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WHAT IS
POLITICAL SCIENCE?

What a Disciplinary Archipelago Says about
Political Scholarship and Academia as a Whole

ABSTRACT

"'Political Science' is greatly in need of definition" (Smith, 1886, quoted in Sigelman, 2006). This statement is as true today as it was a century and a half ago when it was written in Political Science's first independent journal's first article. Throughout its history, the discipline's purpose and objectives have been contested. A conflict between subdisciplines regarding approaches and desired research outcomes hinders the creation of a comprehensive disciplinary framework. Yet, division is inevitable given the objects of Political Science's study – people and power. The discipline is having an identity crisis. To illustrate this, Political Science is compared to an archipelago, a system of separate and distinct islands. Unity is not possible in Political Science, and, perhaps, not even desirable given the variety of topics that it encompasses. By dissecting the etymology of the term "political science," as well as studying the discipline's past and present epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies, I establish an understanding of Political Science's relationship vis-à-vis the natural sciences, the social sciences, academia, policymakers, and society as a whole. This project does not aim to assemble Political Science under a universal purpose, but instead it serves as a self-reflection of Political Science's scholarly contributions and to provide a holistic image of the discipline's impact.

Warren Burroughs
Honors Capstone

INTRODUCTION

My first year of undergrad pushed me to undertake the momentous task of settling an argument that has persisted since my discipline's origin. "Political science is not even a real science," a dorm mate proclaimed to me after disclosing to him what I chose to study. This comment took me aback. I could not help but feel like he was attempting to delegitimize the discipline and, irrationally, delegitimize a part of my identity.

I believed he was intrinsically wrong, but I had difficulty placing what specifically was incorrect about his statement. Surely political science must be a science! Like the natural sciences, political science observes natural phenomena - the actions of human beings - and examines their causes and effects. However, the subtext of my peer's argument was one that many before him pointed out; this comparison to the "hard" natural sciences crumbles when considering that humans are conscious social agents influenced by the outcomes of political science. As opposed to hard sciences, there is the issue of replicability in the social sciences, as results may be difficult to duplicate when studying individuals. Furthermore, my peer's assumption of what is "science" was not clear to me. I cannot remember how I answered the heckler, but I am sure neither of us were satisfied by my response.

I still struggle to answer this question. After devoting the past two years of undergrad studying politics, the question of "What is political science?" seems silly to be asking now[1]. One would think that the definition is intrinsic; political science is the science of politics. Yet, both "politics" and "science" are contested terms, each with distinctive baggage and various definitions. The etymology of "political science" elaborates on its two components. The "political" component refers to its object of inquiry, and the "science" component refers to its preferred methodology. The definitions of both "politics" and "science" and their relationship with one another are a cause for conflict within the discipline and a source of confusion for political scientists, new and old.

Later I learned that I was not alone in my struggle for a definition. Whether or not political science is a science has been quarreled about by academics since the discipline's inception. When I initially set out on my capstone research, my goal was to provide an answer to my dorm mate that would be sufficient for both of us. As I researched political science's history and its current state, I discovered a related, more serious dilemma. The discipline has been experiencing an identity crisis. Not only do scholars argue about the methodology of political science, but they cannot agree on what political science entails. A lack of a universally shared set of assumptions, norms, or rules of conduct has spurred disagreement among political scientists. This has been due to the broad nature of human action and politics as well as the vast number of topics that encompass political science. As political scientists study vastly different phenomena[2] specific research approaches work better for some issues but not others. The subdisciplines[3] that arise from a diversity of aims borrow from diverse influences and origins,

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[1] This is especially true considering it is answered on day one of almost any introductory political science course.
[2] Examples include studies on election results, political systems, roles of individuals and groups, implications of policy, institutional power structures, media, etc
[3] Subdisciplines would include American Government, International Relations, Comparative Politics, Political Theory, Political Methodology, Public Policy, etc.

separating the outcomes of political science inquiries. It thus becomes impossible to settle on one paradigm that establishes disciplinary rules.

The diverging paths within political science has resulted in a fragmented discipline. Different methodologies, underlying assumptions, and schools of thought will be applied depending on the subdiscipline in which an academic approaches their work. Opposing conclusions about the same processes will arise when political science does not share a cosmopolitan framework, engendering strife and conflict within the discipline. A lack of unity between separate fields of study that rarely interact but with loose commonalities leads to inevitable clashes that will result in one of two outcomes:

1) A loss of legitimacy as a discipline - a proliferation of differing beliefs and methodologies that splits political science into separate domains or,
2) A revitalized discipline - the flexibility gained from varied perspectives will give political science the ability to evolve in an everchanging world.

The preservation of the discipline depends on its own ability to self-reflect on its history, be vulnerable enough to acknowledge its shortcomings and strengths that derive from its divisions, and reassess its objectives as a discipline and the role of the political scientists in society. To ensure their survival, political scientists must answer this question: "What is political science?"

The Archipelago Model of Disciplinary Fragmentation

An analogy is helpful to illustrate a snapshot of the existing ontology of political science. Subdisciplines are similar to a system of islands that share alike origins but exist distant from one another. We can call this archipelago "The Polysci Islands," inspired by the shorthand for political science used by students and academics. Its inhabitants, political science scholars, live largely disconnected from the other islands in the archipelago. Their land began forming ages ago when tectonic plates collided, submerging plates to form a series of underwater volcanos. Think of these plates as the historical context of the discipline and the volcanoes as the ancient thinkers who have inspired modern political scientists. These ancient thinkers' philosophies were underwater eruptions from which each subdisciplinary island originated. Although rare, the work of subdisciplines do interact, and the magma from on-land volcanoes can create extensions to islands or form new islands.

The population of Polysci is vibrant and disparate, and as such, the governmental structure is decentralized. Anthropological research has shown the island's demography to hold a diverse set of belief systems and languages, characteristic of the topics and methodologies within the subdiscipline. On the "Political Theory" island, home to a group called the "Theorians," the thoughts of traditional thinkers such as Plato, Hobbes, and Machiavelli are regarded with great respect and built upon, leading to more normative research. On "Political Methodology" island, which the "Methodologians" inhabit, influences that stem[4] from science and mathematics result in a culture that uses quantitative data and idolizes empiricism. The day-to-day activities of the inhabitants are loosely dictated by a governmental body that rules the entire archipelago. The government is given legitimacy thanks to a shared nationality which defines what it means to be a citizen of Polysci. Think of this government as organizations like the American Political Science Association (APSA) or the International Political Science Association (IPSA) and the

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[4]The STEM (science technology engineering and math) pun was intended.

nationality as the shared understanding of what political science is, however weak that understanding may be. The federal government's power is limited, though, and the de facto authority is delegated to each island's municipalities. This federalized approach is justified by the unique culture, history, and conditions of each island caused by the initial eruption that formed a subdisciplinary island. Although the citizens of Polysci live under the same government, their patriotism is lacking, and they have a weak sense of nationality, analogous to political science's absence of a universal paradigm. Even if Polysci citizens see themselves as Polyscians, they have a stronger connection to the local island's identity. The differences in methodological language between islands further add to the archipelago's difficulty in integrating. This model illuminates the path-dependent nature of the history of political science. Old ideas have shaped the course of change that influences the current politics of the discipline.

The fate of the Polysci Islands is not predestined. Although the formation of the archipelago's geography was a natural phenomenon outside the control of humans, the future of the inhabitants' land is theirs to decide. Polysci's lands have remained fertile and full of potential for intriguing research, but unsustainable practices threaten the harvest. A lack of respect for the land, conceived as the rules of the discipline, could leave political science in a famine. If this were to happen, economic restructuring would have to occur. Some islands of Polysci may need to alter their lifestyles, transitioning from agriculture to manufacturing. In other words, political scientists would need to rethink the philosophy undergirding their subdiscipline. The future depends on how the archipelago's citizens choose to act. Is unity feasible? Or is unity even necessary or desirable? What are the implications of their division? Does Polysci die? And finally, how can exogenous developments in the global system impact the archipelago? This capstone project will provide potential answers, but to ensure the longevity of the discipline, other, more respected scholars must be asking the same questions[5].

DEFINITIONS

Self-awareness precedes self-knowledge. Clear expectations about one's goals can illuminate a path that will lead to success. As previously discussed, the name "political science" informs its object of inquiry and its methodology. Setting a broad, yet comprehensive definition of what "politics," "science," and "political science" are will inform further discussion on the discipline's trajectory. Although there are disagreements on the nature of all of these terms, it is important to establish how they are commonly understood to elaborate on the discipline's objectives throughout its history and within its epistemic communities.

Of Politics

"Politics" refers to what political scientists study. Unsurprisingly, political science is about politics, but scholars continue to reflect on what the term "politics" means. Former president of the American Political Science Association (APSA), Harold Lasswell (1936), defined politics as "the study of influence and the influential." *The New Handbook of Political*

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[5] There is a group of scholars who are broadly categorized as "critical theorists" who have provided answers to these questions. Their work analyzes racial, gendered, and economic power structures both within and without the disciple, yet their theories are widely left to the periphery of political science.

Science shares a similar definition and describes politics as the "constrained use of social power" (Goodin & Klingemann, 1996). Max Weber (1965), the commonly proclaimed father of sociology, summarizes the consensus when he simply put that "politics is about power and influence." The shared conception of politics is associated with power over others.

If political science is about politics, and politics is about power and influence, then Political science is the study of how power and influence are allocated in and across societies. How can power be defined beyond an intrinsic understanding of the concept? Politics and power are related, but they cannot be used interchangeably. While politics is the outcome of power, power is a relationship among people. Robert Dahl aimed to detail a definition of power that could apply as a measurement in his 1957 article, "The Concept of Power." He determined that power is relational between political actors, such as groups, individuals, or institutions. For an actor to be considered to have power over another, three criteria must be met. In this example, imagine X is the influencer while Y is the influenced. Firstly, actor X must have a connection with actor Y so that actor X has the capability to influence Y to do something. Secondly, Y's action that was caused by X is X's preference. Thirdly, Y would not have otherwise committed the action without X's influence (Dahl, 1957). Dahl's work elaborates the relationship of power and defines the phenomenon political scientists study.

