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Political Scientists, Disenchanted Realists, and Disappearing Democrats

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For the greater part of its history, American political science has been tied to its political sibling, American reform liberalism. This tether has provided the discipline with a strong while often troublesome identity. At the same time, the discipline's efficacy has sometimes suffered the consequences of liberalism's fate in the polity at large.

The story I want to tell here is about the relatively recent demise of that relationship in the postbehavioral era, one prompted by the decline of liberal politics since the late 1960s and exacerbated by the conservative political climate of the Reagan/Bush years of the 1980s. My remarks will be confined to the discipline's core, the study of American politics, and it will strongly reenforce the view that political science has, at last, departed from its past into a multiplicity of directions. Mine is a self-consciously critical perspective on our discipline today, as it is designed to highlight the features of our present postbehavioral condition that supply both continuities and breaks with the political science past.

In what follows, I will briefly trace the origins and recent history of political science as a science *of* and *for* American reform politics. By the late 1960s, that sort of science was in trouble, for it had largely failed to account for the conflicts then occurring in the polity. What remained of it took a threefold course in the last two decades. First, a reform science of politics lived on as a species of organizational revolt, better known as the Caucus for a New Political Science. Second, reform political science moved beyond considerations of power and participation in American politics through the growth of the subfield of academic political theory. And third, reform political science has moved beyond its own liberalism by employing tried-and-true

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approaches to contradict the very hopes and identities of its academic forebears.

Political Science and Political Identity

Until the middle of this century, organized political science grew with the premise and expectation that it would position itself above the arcane provincialism of the two dominant American political traditions. Like other Progressives whose company they kept, political scientists first opposed what might be called the "institutionalist" tradition. From the Federalists onwards, this "first" tradition featured fear of majoritarian government and created a political order where power was balanced against power, ambition against ambition, interest against interest, and center against periphery. Without human agency, constitutional structure imposed an impersonal, mechanical harmony. For political scientists at the turn of the century, the result was a polity sorely in need of institutional modernization and reconstruction. Not only were the knowledgeable and the altruistic probably excluded from political power, but legitimacy and authority were denied to a potentially benign and positive state. In the proper context, a strong state, backed by responsible democratic majorities, could be formed so that the excesses of a tumultuous modernity could be tamed and shaped.

Arrayed not only against the institutionalist tradition, political scientists also lamented the preeminence of its opposite, the "radical democratic," "second" political tradition. From Paine to the Populists, radical democrats inveighed against strong and centralized state power as a threat to majoritarian democracy and local community. Radical democrats appealed for a local, popularly controlled, nonbureaucratic order within a personal, egalitarian, and virtuous political culture. For political scientists, radical democrats thereby immersed themselves in a fruitless struggle to stop the locomotive of modern history. As America now spanned a continent, radical democrats persisted in trying to reconstruct face to face communities in hopeless circumstances (Wiebe 1967).

In rejecting these two traditions, political scientists sought to create a reformist, statist, and democratic "third tradition," resting heavily on the increased authority of political and social sciences themselves. Through their studies and public activities, political science founders and most of the discipline's prominent leaders sought to close the gap between the uncontrolled pace of change and the persistence of two political traditions rooted in the concerns of the eighteenth century. Firm admirers of political power exercised by expert public bureaucracies and confident about the potential common sense of properly educated public opinion, political scientists began with the notion that scientific language was not just an academic discourse but

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a political one. Walter Lippmann (1961) perhaps best captured this complementarity of science and politics when he said: "Science . . . is the unfrightened, masterful and humble approach to reality—the needs of our nature and the possibilities of the world. The scientific spirit is the discipline of democracy, the escape from drift, the outlook of free men. Its direction is to distinguish fact from fancy, its enthusiasm is for the possible, its promise is the shaping of fact to a chastened and honest dream." If nothing else, here is a distinctively American definition of the scientific ideal. While critical of institutionalism and radical democracy, leading political scientists of the early generations based their claims on the expectation that "scientifically grounded" liberal politics could find deep roots in the American terrain, even among contemporary elites and publics who thought and acted otherwise. Perhaps that is why the definitions of science offered by scholars like Lester Ward, Arthur Bentley, Woodrow Wilson, Frank Goodnow, or Charles Merriam sound remarkably vague by contemporary standards. The use of the word "science" was not much more or less than the assertion that human institutions, and especially American ones, were not unchangeable. Neither the mechanics of institutionalists nor the fears of radical democrats were really necessary. Skeptical about all divinely ordained ethics and static doctrines of authority, political scientists were sure that American state power could be constructed on the basis of democratic processes and informed leaders and citizens.

