. Skocpol, eds, Bringing the State Back In (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); and on how neostatism allegedly entailed a return to history, I. Katznelson, "The State to the Rescue? Political Science and History Reconnect," Social Research 59 (1994), 719-37. For examples of the substantive agendas see respectively P. Evans, Dependent Development: The Alliance of Multinational, State, and Local Capital in Brazil (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979); S. Skowronek, Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); and T. Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

⁴⁶ The result was, of course, a caricature of behaviouralism, as was pointed out at the time by G. Almond, "The Return to the State," American Political Science Review 82 (1988), 853-74.

⁴⁷ See, for example, T. Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," in Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol, eds, Bringing the State, pp. 3-43.

⁴⁸ See respectively D. Butler and D. Stokes, Political Change in Britain: Forces Shaping Electoral Choice (London: Macmillan, 1969); R. Dowse and J. Hughes, Political Sociology (London: Wiley, 1972); J.

Blondel, Comparative Government (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969); and R. Rose, Do Parties Make a Difference? (London: Macmillan, 1980).

⁴⁹ See, for example, H. Berrington, Backbench Opinion in the House of Commons (Oxford: Pergamon, 1973); and R. Jackson, Rebels and Whips (London: Macmillan, 1968).

⁵⁰ For a history of the emergence of rational choice see S. Amadae, Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy: The Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

⁵¹ M. Levi, Of Rule and Revenue (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 197.

⁵² W. Riker, "Implications from the Disequilibrium of Majority Rule for the Study of Institutions." American Political Science Review 74 (1980), 432-47.

⁵³ See, for example, P. Hall and R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three Institutionalisms", Political Studies 44 (1996), 936-57; and K. Thelen and S. Steinmo, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," in S. Steinmo, K. Thelen, and F. Longstreth, eds., Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 1-32.

⁵⁴ The persistent need to fend off universal, deductive theory surely explains why some new institutionalists want to assimilate rational-choice theory to structural-functionalism, as when Skocpol calls the structural-functionalists "forebears" of rational choice theory, and rational choice theorists the "successors" of the Grand Theorists of old. See T. Skocpol, "Theory Tackles History", Social Science History 24 (2000), 675-6.

⁵⁵ For these two approaches to micro-theory see respectively P. Pierson and T. Skocpol, "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science," in I. Katznelson and H. Milner, eds., Political Science: The State of the Discipline (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), pp. 695-6 ; and P. Pierson, "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics", American Political Science Review 92 (2000), 251-67.

⁵⁶ A. Breton, G. Galeotti, P. Salmon, and R. Wintrobe, eds., Nationalism and Rationality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁵⁷ C. Tilly, Coercion, Capital, and European States, 1990-1992 (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992).

⁵⁸ A broader account of radical historicism conceived as anti-metaphysics in the writing of history appears in D. Roberts, Nothing But History: Reconstruction and Extremity after Metaphysics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

⁵⁹ See R. Collingwood, An Essay on Metaphysics (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940); R. Collingwood, The Idea of History, ed. T. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946); and, for comment, L. Rubinoff, “The Relation between Philosophy and History in the Thought of Benedetto Croce and R. G. Collingwood”, Collingwood Studies 3 (1996), 137-72.

⁶⁰ C. Taylor, Philosophical Papers, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁶¹ R. Williams, Long Revolution (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 55.

⁶² E. Thompson, “The Long Revolution”, New Left Review 9 & 10 (1961).

⁶³ R. Williams, Long Revolution, p. 55.

⁶⁴ P. Laslett, ed., John Locke’s Two Treatises of Government (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

⁶⁵ See, for example, J. Pocock, Virtue, Commerce, and History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁶⁶ J. Derrida, “Declarations of Independence”, trans. T. Keenan and T. Pepper, New Political Science 15 (1986), 10.

⁶⁷ It is arguable that Foucault offers a more historicist version of poststructuralism. While his earlier archaeological studies appear to rely on a quasi-structural logic within any given mode of knowing, they present each mode of knowing as something of a historical particular, and his later genealogical studies seem even more hostile to the idea of a quasi-structural logic. For an earlier discussion of these two strands of poststructuralist skepticism see E. Said, “The Problem of Textuality: Two Exemplary Positions”, Critical Inquiry 4 (1978), 673-714.

⁶⁸ British examples include respectively R. Hewison, The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline (London: Methuen, 1987); E. Jones, The English Nation: The Great Myth (Stroud: Sutton, 1998); J. Garrity, Step-Daughters of England: British Women Novelists and the National Imaginary (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); and J. Richards, Films and British National Identity (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997). Related American examples include D. Ross, “Historical

Consciousness in Nineteenth Century America”, American Historical Review 89 (1984), 909-928; L. Kerman, Americanization: The History of an Idea, 1800-1860, Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1983; and L. Bosniak, “‘Nativism’ the Concept: Some Reflections”, in J. Perea, ed., Immigrants Out! The New Nativism and the Anti-Immigrant Impulse in the United States (New York: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 279-98.

⁶⁹ See R. Samuel, "Four Nations History", in Theatres of Memory, vol. 2: Island Stories: Unraveling Britain (London: Verso, 1999), pp. 21-40; N. Davies, The Isles (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); and D. Fischer, Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁷⁰ L. Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); R. Smith, “American Conceptions of Citizenship and National Service”, in A. Etzioni, ed., New Communitarian Thinking (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995), partic. pp. 237-9.

⁷¹ Compare Jones, English Nation; Colley, Britons; P. Rich, Race and Empire in British Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and R. Samuel, ed., Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Vol. 1: History and Politics (London: Routledge, 1989).

⁷² Smith, “American Conceptions”; and P. Schrag, The Decline of the WASP (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).

⁷³ Compare P. Gilroy, The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness (London: Verso, 1993).

⁷⁴ Compare P. Gilroy, There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

⁷⁵ Radical historicism is, in fact, peculiarly sensitive to both change and continuity. While it suggests that all allegedly fixed beliefs or norms are in fact open to transformation, it also suggests that people always reach their beliefs against the background of an inherited tradition, discourse, or language, and it thus rejects the very idea of a complete break or rupture with the past.