Yet, Dahl does not do much to suggest measures or outcomes of power. According to Lasswell (1936), power is more than just relationships. Its importance derives from "who gets, what, when, and how." Lasswell provides three non-exclusive measures as to the values of power. The first he lists is "deference," or one's position in the societal hierarchy. Those on the top of the pyramid are more likely to receive what they prefer quickly, while those below them must wait while the more powerful's needs are met. Another is "safety," or how protected one is from danger. The ability to impact others is directly related to survival; the acts of dead people have little influence on the living. Finally, income and wealth are measures of power. The inequality between groups will impact the opportunities available to groups relative to others and impact what one can accomplish (Lasswell, 1950). Dahl's and Lasswell's understandings of power are complementary. While Dahl describes the nature of power, Lasswell's definition provides measures in which to assess the outcomes of power.

Even still, power encompasses multiple occurrences. From individuals, to states, to international organizations, different political actors can hold power. Part of the reason political science is left fragmented is because power and influence are broad phenomena. Many prominent political scientists have defined politics and power in more specific ways, yet their definitions are not all-encompassing. For some, like David Easton, politics is about the allocation of resources and values by an authority. Vernon Van Dyke sees politics as a battleground in which actors compete for dominance, legitimacy, lawfulness, and justice. Mao Zedong defines politics in terms of diplomacy; politics is a war not fought with weapons and physical strength but with institutions and cunning intelligence (Uchechukwu, 2022). Depending on the focus of study, power and politics could be applied to both individuals and institutions, leading to understandings that are not applicable to all topics within political science.

Of Science

While the "political" component of "political science" signifies the topics which define the discipline and is relatively agreed upon despite its vagueness, the "science" component is emblematic of the ambitions and ideals of political science and is a subject of contestation. *The*

New Handbook of Political Science defines science as a "systematic inquiry, building toward an ever more highly differentiated set of ordered propositions about the empirical world" (Goodin & Klingemann, 1996). When prior knowledge informs research, political scientists better understand the world. New data forms theories that reject or add on to previous understandings, constructing an "ordered set of propositions." All subjects in a science do not need to be attached to this order of propositions, as the focuses of different issues can form alternative theories. By systematically addressing and readdressing similar phenomena, scholars aim to apply these theories to predict future events.

The *New Handbook's* definition originated from the logical positivist tradition, which desired disciplines to value objective evidence rather than subjective assumptions. Scholars used evidence that relied only on observations and aimed to make falsifiable claims. The ideal outcome for positivists was a system of "converging laws" that would always hold true and could explain the empirical world (Goodin & Klingemann, 1996). Positivists aimed to expand their knowledge by proclaiming findings that will always be accurate. To legitimize their proofs, results must be replicable. If research could not be reproduced, there would be no way to ascertain whether the conclusions were correct interpretations.

Despite "science" being in the name of "political science," the standard set by the positivists cannot be met by the discipline. Replicability is near impossible for political science research, making falsifiability a delusion. The contingent nature of human behavior forces political scientists to make generalizations rather than "covering laws." Claims made by political scientists are followed by the word "usually" rather than "always" (Chilcote, 1994). Democracies *usually* do not go to war with other democracies. Elected officials *usually* listen to public opinion more than nonelected officials. Political actors are *usually* rational actors. Leaders will *usually* enact their potentially controversial decisions when public attentiveness to the issue is low (Neack, 2019). Political scientists and social scientists must base their conclusions based on correlations rather than complete causations, unlike in the natural sciences, who have the privilege to prove causation between phenomena.

Through assumptions based on prior experience, political scientists find correlations to produce models that predict the consequences of similar phenomena. Yet, the inputs for these models (the controlled and manipulated variables) are constrained by current technology and data collection methods. Even with knowledge of the contributing factors, it may be impossible to collect data about known factors using conventional techniques. The environmental conditions are ever-changing, differing from situation to situation, making some models irrelevant over time. Although the goal may be to find similar cases that apply to current happenings, unique factors will add new variables, which may void the usefulness of the findings from similar events. As *The New Handbooks* puts it, models do not show "external forces [which act upon] passive actors, but rather… [show] conventional responses of similar people in similar plights" (Goodin & Klingemann, 1996). While the aim of these models may be for prescriptions or policy proposals, inevitable externalities inhibit their predictive power. The accuracy of these models may come into question due to the inability to truly reflect reality results in a lack of confidence. If models cannot always represent the phenomena they are trying to show, then they are unable to be repeated or proved in the same way a model in the natural sciences can

Although the issue of replicability derives partially from limitations in technology, data collection, and modeling, studies in political science struggle to be repeatable mainly because of

the subject of political science, politics. Since politics refers to the relationships of power between people, and because people are malleable, rational beings who are changed and influenced by the information from their environment, the findings of political science can be a model's externality that creates outcomes that are different than expected. Political science's legitimacy is a limiting factor in its applicability; If the implications of political science's findings are taken seriously, it may alter outcomes. What happened once in a similar situation could be avoided thanks to the knowledge of previous mistakes. Humans are "social agents" and are not deterministic in the same way the objects of the natural sciences are (Dryzek & Leonard, 1988). The actions of humans do not abide by any known law and adapt to new stimuli, and as such, the study of humans must accept that their conclusions will be imperfect.

While it could be argued title of "science" in "political science" is not meant to be an aspiration for empiricism, but rather is a shorthand of the "study of" (as in "the study of politics"), the reference to the natural sciences was intentional as the philosophy of positivism was on the founders of the discipline's minds. Although modern academics emphasize politics when discussing political science, the "science" component was the justification of creating a new profession. Political science has its roots as a restraining force to normative political theory. At the beginning of the 20th century, former president of the APSA, Westel Willoughby, wanted the new association "to take the scientific lead in all matters of political interest [and] to advance the scientific study of politics" as well as to provide checks on "non-empirical claims of philosophers" (Gunnell, 2006). Inspired by the positivists of the previous century, APSA's founders felt it was possible to study the power relationships among human beings in a scientific fashion. If the science of politics could exist and provide policymakers with accurate data, as many who established political science hoped, then the unchecked philosophic ramblings of political philosophers would be a detriment to society. Politics necessitates theory, as governments and their structures are concepts bore from human ideas. However, founders such as Willoughby saw political theorists as undermining the influence political science could have over policymakers in providing recommendations to improve the general welfare.

The founders framed political science as scientific and empirical to provide the discipline with the authority to win over government officials and academia (Gunnell, 2006). This sentiment would carry over through many eras in political science. Historically, prejudice has existed against political science's sister discipline. The first reference to political theory in a political science journal was in 1890, denouncing philosophy as "abstract" in defense of social science (Gunnell, 2006). Political theory has been used as a pejorative to delegitimize other works. Many agreed that the scientific method ought to be the means of political inquiry rather than uninformed musings.

If dedication to science was a core intention for creating the discipline, but it is near impossible for political science to reach the standards to be a science, is it fair to even use science as a definition? It would be more accurate to refer to science as a goal rather than a descriptor of the discipline. Even given the contingency of politics, political science has become more scientific, or towards "a more highly differentiated set of ordered propositions" as the *New Handbook* defines it (Goodin & Klingemann, 1996). Scientific progress has occurred for several reasons. Firstly, recent events have provided political scientists with more information. Innovative technology has created new measures and better data collection methods to make models easier to interpret. New theories have arisen from increased access to higher quality data, elaborating on previously held beliefs and improving political science's understanding of

politics. Secondly, the fragmentation of subdisciplines makes political science "more highly differentiated." Segmentation allows phenomena to be described in much greater detail and focus, highlighting distinctive intricacies. Even if political science comes closer to the scientific ideal, the previous issues endure; The fact that humans are social agents and the persistence of technological and institutional barriers make collecting all the necessary data difficult. Discovering "covering laws" of politics remains a fantasy for the discipline.

For some subdisciplines, the inability to be a true "science" is not a problem. The dedication to science and its definition is where division occurs within the discipline and among subdisciplines. The questions of what can be considered falsifiable, how important repeatability is, and whether "covering laws" are necessary continue to be answered differently by various subdisciplines, pushing them further away from unity. "Hard" political science studies have a preference towards empiricism. They are characterized by statistical and mathematical thinking, qualitative and quantitative measures, and the use of mathematical models to test hypotheses. This juxtaposes the "soft" political science studies, who are classified as humanistic, historical and philosophical, use narratives rather than mathematical proofs to answer research questions, and often have normative claims which are left to interpretation (Almond, 1988 & Grant, 2005). These two categories are reminiscent of David Hume's "is" versus "ought" conflict. While the "hard" extreme focuses exclusively on collecting data to depict how the world "is," the "soft" extreme creates theories to prescribe how the world "ought" to be.

The "hard" vs. "soft" typologies are not dichotomies, but instead exist on a spectrum. Knowledge of where a study lies on this continuum illustrates its role in society. The purpose of descriptive analyses is to deliver "objective" analysis so as to inform and educate others who make political decisions. The purpose of prescriptive analyses is to provide government officials with advice on how to better rule, giving political scientists sway over institutions. Both provide theories that expand political science's understanding of the world, yet their dedication to "value-free" evaluation differs (Berndsten, 1975). Norms about research methods and the philosophy of science within different subdisciplines alienate them from a disciplinary whole.

Of Political Science

A working definition of political science can be derived from the analysis of politics and science. Political science is the study of power relationships among people and institutions. An actor has power over another when they are capable of influencing another to do something they would not otherwise do. Power is measured by various values such as hierarchical position, security, or wealth. The discipline aims to find correlations between broad social phenomena to establish generalizations about the nature of politics, expanding the field's knowledge base which develops new and refined conclusions.

While this definition lacks specificity, it intends to be all-encompassing and omit potential areas of conflict. It also fits with other accepted definitions of political science. *A New Handbook of Political Science* describes political science as "the study of the nature and source of [the constrained used of power] and the techniques for the use of social power within these constraints" (Goodin & Klingemann, 1996). Just like the working definition, power is stressed as the focal point of politics while adding the limitations that elites have on others to the realm of inquiry for political scientists. The *New Handbook's* definition is also non-specific, reflecting its general nature as a textbook that describes theories from across the discipline. If one were to read a subdiscipline-specific textbook, political science's meaning would be adjusted. In *Theories of*

Comparative Politics, the role of political scientists is to "predict and prescribe" the actions of the influential (Chilcote, 1994). Reflective of its methodology, Comparative Politics views political science as an arbiter of change. Its philosophy echoes a mixture of sentiments from both the "hard" and "soft" extremes, applying both quantitative and qualitative evidence to form normative conclusions. Often, comparative politics necessitates some amount of normativity. Comparative politics examines how different political structure produce different outcomes, yet implicit in their conclusion is a preferred outcome – a value judgement. Comparative politics scholars identify as political scientists in a way that extends the original definition to fit their methodology.

Despite some shared consensus about political science's definition and goals, the discipline lacks a universal identity due to its definition being prone to augmentation. Although the question of "what is political science?" has been answered, a follow-up question remains, "who are political scientists?" A definition has been found, but a connecting identity has not. This identity crisis corresponds to the discipline's historical lack of direction. In the first publication of a political science journal in 1886, the first article's first sentence read "The term 'political science' is greatly in need of definition" (Smith, 1886, quoted in Sigelman, 2006). Throughout political science's life, many academics have continued to comment on the confusion of the discipline's aims and objects of inquiry. Founding author of another journal, the American Society for Public Administration Review, Leonard White, characterized political science as "a collective name descriptive of a larger number of interesting matters which no other social scientists claim as their special territory" (White, 1950, quoted in Sigelman, 2006). Although White's perspective on the discipline is seemingly positive - as he suggests that the topics which Politics explores are "interesting" – his definition sets few boundaries on the potential phenomena studied. The limited boundaries that are established are irrelevant to politics and instead relinquishes the choice of what falls under political science's purview to other social science disciplines. political science then, as seen by White, is the vulture of the social sciences, obtaining sustenance from the leftover topics which other fields have not claimed. Given that politics has a definition, albeit a broad one, political science must be entitled to certain subjects. Yet, political science's absence of a shared identity makes acknowledging the topics of study the discipline is entitled to elusive. The truest definition then is the most unsatisfying definition, "political science is what political scientists do" (Monroe et al. 1990, quoted in Grant, 2005).

What holds political science together is left undefined. Political theorist John Gunnel (1986) concurs when he writes that political science "is more of a holding company for some loosely related fields of inquiry and research programs than a discipline with a theoretical core" (quoted in Sigelmen, 2006). A noncentralized understanding of what philosophy drives political science allows for subdisciplines to decide for themselves, further exacerbating the discipline's identity crisis. This has led scholars to ask whether said identity crisis is the connecting link among political scientists. Sigelman (2006) goes as far as to write, "the only concern that has truly unified this enterprise over the course of its first century is the question of whether or not political science is or is not a discipline." My original question of "what is political science" becomes justified given that educated academics still struggle to answer it after years of studying under the discipline. Still, it is frustrating to be left without an answer. The only solution is to determine my own answer. By delving into the discipline's history and analyzing its current state, I hope to shape some semblance of an identity. I must find an identity for my own sake, to anchor my research as a political scientist.

DISCIPLINARY HISTORY

An evaluation of the etymology of political science has shed light on its philosophic underpinnings. Unspecific and all-encompassing, the discipline's rules are a mélange of contradictory ideas of separate islands. This conflict was not random. Geological forces have fostered the perfect environment in the Polysci Archipelago to foster separation. The volcanic eruptions which formed the islands were caused by an array of political philosophers, interdisciplinary developments, and historical events. The diverse identities and ideas of philosophers, the methodological advancements made in the social and natural sciences, as well as the differing implications from prior events gave political science a wide foundation, inducing distance between subdisciplinary islands. Fragmentation of the discipline was a natural process outside of the control of current academics. Yet, they have the agency to dictate what tomorrow will look like. To do so effectively, scholars need to be aware of the origins of the soil and dirt they stand on today.

Transitioning from the Lithosphere which controls plate movements, a disciplinary history will sketch Polysci's geography. The archipelago's landscape not only holds expansive potential for academic exercise but also constrains the activities of the Polyscians. The topography of the Polysci Islands is analogous to the concept of an academic discipline. The Oxford Dictionary provides several definitions for discipline, including, "a branch of instruction; mental and moral training; system of rules for conduct; chastisement" (Oxford, quoted by Gooding & Klingemann, 1996). Sorting fields of study into groups foster order, as a shared understanding permeates through an epistemic community. Over time, acceptance is garnered over the expectations for quality work. To reference the commonly used verb form of discipline, the role of academic disciplines is to punish scholars who break disciplinary rules or norms. By centering research on a framework, comradery among scholars around a shared interest is increased. Practices and traditions may limit the methodologies and theories used during the research processes, but it also legitimizes the profession by defining what is "minimal professional competence" and by constructing "standards from which to judge other's works" (Gooding & Klingemann, 1996).

What is possible on the Polysci Islands is restricted by both natural factors, like climate and geography, as well as human-made developments in infrastructure and technology. In the academic world, these are circumstances exogenous to the discipline (e.g., economic, political, and cultural, developments) or endogenous to the discipline (e.g., organization, worldviews, subdisciplines, etc.). Erkki Berndston (1975) refers to these factors as "steering factors" which drive the discipline down its eventual path. Political science does not exist in a bubble. Although new systems of analysis and disciplinary organizational change have influenced the discipline, the impact of wars, technological advancement, globalization, and third-world development shaped the discipline. Acknowledging the contingent nature of academia, a disciplinary history is necessary to contextualize modern scholarship and for a prognosis of its current state.

A history of political science will highlight both the "intellectual realm," the ontology of "theories, models, concepts, and scholarship," as well as the "organizational realm," the social system which informs the "organization of departments, association, curriculum, and publications" (Holden, 2000, quoted in Grant, 2005). Political science's genesis is critical to understanding the contemporary status of the discipline. Using the frameworks of premodern

thinkers and other disciplines, the vanguard of the first political scientists standardized norms which would subsist throughout the discipline's lifespan.

The conception of political science occurred with the intermingling of ideas from philosophers as well as the natural and social sciences. What followed was the creation of an independent discipline at the beginning of the 20th century focused on institutional description and a desire to improve the welfare of society. Significant scientific improvements and historical events would usher in the "Behavioral era" in which political science would shift its focus towards quantifiable human behavior in the 50s and 60s, steering its general framework towards empiricism. The disadvantages of unwavering dedication to science would be criticized, leading to a call for a "post-behavioral era" and a return to an uneasy armistice between positivism and normativism within research. To begin, political science's theoretical rationale emanates from landmark advances in ancient thought and progress in the sciences.

Pre-Modernity and Modernity

Political science's history derives from Greek philosophers[6]. Plato and Aristotle are often cited to be the fathers of political science. Although neither their methodologies nor their general interests reflected the discipline's goals, they both contributed theoretical frameworks that are relied upon today. In Plato's *The Republic*, Socrates finds himself with the challenge to determine the ideal government and rulers. He evaluates a series of typologies of governments, both real and nonexistent, and proposes a new government that would maximize the welfare of society. Though Plato grounds his analysis in theory, his focus is centered on political science's subject of inquiry, power. Plato decides which group are the "just" rulers, the Guardians, and deems them deserving of influence. Aristotle's *Politics* follows a similar approach. By comparing regime types, he differentiates between "legitimate" governments (monarchy, aristocracy, polity) and "corrupt" governments (tyranny, oligarchy, democracy). Aristotle makes the normative claim about where power ought to be distributed and the role of regimes (Roskin, 1999 & Jaffa, 1972). Plato and Aristotle both had a similar aim, to create the ideal city-state. Their means to achieve their ends were description and prescription. By studying power structures and determining the difference between "good" and "bad" governments, these political philosophers saw their roles as being similar to modern-day political scientists. As self-proclaimed experts, both saw themselves obligated to instruct governments on what was best for society's prosperity.

Many also cite the Greek historian Thucydides as a pioneer in political study. His *History of the Peloponnesian War* was the premiere of historical and political analysis. Thucydides has been cited as the first historian, providing a descriptive account of prominent institutions, events surrounding the war, and the motivations of leaders. It intention was to inform through thick descriptions, which would be "useful to inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future" (Thucydides, quoted in Ober, 2005). Thucydides' approach reflects the "hard" framework, as his stated goal was to provide reports for readers to extrapolate from. Whereas Plato and Aristotle plainly emphasize their conclusions, there are no theories in the *History of the Peloponnesian War*. However, his work's outcome reflects a

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[6] Although non-western authors wrote about politics earlier, such as China's Confucius in 500 BCE and and India's Kautilya in 300 BCE (Roskin, 1999), it was the Greeks whose ideas are most commonly cited by modern political scientists. This says nothing about the quality or application of either traditions, rather it is reflective of political science's Western-centrism (Chilcote, 1994).

continuing problem in the social sciences. Objectivity is a near-impossible virtue when human perception is necessary for examination. Values and limited experience can cloud accounts, influencing the verifiability of works. The likelihood is slim that Thucydides was amiable with the various leaders of both sides of the war or was present at all of the events recorded (Ober, 2015). Nonetheless, Thucydides' influence on political science was immense. A theme of his work was that transhistorical truths exist, informing his worldview on a universal human nature depicting people as being driven by pride, interest, fear, and power. These general theories engendered the international relations theory of realism, the idea that political actors act rationally out of a pursuit of power (Welch, 2003).

A cosmopolitan desire for power was only half of realism's ideological whole. Although the next millennia passed with several contributions of political philosophers, the next significant influence would come from Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* in the 16th century. Serving as a handbook for monarchs, Machiavelli's work examined the international system and a prescription of how a leader should act towards their subjects and their rivals. Expanding upon Thucydides' input to realism, *The Prince* characterized every actor as rational beings concerned with power (Roskin, 1999). Much like contemporary political science, power was the core of Machiavelli's analysis, as he advised rulers that maintaining power ought to be the aim. He inductively supported his prescription with anecdotes and descriptions, making *The Prince* a classic within the discipline due to its familiar structure which paralleled the "soft" approach.

Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* would reorient the discipline's perception of the realism framework that Machiavelli contributed to. Hobbes additionally established a philosophy that justifies the state, a political institution that would be central to future works. Hobbes' approach is more akin to works of political theorists than Machiavelli's observation-grounded style due to his use of hypotheticals and reason rather than historical description. Yet, the claims that Hobbes proposed would persist in many of the discipline's core assumptions. In his infamous notion of the "state of nature," humans are characterized as ruthless, security-driven creatures whose default is independence. Society is non-existent in the anarchic state of nature as life is "nasty, brutish, and short." To escape this undesirable condition, individuals form a "social contract," an agreement to relinquish some of the freedoms they enjoyed in the state of nature to a sovereign in exchange for security. The monarch would be the authority to run the state, and citizens would benefit from the safety that the state was obligated to provide as they would indulge in more productive practices (Roskin, 1999). The social contract is the legitimization of the sovereign as the holder of power. Yet, despite the presence of nation-states today, the state of nature is prevalent in today's international system. With no global governance, nations are thought to be similar to the individuals in the state of nature, in perpetual conflict over power and security. This is another core assumption of the international relations theory of realism. However, accepting the state of nature may be unfounded as Hobbes' framework is based on little empirical evidence. The environment described in *Leviathan* is a hypothetical, unlikely scenario in which humans are segmented, isolated, and nonrelational beings, or as Hobbes' writes, "sprung out of the earth, suddenly like mushrooms, come to full maturity without all kinds of engagement to each other" (Hobbes, quoted in Dryzek & Leonard). Whether or not this portrayal of human nature is accurate, political scientists are inspired by this view and see international relations as reflective of an anarchic state of nature.

Furthermore, the social contract does not exist. Citizens did not physically sign a legally binding document agreeing to create a sovereign. The social contract is a theoretical construct

that illustrates citizens' rights and obligations to their governments and the government to their citizens. Still, other "social contract theorists" would go on to modify Hobbes' social contract. John Locke would flip the script, minimizing the state's power and focusing on their minimalist essentials, "life, liberty, and property." Rousseau would honor the collective "general will" over the individual, and the social contract would serve as admittance into that collective (Roskin, 1999). Political science's dependence on the assumptions surrounding the state of nature and the social contract persists even with its dedication to empiricism, informing knowledge about the power structure between citizens and the state as well as the international system. However, the evolution of realism does elaborate on the influence theories have in producing new frameworks. Locke's and Rousseau's ideas inspired a theoretical perspective to counter realism, liberalism, which focused simultaneously on freedom and cooperation for mutual benefit. Not only do the underlying assumptions of realism play a role in society's expectations of how humans and institutions interact, but they also engender the construction of complimenting or conflicting theories that also alter perceptions of policymakers and academics.

Positivism's Influence

While the 16th and 18th centuries saw strides in political philosophy, the distant academic fields of the sciences had world-shattering discoveries that would revolutionize culture. Technological innovations pushed the limits of human perceptions. Absolute truth seemed possible as new phenomena were able to be ascertained. As methods and tools improved the scope of research, enthusiasm for the natural sciences peaked in the 19th century (Roskin, 1999). Scientific standards and terminology permeated across academia. The scientific method's approach to ontology rationalized perceptions to honor observations based on sensory experience rather than intuition. With deductive reasoning, the scientific method called on experts to test hypotheses using collected data to prove theories. This contrasted with *inductive* reasoning, which had the data collection process come first which would then determine theory-building. The ideology of the "positive" sciences grew from this development and would honor objective proof based on empirical observation and dismiss conceptual theories.

Scholars took note, and empiricism became an achievable goal as universal truths temporally and spatially independent of environment were viewed as increasingly possible. The positivist movement lead to a desire to apply an empirical framework to the study of humans. The social sciences were born from the belief that individuals could be measured, tested, and understood similarly to objects in the natural sciences. Philosophy's accuracy was dismissed as it lacked certainty and could not assuredly support claims with objective evidence. The purview of politics was shared by positivists and interpretivists, breaking up the monopoly philosophy had on the study of power. Positivists, like Comte, compared politics to science, seeing power dynamics as a "social physics" which could produce knowledge of infallible laws of human behavior (Roskin, 1999).

The core of positivism was a dedication to objectivity, and this sentiment would reverberate throughout political science's methodology, scope, and frameworks. Positivism believed mathematical proofs and scientific verification must support any assertion of general truth. Research aimed for reliability, as deductive reasoning required that theories be tested and proved false. Researchers would study social forces that could be quantifiably measured and circumstances that could be easily controlled and repeated. Elections and demographic studies were commonplace under this framework, as many variables could be consistent and researchers

could return after a period of time and collect more data. Data from informal institutions is largely outside political scientists' hands, making research seem unbiased and objective.

Additionally, the study of politics borrowed from other social sciences affected by positivism. Lasswell (1936) saw several disciplines influencing the methods of political science. Borrowing from cultural anthropologist and clinical psychology tradition, long and technical interviews were conducted to ascertain demographic information and social psychologists and sociologists studied historical works to compare current data. A common desire for a cosmopolitan tautology was infectious among social scientists, influencing political science to derive many of its frameworks from the developments of other disciplines.

Political science is an imitative discipline. Its relative youth has given rise to its derivative nature. It was not until the 20th century that political science became a distinct school of thought separate from social science. Borrowing from the ideas of other research communities, political scientists would have a vast array of tools to choose from, each with its own unique history and context. Under such conditions, it was inevitable then that fragmentation would occur. Although the acceptance of differing paradigms widens the range of analyses possible, it will sometimes lead to contradictory outcomes. Political science's second-hand intellectual and scientific base would affect the continued vacillation between normative and objective, two opposed aspirations, and this wavering will be a leitmotif throughout its life.

The Birth of a Discipline

Politics was an area of objective study under the sphere of influence of the social sciences preceding the political science's creation. Although research on governments and individuals acting within the power dynamics of political institutions was done during this time, political studies were without a community that differentiated itself from political theory or the general social sciences. While political science journals existed (Political Science Quarterly founded in 1886 and the Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Sciences in 1890), they were either a part of the short-lived Political Science Association or cojoined with American Social Science Association (Gunnell, 2006). Political science needed an organization to call their own to be independent and determine the conduct of their research.

Following an increase of colleges with political science schools in the late 19th century, the American Political Science Association (APSA) was founded in 1903. The creation and persistence of political science's own association was salient as it marked the acknowledgment of academia that political science was a sovereign discipline. Without the contextualization of other areas of interest, the APSA formed a space to discuss current findings on politics among professors, lawyers, students, and other scholars. The APSA was unique from previous efforts as the association was committed to unbiased research devoid of political influence. The APSA constitution was clear that their membership would "not assume a partisan position upon any question of practical politics" (Gunnell, 2006). Inspiration from the positivist philosophy dictated the APSA's distinction between the empirical political scientist and the policymaker. The association's earliest ambitions believed evidence-based, value-free research to be an obligation and the superior way to support states in governing. Henry Jones Ford spoke optimistically in APSA's second annual meeting of "supply[ing] general principles of guidance of statecraft" (Gunnell, 2006). The "general principles" that Ford refers to are the universal truths that positivists felt were possible. Yet in contrast to the positivist tradition, political scientists would be suggesting the general principles rather than letting the data be used in other's analyses. By

providing officials with these principles, they would be advocating for how the world ought to be. Thus, political science saw its aim as descriptive and prescriptive from the onset. Political science's research aimed to improve general welfare not only by expanding the pool of knowledge that policymakers can pull from but also by providing normative conclusions to steer policymakers in the direction of what the experts thought would maximize welfare.

Frank Goodnow, the initial APSA president, spoke of forming a disciplinary identity as a priority during his first presidential address. The core of this discussion surrounded the position of political theory within the association. Political theory's non-observational ethic was outdated compared to improved empirical data collection methods. When scientific hypotheses could be proven, unchecked and unverifiable hypothetical theorization could threaten society. Empiricism was seen to provide the discipline with authority and recognition in politics and academia Political theory was accepted to belong under the purview of political science by necessity. Control over political theory would ensure that theorists would not delegitimize political science, as their unsubstantiated claims could be easily confused with the objective statements of political scientists. Furthermore, while some viewed political theory as its distinct vocation, others with decision-making power believed that political theory was an essential backbone of politics. Being a human construct, government and power bespeak the prevalence of theory and ideas. Beneath every constitution is a set of underlying assumptions about how the world ought to be. A discipline that claimed to study politics with no room for theorizing about these assumptions would be incomprehensible (Gunnell, 2006). The APSA's inclusion of theorists and scientists in the association made prescription and description valid goals. Political Science's most prevalent organization was founded on methodological mélange. This decision would cause problems, as holding the same scholars responsible for both unbiased scientific research and normative policy prescription was contradictory, fostering strife and culture wars.

The rest of this disciplinary history will be focused on the APSA and its journal, the *American Political Science Review* (APSR). However, there are issues with centering the discussion of political science's organizational realm around the APSA as the association is not wholly representative of the discipline. Many influential works within the field appear in books or other journals, discrediting the APSA as the arbiter of political science knowledge. Sigelman puts it best when he wrote, "Rather than seeing the *Review* as a faithful reflection of the discipline, then, I liken it to a funhouse mirror that reshapes the images that parade before it and thereby transforms them, individual and collectively, into something new" while asserting that "the *Review* has played an important role in constructing political science." Sigelman further argues in his version of a disciplinary history that political science's fragmentation "left a vacuum that the *Review* came to fill by default. It became a – even the – primary gatekeeper for political science research" (Sigelman, 2006). The APSA acts as the disciplinary power of political scholarship, shaping the research agenda through its influence to publish works while omitting others. Despite the deprivation of a common identity, the journal filled the role of aegis. The APSA found success even without a shared paradigm because of its "organized sections" within the association, which allowed scholars with common interests to discuss research. Essentially acting as institutionalized subdisciplines, these organized sections were part of what made the APSA the most prominent political science association with 15,000 members as of

2005 (Grant, 2005). The authority that the APSA has justifies it as the object of historical evaluation in a discipline of discord[7].

The Traditionalist Approach

The approach associated with political science's origins is the "traditionalist approach." This era centered research around institutions; the main units of analysis were states and political parties, as they were seen as the drivers of political action. The discipline was entirely Western-centered during this period, and as such, much of the scholarship assumed that the governments being studied were democracies. Even still, the context in which studies took place mattered. Some academics saw history to be contextually salient, while others dismissed temporal frameworks. Regardless, work at this time focused on region-specific issues, and were rarely comparative. Studies had a balance of description and prescription, concerning their research with general, as well as midlevel theories. Yet, given the youth of the discipline and the social sciences as a whole, the traditionalist approach was characterized by qualitative research rather than quantitative. Typologies were often used, meaning that many studies used hypothetical but ideal conditions that would describe a system or event in its purest form (Chilcote, 1994). Traditionalist measured "social facts," a term derived from sociology meaning external and potentially coercive influences that could sway individuals to act in ways that they otherwise would not (Durkheim, 1895). Traditionalists saw understanding social facts as imperative to recognizing how legislation could incentivize certain behaviors. As the traditionalist approach developed, more emphasis was placed on statistical measures to measure social facts.

TABLE 1. Primary Purpose of *Review* Articles

	Percentage of Articles with This Primary Purpose									
Decade	Consideration of Normative Issues	Policy Prescription or Criticism	Policy Prescription or Criticism and Presentation of Empirical Results	Presentation of Empirical Results	Presentation of Empirical Results and Formalization	Formalization	Conceptualization or Theory Building	Inventory/ Survey/ Critique	Consideration of Methodological Issues	Other/NA
1906–16 (n = 134)	2.2	0.0	10.4	82.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.7	3.7
1917–26 (n = 117)	17.9	9.4	11.1	54.7	0.0	0.9	1.7	2.6	1.7	0.0
1927–36 (n = 144)	19.4	2.8	6.3	61.8	0.0	0.0	4.9	2.8	1.4	0.7
1937–46 (n = 106)	29.2	4.7	17.9	39.6	0.0	0.0	7.5	0.9	0.0	0.0
1947–56 (n = 218)	16.5	4.1	4.1	64.7	0.0	0.5	7.3	0.9	0.9	0.9
1957–66 (n = 318)	16.0	0.3	2.5	62.3	0.0	0.9	7.9	6.3	2.8	0.9
1967–76 (n = 414)	9.2	0.0	0.5	67.6	2.9	6.3	7.7	2.2	3.4	0.2
1977–86 (n = 430)	17.2	0.0	0.5	60.7	3.5	10.9	3.0	1.9	2.1	0.2
1987–96 (n = 385)	18.4	0.3	0.0	55.3	0.0	21.3	1.8	1.8	1.0	0.0
1997–2006 (n = 297)	19.7	0.0	0.3	53.7	0.8	18.0	2.2	1.4	3.9	0.0
Overall (n = 2563)	*16.1*	*1.2*	*2.9*	*60.6*	*1.1*	*8.6*	*4.5*	*2.3*	*2.2*	*0.5*

Table 1: Primary Purpose of *Review* Articles (Sigelman, 2006).

The traditionalist approach dominated for the first five decades of the discipline's life between the years 1906 and the early 1950s. In Lee Sigelman's (2006) article *The Coevolution of Political Science and the American Political Science Review,* he shows categorizes the scholarship present in the APSR throughout its first century of publication, as seen in Table 1.

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[7] The alternative would be to research every subdisciplines histories and influences, which beyond the scope of this project.

While the first decade saw empirical studies the popular form within the discipline - with 82% of the articles being presentations of empirical evidence and 2.2% being normative-focused work – political science became more comfortable with normativity as the years went on. Between 1906 and 1926, the percentage of articles that had a normative element jumped from 2.2% to 19.4%, peaking in the APSR's fourth decade at 29.6%. Purely empirical studies dropped to the lowest share it will ever be in the history of the discipline in the fourth decade as well, standing at 39.6%. This seemed to be an afterthought for many political scientists, as articles which focused methodological remained relatively low during this era. Prescriptive analysis cumulatively made up around a quarter of the discipline's scholarship during this time. Toward the end of the traditionalist era, the APSR garnered significant recognition, as during the fifth decade, it produced 218 original articles over that ten-year period.

Behavioralism

Behavioralism was a reaction to the traditionalist's growingly normative approach. Its scholarship was a mixture of experience and theory and used methods which were inspired by the natural sciences. This can be shown in Table 1. During the 1960's and 1970's, articles in the APSR were dominated by empiricism, making up 70% of total scholarship (Sigelman, 2006). Using deductive reasoning, this framework saw the scientific method as the optimal way to pursue scholarship for ideas to be fully understood before use. This contrasted with inductive reasoning which took data and then formed theories based on patterns. Behavioralism would opt to forgo prescription, but rather provide data which tested theories based on previous experience to prove or disprove previous conceptions. As such, research focused on descriptions of how things are, rather than how things ought to be. Behavioralists believed that implications be determined by outside observers. It was not the role of the political scientist to provide recommendations, but rather to provide the data. Behavioralists felt that contextually-independent, general truths could be more applicable to policymakers and aimed to be as objective as possible. Data could be "value-free" according to behavioralist, and it was possible for researchers to be unbiased (Chilcote, 1994). During this era, political scientists believed they were coming closer to achieving its potential as a true "science."

Behavioralism was a bottom-up approach. The focus was on individuals and their behavior and beliefs, variables which could be easily quantified through polling. Power dynamics between humans, rather than institutions, were seen to be the driving forces behind political action according to this framework. As such, the prerogative of behavioralists was to study the individuals who made up these institutions. By using mainly quantitative measures to evaluate culture and public opinion, aphorisms or causes and effects were believed to be possible. Behavioralism and its methods were a natural progression for political science because of its positivist grounding. Behavioralists further rejected political philosophers – even more so than the traditionalists who at least acknowledged the value of philosophic contributions. It was common to hear the labeling of methods which were not to the standard of behavioralists as "metaphysics."

External and internal driving factors encouraged the discipline to advocate for more empirical research. Methodological development within political science and in other social sciences raised enthusiasm for the potential of repeatable, statistical measures to understand political phenomena. This lead to a belief that causation could exist in political science, and that individuals are predictable and deterministic. Outside of academia, the world of the 1950s and

1960s looked drastically different from the past. The outcomes of World War II and the realities of the Cold War shifted scholarly priorities. Political science began to study developing countries and include scholars from Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The literature on corruption, decolonialization, federalism, and instability expanded during this era. Western political scientists had a newfound interest in these areas due to the battle for ideological superiority and the prevalence of proxy wars. Theories that promoted Western values of democracy and liberalism – including modernization theory – became popular during this time as well. Political science feared totalitarianism in all countries, so there was a shift in focus to political polling data, the impact of elites and bureaucrats, and election statistics. A growing sentiment for stability was prominent during the post-WWII era, leading to a stronger passion to have a complete understanding of the world for political science. The fervor for behavioralism did not last though. Several critiques were mounted against the behavioralists which caused a shift towards a post-behavioral movement.

Post-Behavioralism: A Return to Form

The positivist shift caused by the behavioral revolution gave rise to disciplinary self-reflection during the post-behavioralism era. There was a newfound reacceptance of theory and normativity as potential alternatives to study political phenomena. As opposed to the behavioralist who saw that research could be value-free, post-behavioralists saw fact and value as inseparable; any facts pronounced by scientists had frameworks and assumptions underlying them. The goal behind research during this era was action and change. Political science was seen as a tool to advocate for policies that could lead to better governance, leading to a reintroduction of normative research (Chiclcote, 1994). Table 1 shows the rebound of normative research from 1970's and onward, going from just under 10% to about 20% of articles in the APSR (Sigelman, 2006).

What pushed political science into the post-behavioralism era was largely internal steering factors. Even despite the gains in scientific advancement, many saw empiricism as weakening the discipline overall. The u-turn and reacceptance of theory seems strange given the technological, scientific, and methodological advances in the behavioralism era. Political science's original desired path was an eventual acceptance of empirical analysis as the optimal tool for studying political behavior. The tools were present, yet political scientists rejected the absolute positivism of the behavioral era in favor of the reintegration of humanistic and normative approaches. Having made significant progress towards their scientific vision, the upper echelons of the APSA - and political science more generally - began to discern the problematic aspects of a social science rooted in positivism. The shift was marked by a 1969 speech by then APSA president David Easton who critiqued behavioralism for empirical conservatism, a loss of touch with reality, over-sophistication, and politicization of the profession. He called for a new movement "bound together by… a deep discontent with the direction of contemporary political research" (Easton 1969, quoted in Berndston, 1975). Despite forming a new community within the discipline, he acknowledged that post-behavioralism did not have a core ideology or belief structure, but instead would oppose a previous worldview. Easton hoped to move political science away from "exact trivial knowledge" and towards "application-oriented" research (Berndston, 1975).

The post-behavioralism movement critiqued empiricism on multiple fronts. One was that the quest for general truth operated on a fundamental assumption: human behavior in one time or

place could apply to behavior with different spatial and temporal contexts. Given similar institutional conditions, empiricism expects people to act the same and experience similar outcomes. A structural understanding of human nature is necessary to propose covering laws. During the post-behavioral revolution, more emphasis was placed on human agency. While environments can influence human beings, political actors also influence their surroundings. People can alter outcomes, making causality difficult to prove using empirical models as time and institutions progress.

Behaviorism constrained the field to the recent past and present, limiting applicability. Sensory-oriented observation necessitates a short-time span. The models and data sets from the far past are invalidated when tools for gathering information improve, keeping political science from extrapolating from long-term trends. (Lasswell, 1950). Additionally, human behavior can only be recorded in the present, as actions are contingent on time. Limiting variables can be easier when research is replicated within a very short time span. Alternatively, reoccurring events such as elections can be used to extrapolate information while avoiding the issue of repeating studies over a long period as many variables are likely controlled for. Reoccurring events became a common focus of the behavioralist movement as empirical observations are easily obtained and comparable with other phenomena, simplifying the data collection process.

The applicability of these findings was limited due to the few events that were reoccurring and the changing conditions across time within these experiments. The studies were only valuable to the specific conditions in that time and space. Political research is context-dependent and exogenous to the object of study while being defined by the environment surrounding it (Lawson 2008). Institutions evolve. Conceptions of identities fluctuate. The population composition may change over decades. Democracy, voting systems, and forms of governance transform over centuries. These factors influence outcomes, and the positivist belief that truth was independent of context neglected all of these facts. The ambition for universal truths justifies a short-time horizon as it assumes a nontemporal human nature, but it does not account for systematic changes.

Quantitative research can be limiting in scope, usefulness, and feeling. The variables that can be measured quantitatively are finite, narrowing the scope of political science and the aid it can provide to promoting good governance. Gunnell (2006) argues that an emphasis on empiricism distracted the discipline from "practical concerns." During the post-behavioral era, others felt that being "self-consciously scientific" in the mid-20th century inhibited the potential political science had to contribute to social progress during a transformative time in history (Rici, 1984, quoted in Dryzek & Leonard 1988). Behavioralists justified their approach by suggesting that the value in their work was to be found by policymakers who would interpret meaning. Yet, the issues policymakers value may not be related to behavioral research. Additionally, empirical political science was full of statistical jargon unreadable to policymakers. It is unfair to ascribe the responsibility of interpretation to a government official. The usefulness of these studies - and the discipline as a whole – suffers as findings are constrained to their temporal and spatial context.

The more damning critiques attacked the core assumptions of the behavioralist's framework. Opponents objected to the possibility of value-free research. Biases influence conclusions in the social sciences. David Welch (2005) describes the post-behavioralist view: "They insist that there is no objective social 'reality' independent of our experience or

construction of it, and hence objective 'knowledge' of such a world is impossible." An individual's perceptions are tied to their interpretation of the senses. Therefore, preconceived notions will necessarily impact observations.

Post-behavioralists argue further that the framework of "value-free" science is paradoxical – honoring verifiability is a value. While empiricism rejects normativity due to its need for assumptions not based on sensory input, the undergirding philosophy of positivism begins with a value judgment. Even more, political science cannot be value-free in its research as interpretation plays a role in selecting methodology and data measures, impacting outcomes. Searing (1970, quoted in Chilcote 1994) dives deep into this argument. Issues of value judgment occur during different stages of the research process. Although bias is possible during the first stages of research (problem selection and concept formation), it is unlikely to occur. However, partiality becomes more prevalent during data selection, interpretation, theory construction, and verification. Behavioralists aimed to remove bias from research, but the discipline found the effort tiring and gave up hope in achieving value-freedom.

The post-behavioral era lasted from 1969, when Easton gave his APSA speech, to the late 1980s. During this time, the discipline saw an increase in consideration for normative issues and a decrease in the use of empirical results within studies. Additionally, formal modeling – a method used to explain relationships between variables – began to rise during this time. As Behavioralism started to wane, scholars began to focus research on critiquing different methodologies by devoting articles to the subject (Sigelman, 2006).

The Paradigm Dilemma

In English, the name "political science" uses the singular denunciation – one politics, one science. Yet languages like French and Spanish acknowledge the pluralistic nature of the discipline, and their translations reflect such. Naming the subject "sciences politques and ciencias politícas" illustrates the vast differences in subdisciplinary activity (Roskin, 1999). The diversity of ideological backgrounds in organized sections makes it difficult to establish a disciplinary identity because their previous experience informs present actions. Fragmentation furthers the split, as the continued division will isolate the development of theories and methods within subdisciplines. If sections rarely interact, their progress is unknown to each other. Frameworks within subdisciplines have origins that hardly relate to one another, making a history of political science challenging to evaluate. There may be subdisciplinary histories, but the absence of a universal disciplinary paradigm makes a holistic history of the discipline - and by extension, identity - incomplete. Even still, the salience of shared history can be helpful. The alternative is to remain oblivious about the contributions of the scholars who work aside us. Ignorance only eclipses our self-knowledge as a discipline.

Political science's lack of cohesion has been noticed by its scholars. Sheldon Wolin (1968), a prominent APSA member in the 20th century, argued that although political science has a loose set of assumptions, it has "no dominant theoretical paradigm" (quoted in Chilcote, 1994). Wolin is referencing the understanding popularized by Thomas Kuhn (1970), who defines paradigms as "research based upon one or more scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice" (quoted in Chilcote, 1994). According to Kuhn, scientists will influence future work by developing theories and methods under specific frameworks that become accepted by an entire discipline as true. These methods and theories become paradigms and inform the

discipline's rules and norms. Anomalies contradicting paradigms are eventually found, leading to an intellectual revolution where ideological destruction allows a new framework to rise from the previous' ashes. When an alternative paradigm is able to prove its superiority, the discipline's worldview is reborn as something familiar yet also new. A new paradigm will provide an epistemic community with a different framework and rules to approach their work, restarting the cycle. Kuhn rejects a linear ideological history, acknowledging instead the cycle of conflict which arises from a constant reassessment of ideas. "Science destroys its past," Kuhn argues (1970, quoted in Dryzek & Leonard, 1988), as a progressive history makes some practices invalid, shifting research questions, standards, and techniques. For example, no one within academia would be taken seriously if they argued in favor of the "Flat Earth Theory." The scientific community has proved that the world is round, and this accepted achievement has gone on to inform future research.[8] Past paradigms can be effectively challenged if another idea is proven to better explain a phenomenon – usually through empirical evidence or logic.

By nature, political science cannot have a universal paradigm. The contingency of human nature complicates ideological destruction. To prove the supremacy of a paradigm, one needs to show that the previous framework cannot accurately describe or predict a phenomenon given new information. As Dryzek and Leonard (1988) write in their account of political science's origin, "to evaluate a theory… is to write a particular sort of history in which the stance in question is seen as rationally superior to its competitors, past and present." The conceptions which form humans and institutions (i.e., the objects of politics) are temporal; their power dynamics and foundational beliefs are characterized as wavering and mailable. Regime leadership or government systems may differ depending on the moment, making general theories potentially null if applied to the past or future. As such, Kuhn labels political science as "pre-paradigmatic," as it does not have a shared framework that informs its research.

What is more, political scientists, directly and indirectly, influence these fundamental beliefs undergirding politics. As the discipline matures and becomes more respected, scholarly theories will impel governments to react differently than in the past. When understandings of previous events are used to inform present action, outcomes differ. Thus, there cannot be paradigm shifts in political science as their findings add to the contingency of politics. Only when superiority is universally accepted in both time and space can paradigms be challenged; otherwise, paradigms continue to be considered valid and instead of being rejected, are built upon (Dryzek & Leonard, 1988). The discipline remains married to old theories while further developing them at the same time.

Some may prefer a multi-paradigmatic discipline. Political science's plurality of disciplines - originating from its various material - necessitates a plurality of paradigms. Different islands highlight distinct topics and take influence from different thinkers. There will be no comparison to the natural sciences' periodic table, an unquestioned truth (Roskin, 1999). While the natural sciences enjoy the privilege of a "hegemonic" shared history, political science's multiple paradigms bifurcate its influences. Unlike a paradigmatic discipline, political science shares no agreement on progressive development. Scholars allow many competing

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[8] Although, to the Flat Earther's credit, paradigms do not necessarily need to be based on evidence. Truth would help foster universal acceptance of an idea, but faith in a theory drives its relevance

accounts for intellectual movements, research programs, and figures. Its variety of histories reflects its plurality of identities (Dryzek & Leonard, 1988).

A complete history of every subdiscipline is beyond the scope of my research. Does a general disciplinary history of political science still have value? According to the implications of Kuhn's paradigm, a common past would aid in providing a cohesive set of norms and values. Even if there has been no ideological destruction, I would argue that signs of disciplinary progress still can be found. Despite the segmented ideologies, political science is connected by loose governance, the APSA.[9] Judging the validity of an article's approach can be done, but only within the temporal and spatial context of the problems they were designed to confront. Even if the theories from political science could not result in a universal paradigm, it is possible that the methodology was able to produce better outcomes for people and policymakers. The contingency of the present should not immediately delegitimize past work. A self-reflective history informs what past ideas are applicable today while acknowledging their limitations and potential improvements. Dryzek and Leonard (1988) reflect this sentiment elegantly, "good disciplinary history can improve our abilities to make good, contextual choices by making available a varied menu of alternative approaches to our subject matter, along with evidence about when each tradition is likely to be useful, and when it is likely to fail or be irrelevant." My research aimed to track a disciplinary conflict as it developed while shedding light on the priorities that scholars generally shared. Although acknowledging the costs and benefits of methodologies did provide political scientists with suggestions on how to conduct research, they could not prove the superiority of certain methods. Thus, the struggle of fragmentation and methodological diversity continues and the question of what a multi-paradigmatic nature means for the future survival of the discipline remains.

NAVIGATING THE MODERN DAY

The post-behavioral movement was not successful in reinvigorating political science. A 1980's Carnegie Foundation survey of about 3000 academics spanning multiple disciplines asked participants if the developments in their fields were exciting. Political science ranked dead last out of 32 in this survey. Then in a 1989 study, when asked, "when I look at a new issue of my discipline's major journal, I rarely find an article that interests me." PS, again, ranked the least enthusiastic out of 7 disciplines (Sigelman, 2006). The two decades following Easton's address did not bring the optimism that the former president thought it would, and instead, pessimism permeated throughout the discipline.

Then what was the outcome of the post-behavioral movement? What did scholarship look like during those years? The discipline experienced a return to form with the rise of a movement called "new institutionalism," transitioning focus away from a bottom-up approach with the individual at the center of the analysis and instead opting to study governments, systems, and group power dynamics. These topics were prevalent in the discipline's early years, and passion was revived for the subject with the new developments in the post-WWII, post-Cold War, and hegemonic eras. Critical theories such as Systems Theory, Rational-Choice Theory, and Democratic Peace Theory were created and utilized to more effectively illustrate growingly complex institutions. Other new developments included addressing the interdependence of the

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[9] As mentioned before, though the APSA is not a complete reflection of the discipline, the status of political science can be articulated through the APSA's publications

global economy with a new interest in both comparative and international political economy, as well as testing old models using new methodological tools. Although the topics discussed in the behavioral revolution were still addressed (e.g., election results, demographic data, political attitudes, etc.), new institutionalism and other subjects signified a sign of accepted coexistence between the soft and hard sciences.

Referencing back to Sigelman's work (see Table 1), *The Coevolution of American Political Science and the American Political Science Association*, scholarship during the '90s through the 2000s was a more diverse mixture of approaches compared to previous eras. Most noticeable was the increase in normative research articles. Although empiricism remained at the forefront of published works, normative analysis gained traction, representing about half of the journal. Compared to the previous era where normative research contributed 17% of articles, by the mid-2000s, this number jumped to 19.7%. This was accompanied by a decrease in empirical results from 60.7% to 53.7% in the same year. Other interesting trends in subject matter included the rise of formalization[1011] and methodological issues. However, an important caveat to acknowledge is the significant drop in published articles within the *Review*, as the steep growth of the journal Behavioral Revolution and the period immediately following the Post-Behavioral era did not follow into the new millennium. Articles published fell from 430 during the journal's peak (1977-86) to 297 (1997-2008) (Sigelman, 2006). These trends are likely to continue as the growth of other forms of publication, the rise of social media, and the increasing complexity of issues will incentivize a broader range of research methodologies across subdisciplines and a drifting away from old forms of communicating scholarly activity, such as journals the APSR, and towards internet publications.

Empirical evidence suggests that scholars rarely interact with eachother, giving credence to the Archipelago analogy – islands are separated and rarely interact. Utilizing the reference list in *A New Handbook of Political Science,* Goodin and Klingemann (1998) conduct a bibliometric analysis to determine who the prevalent influencers within the discipline are, what subdiscipline they originate from, and which epistemic communities they penetrate. The calculation assumes that each chapter provides an adequate review of the literature surrounding the subdiscipline it centers around. By measuring the number of times an author is cited across all, Goodin and Klingemann illustrate the integrators and influencers of the discipline. The bibliometric analysis finds that most political science scholars are "specialists," only contributing to their primary vocation. Out of the 1630 scholars referenced throughout eight overviews of different subdisciplines, only two-thirds of those authors are cited once throughout the entirety of the *New Handbook*. Those referenced ten or more times enter the elite group of the "most frequently referenced authors" and consist of 35 scholars. An evaluation of the topics these authors wrote on confirms the idea of different eras in political science. The most frequently referenced authors wrote influential works that informed the behavioralism era's ideology and the post-behavioral borne rational choice revolution. A separate group known as the "integrators" who are in five or more chapters entails 21 authors out of 1630. This group can be subdivided even more; Goodin and Klingemann create a group of "powerhouses" who are among the most cited within the discipline, within their subdiscipline, and are frequently cited in at least five subdisciplines. Very

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[10] Formalization is defined as the standardization of processes and outputs (Tetrick and Camburin, 2004).

few political scientists have their ideas integrated within the entirety of political science, and the same can be said for the subdisciplines. By taking the most referenced authors in each subdiscipline and comparing them with the group of integrators, Goodin and Klingemann show that "there are highly differentiated sub-disciplinary communities." Theit findings suggest that Political Methodology and Political Institutions lack influencers, while Comparative Politics and Political Economy have authors referenced throughout the discipline. Additionally, the work of Public Policy and Political Theory has a relatively high number of influencers. Goodin and Klingemann's bibliometric analysis substantiates the claim that political science exists on separate islands and that the Polyscinians are isolated.

Disciplinary Fragmentation

As referenced several times throughout this essay, political science is marked by an excessive number of subdisciplines that are somewhat self-contained and hold differing paradigms. I have provided intuitive rationales for this split; however, I recognize that I have not provided hard evidence for this claim. J. Tobin Grant (2005), in his article *What Divides Us? The Image and Orientation of Political Science*, empirically proves that segmentation exists while illustrating what the divide looks like. Using multidimensional scaling (MDS), a graphical method that shows the similarity and dissimilarity between two variables, Grant can graph where scholars gravitate and sketch a holistic image of the discipline[12]. The data represented in the MDS model comes from the population of different APSA organized sections, a classification of the type of phenomenon discussed within an organized section (specifically whether it is domestic or international), and the methodology used to research its subject (hard vs. soft approaches). Additionally, the topography of the math illustrates the similarity of concentration of work. In other words, the area shaded darker shows groups who have shared questions and methodologies.

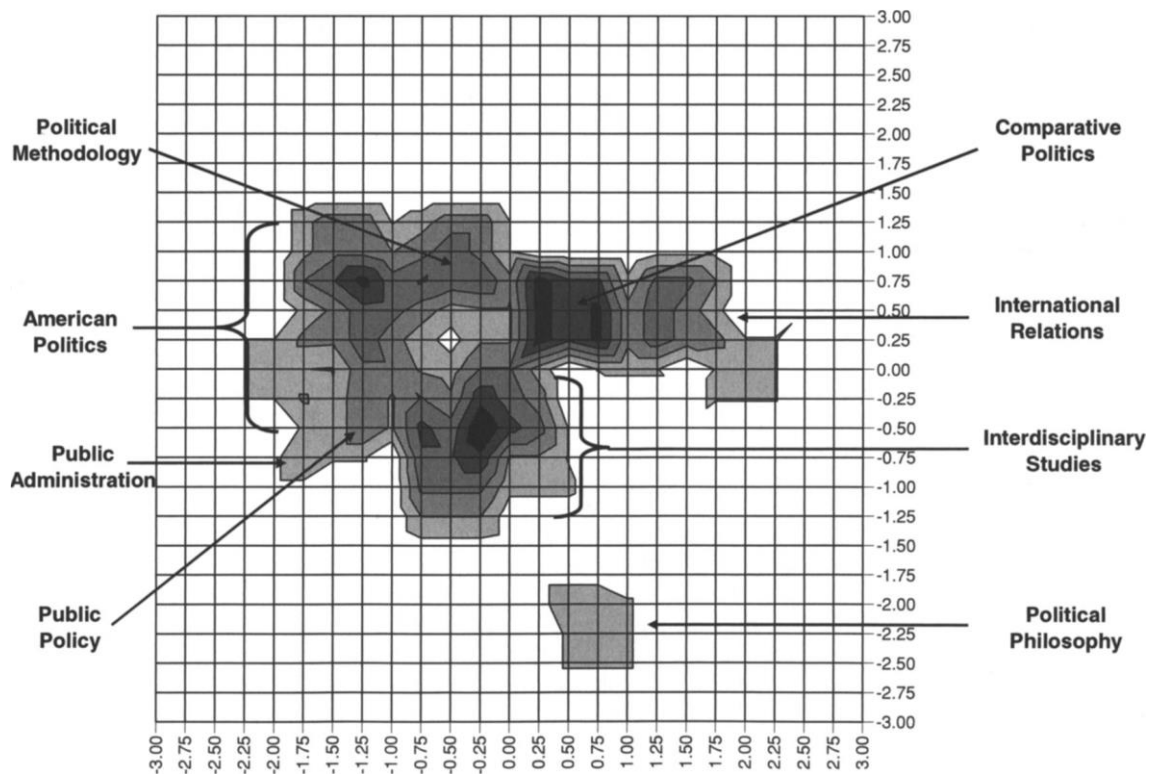[12] This graph was an influence for the archipelago analogy.

Figure 1: Concentration of Political Scientists (MDS of APSA Organized Sections)

The MDS chart's X-axis (OS1 on Table 2) represents the domestic versus international spectrum of organized sections. The organized sections that usually focus on domestic politics are placed on the left, and those that focus on international politics are placed on the right. Organized sections are the APSA's institutional recognition and promotion of subdisciplines. The APSA fosters the creation of groups centered around shared scholarly interests, working to foster communities that share research goals. Although scholars are not obligated to work within one of these sections, many are a part of one or more. Grant lists approximately 45 different organized sections (See Table 2.). To provide more applicable conclusions to the discipline, Grant then classifies them into eight related sections that could be considered subdisciplines (American Politics, Comparative Politics, Interdisciplinary Studies, International Relations, Political Methodology, Public Administration, Public Policy, and Political Philosophy).

The Y-axis (Dimension 2) illustrates the hard versus soft dimension, referencing the type of methodology used by political scientists. To review, "hard" approaches are associated with the positivist school of thought and desire to establish universal laws through the use quantitative and qualitative data, such as mathematical and statistical research or structured interviews. "Soft" approaches are not as strict about the quality of data they collect and find value in the use of humanistic, contextual, or philosophic methods. Anecdotes and historical analyses are often used in soft approaches to provide conclusions on specific cases. The hard versus soft division is not necessarily a dichotomy between empirical versus normative claims. Still, they can be an applicable proxy measure as the softer sciences tend to more normative conclusions. Organized Sections with higher Y-values were classified as having harder, more empirical approaches, while lower Y-values were associated with softer, more normative methods.

Table 2 shows the positions that each organized section is graphed on according to the two dimensions[13]. Additionally, it lists the order of the sections based on lowest to highest values. For example, the most domestic organized section is "state politics and policy" as it has the lowest dimension 1 value at -2.0, as such it is ranked number 1. Meanwhile, "International Security and Arms Control" is ranked the most international with a score of 2.9 and a ranking of 25. The softest organized section is "Foundation of Political Thought," while the hardest organized sections are "Political Communication" and "Political Methodology."

Two-Dimensional Mapping of APSA Organized Sections and APSA Divisions
(Rank from Lowest to Highest in Parentheses)

	OS1	OS2	DIV1	DIV2
Comp. Politics of Advanced Indust. Societies²	na	na	0.1 (15)	1.3 (23)
Comparative Democratization	1.4 (22)	0.7 (18)	-0.4 (10)	-0.1 (12)
Comparative Politics	0.7 (19)	0.5 (16)	0.2 (16)	0.3 (15)
Comparative Politics of Developing Countries²	na	na	0.0 (14)	0.3 (15)
Conflict Processes	1.6 (23)	1.0 (21)	2.6 (26)	-1.0 (7)
Constitutional Law and Jurisprudence²	na	na	-1.8 (1)	-0.4 (10)
Ecological and Transformational Politics	0.4 (17)	-1.2 (3)	1.2 (22)	-1.9 (3)
Elections, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior¹	-1.4 (4)	1.1 (22)	-1.4 (2)	0.6 (18)
European Politics and Society	1.0 (21)	0.3 (14)	0.9 (19)	1.0 (20)
Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations	-1.0 (6)	-0.2 (11)	-0.2 (12)	0.0 (13)
Foreign Policy	1.6 (23)	0.6 (17)	0.9 (19)	0.0 (13)
Formal Theory²	na	na	1.1 (21)	0.3 (15)
Foundations of Political Thought	0.8 (20)	-2.1 (1)	-1.2 (3)	-1.2 (5)
Human Rights	1.4 (22)	-0.3 (10)	1.1 (21)	0.3 (15)
Information Technology and Politics	-0.2 (12)	0.3 (14)	-0.7 (8)	-1.5 (4)
International Collaboration²	na	na	1.5 (23)	1.0 (20)
International History and Politics	2.2 (24)	0.0 (12)	1.6 (24)	1.1 (21)
International Political Economy²	na	na	1.0 (20)	1.0 (20)
International Security and Arms Control	2.9 (25)	0.9 (20)	2.7 (27)	0.4 (16)
International Security²	na	na	2.2 (25)	-0.2 (11)
Law and Courts	-0.6 (8)	-1.0 (4)	-0.3 (11)	-0.5 (9)
Legislative Studies	-1.5 (3)	0.6 (17)	-0.3 (11)	1.0 (20)
New Political Science	0.3 (16)	-0.6 (7)	0.3 (17)	-0.7 (8)
Political Communication	-1.0 (6)	1.2 (23)	-1.0 (5)	1.1 (21)
Political Economy	0.6 (18)	0.6 (17)	-0.2 (12)	1.4 (24)
Political Methodology	-0.5 (9)	1.2 (23)	-0.4 (10)	0.8 (19)
Political Organizations and Parties	-0.9 (7)	0.7 (18)	-0.5 (9)	1.1 (21)
Political Psychology	-0.1 (13)	1.1 (22)	-1.1 (4)	-0.2 (11)
Political Thought and Philosophy²	na	na	-1.0 (5)	-1.1 (6)
Politics and History	0.1 (14)	-0.2 (11)	0.2 (16)	-0.1 (12)
Politics and Literature	0.6 (18)	-1.7 (2)	-0.3 (11)	-2.3 (1)
Politics of Communist & Former Com. Countries²	na	na	0.1 (15)	1.3 (23)
Presidency Research	-1.1 (5)	0.4 (15)	0.2 (16)	0.1 (14)
Public Administration	-1.4 (4)	-0.6 (7)	0.0 (14)	-1.2 (5)
Public Opinion and Political Participation²	na	na	-0.8 (7)	0.5 (17)
Public Policy	-0.9 (7)	-0.3 (10)	-0.1 (13)	0.5 (17)
Qualitative Methods	0.6 (18)	0.2 (13)	-0.3 (11)	0.0 (13)
Race, Ethnicity and Politics	-0.3 (11)	-0.4 (9)	-0.8 (7)	-0.1 (12)
Religion and Politics	0.2 (15)	-0.5 (8)	-0.9 (6)	-0.5 (9)
Representation and Electoral Systems	-0.6 (8)	0.8 (19)	0.3 (17)	0.1 (14)
Science, Technology, and Environmental Politics	-0.4 (10)	-1.2 (3)	0.4 (18)	1.2 (22)
State Politics and Policy	-2.0 (1)	0.0 (12)	-1.2 (3)	0.6 (18)
Teaching and Learning in Political Science²	na	na	0.1 (15)	-2.3 (1)
Undergraduate Education	-0.1 (13)	-0.2 (11)	-0.8 (7)	-2.1 (2)
Urban Politics	-1.9 (2)	-0.9 (5)	-1.2 (3)	0.6 (18)
Women and Politics	-0.3 (11)	-0.7 (6)	-0.7 (8)	0.3 (15)

Table 2: Two-Dimensional Mapping of APSA Organized Sections and APSA Divisions (Rank from Lowest to Highest in Parentheses)

While Table 2 may be helpful to establish how topics are spatially and methodologically focused, Figure 1 does a better job plotting the discipline's scholarship. Most political science is clustered in the scientific, or "hard," north. Empirical analyses spans across international and domestic topics, but the softer approaches remain neutral with regard to location. What is notable is that political philosophy is separated from the mass of political science, providing credence to the argument made in the past by prominent political scientists that political theory should be its vocation. The methodology of political theory is distinctive from the rest of the discipline,

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[13] "Div1" and "Div2" were alternative measures that shows the scholarly work of APSA annual meetings. I chose to discuss only the organized sections because I felt it connected better to this project as it elaborates on a choice to join something akin to a subdiscipline.

making their work unique to other scholarship. This finding supports Grant's conclusion that political science is divided by subdisciplines as opposed to methodologies, but methodologies often define most subdisciplines. The topographical peaks also elaborate on Grant's point. The concentration of comparative politics shows the subdiscipline's connection to common questions and methodologies. Comparative politics is followed by the second strongest concentration of a group of interdisciplinary studies, such as Religion and Politics, Women and Politics, History and Politics, and others. Another notable grouping is in American Politics, specifically in legislative studies.

It appears that unity is not feasible in political science. As informed by Grant's work, there is a mixture of approaches used by various subfields that extend from the empirical positivists to the normative traditionalists and philosophers. Fragmentation occurs due to the expansive and expanding nature of what political science studies – politics. Besides the inability to form a shared paradigm, recent external steering factors have also led to a separated discipline. As time has passed, the scope of political science has swelled. What has fallen under the purview of political science continues to grow as the world becomes more complicated. Recent phenomena such as the success of a few developing countries, hegemonic shifts, civil wars, changing demographics, populist leaders, global pandemics, new physical and cyber weapons, as well as global and regional inequalities have necessitated a plurality theories and frameworks. The circumstances that foster differences in methodology include technological improvements that have made data collection easier, globalization which has connected societies, and the internet which has awakened more of civil society to political issues. Methodological inertia pushing subdisciplines towards different directions not only come from these diverse modern problems, but also from the various ancient thinkers and other social sciences which have influenced different corners of political science. Because of diverse approaches and the various influences that define them, the success of getting political scientists to come together and agree upon a common framework of what politics and science are unlikely.

Fragmentation may be needed in a growingly complicated world. All subjects cannot be studied using quantifiable measures. Some situations require normative approaches. While there may be strategies to quantify issues such as globalization or populism, they fail to give a full picture. Anecdotes from a few individuals would likely add context to data and provide a more comprehensive understanding. Yet, positivists argue there are limitations to small-n research. Few respondents may not reflect the aggregate experience. Simplifying personal stories into a number or an identity makes information easily collectible. Data to the empiricist is nothing but the plurality of anecdotes. While both hard and soft sciences have their pros and cons, the combination of the two forms a synergy that paints a more complete image.

Additionally, these phenomena are inter-subdisciplinary. They involve all sorts of subjects and need different fields to explain their various intricacies. Take for example COVID-19. While comparative politics is needed to contrast foreign policies and human conditions, American government can focus on specific domestic institutions and analyze their individual failures and successes. Whereas political methodology will study demographics and COVID cases, political theory will consider issues of bodily autonomy, human rights, and morality. A vague understanding of politics is what keeps political scientists together. A pronouncement for independence by one subdiscipline would lead to a missing component in political sciences scholarship. Every field is needed to fully study politics. Although it is true that these

subdisciplines do not have the same standards for research methods or topics, they do share a similar identity when it comes to their interest in the broad spectrum of politics.[14]

CONCLUSION

      The Polisci Archipelago remains separated in the waters of academia. Even though a plurality of traditions and languages exist among the islands the Poliscinians are joined together by a loosely shared understanding of their goals and object of study. Politics is widely understood as power relationships between humans and the dynamics of influence actors have over one another. Science, on the other hand, has a contested meaning. Science is less of a descriptor and more of accurately an ambition shared of significant section of the discipline. While a focus on empirical, hard science may be attractive, value-free judgements are elusive, general theories are near impossible, and strict methodological traditions restrict research topics. At the same time, empiricism provides political science authority within academic and society, making their work a distinctly legitimate citation compared to political theory. In this way political science has remained married to both positive and normative traditions. Although the incompatibility of these two approaches has brought into question whether political science could achieve its superordinate goal, to aid in optimizing good governance, research has shown that the discipline still has guidance over legislation frameworks.

      A history of the discipline's core thinkers, dominant ideas, and general scholarship further elaborated the discipline's overarching identity as well as the divisions within it. Throughout the 20th century, political science underwent three eras, the traditionalist era, the behavioralist era, and the post-behavioralist era. Different internal and external steering factors pushed the discipline's commanding heights to reconsider prevailing worldviews. While political science can be characterized as having pervasive norms, ideologies, and research methodologies, the nature of politics hinders the creation of a sole disciplinary paradigm. No one idea can prove supremacy over another in the social sciences as human behavior can be influenced by temporal and spatial contexts, including the findings within political science. The disciple is marked as having a multitude of paradigms in which to center its study because of the nature of human beings.

      Unity then is not possible in political science, yet this is not a new or unnatural phenomenon. Political science has been "pre-paradigmatic" and will always remain pre-paradigmatic. A separation between subdisciplines may lead to different research orientations, but this may be preferable. The variety of topics under political science's purview makes multiple subdisciplines desirable, as an intersectionality of perspectives can foster new meanings and relevancy, giving political science staying power and flexibility in a growingly complicated world.

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[14] The APSA has acknowledged the necessity of fragmentation, or at the very least its inevitability. On top of organized sections, its editorial now consists of elected appointees from different subdisciplines who review and decide what is published in journals.

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