With a number of exceptions, this was nonetheless the dominant view of leading political scientists between 1885 and 1940. Lester Ward, Woodrow Wilson, Charles Beard, and Arthur Bentley were certainly of this view, and so, too, were Charles Merriam and Harold Lasswell in the 1920s and 1930s. These are disciplinary leaders who created political meaning and a national context for the scholarly enterprise of political science. Whatever their differences, their idea of political science depended for its authority on the vindication of reform claims and expectations in the American polity. Political science would enter democratic politics not just as an academic field but as a part of an entirely new tradition of political thinking and of counsel to the democratic state.

That peculiar kind of partisanship even influenced the professionalization that attended the rise of political science. Under Charles Merriam's leadership at the University of Chicago, political science professionalization achieved an inherently political dynamic. In Merriam's own words (1939), "the new scientific orientation, the new drive to remake the world in creative fashion, may rest upon the assumption of faith in the common possibilities of common humanity, . . . great human values so precious to the spirit of man are recognized and placed in a more realistic setting than ever before."

With the identity of an earlier political science, bound as Merriam's to

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the development of new political sensibilities in the polity itself, it is worth asking how well these expectations were met. Generally, the publics designated by reform political scientists failed to live up to their billing. As time progressed, each political science generation began to limit the range of their reform expectations for the state and democratic publics alike. Reliance on ever narrower circles of political leaders and publics grew to the point where the once broad audience of reform political science dwindled. In our own postbehavioral existence, it could be said that the audience has been reduced to colleagues and students.

Take, for instance, the proposal of Lester Frank Ward in the 1890s for a "populist sociocracy," a bureaucracy of common origins but of scientific sophistication and learning. Ward's positive science of society was self-consciously designed to provide intellectual foundations for the quite broad labor and agrarian radicalism of the 1880s and 1890s. "No one," Ward (1893) argued, "is more anxious to throttle the money power than I am." His bitter criticisms of social Darwinism and competitive capitalism were coupled with calls for a "dynamic and applied sociology and political science" leading to "controlled evolution." The horrors of American industrialization, thought Ward, had spawned a "great movement in history," naturally characterized by "strong emotion" and not always by reason. But the movement's proper object was to "checkmate the principle of competition as it manifests itself in society."

Contrast the breadth and nature of Ward's intended audience with that of Harold Lasswell, who argued forty years later that "the discovery of truth is an object of specialized research, it is no monopoly of people as people, and of the ruler as ruler" (Lasswell 1930). Or compare Arthur Bentley's call for a "middle-class counterrevolution" against the powers of trusts and corporations, an appeal directly linked to his call to study processes of government, to David Truman's 1968 warning that "if the preoccupations that in large part define a discipline are being set by the problems of public policy, then in some measure they are being set by the problems that confront the discipline as an intellectual enterprise" (Truman 1968).

The growing cleavage between professional work and political reform was accompanied by the sense that hopes for the third tradition came not from democratic publics but elites who could serve as reform vanguards in the public's absence. In his classic study of Congress, Woodrow Wilson was bold and prescient enough to urge that Congress be reformed from the outside, through the growth of "a responsible two party system" and new forms of organized popular influence over elites (Wilson 1885). Yet by Lasswell's time, political and social scientists themselves were designated as "democratic guardians," not the people acting in their collective capacity (Lasswell 1941). The classic work of pluralist political science, penned by Robert Dahl,

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described a chaotic policy universe infused with direction and purpose not by pluralist groups but by New Haven's chief executive, the talented Mayor Lee (Dahl 1961).

My point is that the democratic reform tradition in political science, once so broad in its expectations about the relationship between good political science and the emergence of liberal publics, gradually began to have few constituencies outside itself. This was hardly intended and was often the fruit of firsthand experience or glum research findings disconfirming once optimistic outlooks. Designated reform publics have simply refused to heed the appeals of political scientists, contradicting the "realistic" scientific expectations of their would-be guides out of the institutionalist and radical democratic dilemma.

At one level, reform political science has always possessed a kind of fated Enlightenment optimism about the receptivity of publics and elites alike to the "realistic" findings and suggestions of reform political science. Yet underneath the optimism there is a long history of disenchantment, as realistic science meets incorrigible realities. A favorite of early reform political scientists, for example, was the desire to separate politics from administration so that each could act in their proper spheres. But politics and administration, though formally separated, have had the uncanny tendency to intertwine once again. Pluralist theory promised democracy and stability, until it was discovered in the 1960s that many groups disputed the rules and the limited version of democracy pluralists described and prescribed. For seventy years, scholarship was devoted to the idea of "responsible parties," until it has finally been admitted that this is probably the feature of American political parties that one could least expect. And there are numerous studies in the reformist vein that end with calls for a "strong presidency," until the president turns out to be Johnson, Nixon, or Ollie North's boss. All of the above proposals only make scientific sense insofar as one accepts the notion that political science's primary identity must be vindicated by changing realities to match research agendas, not the other way around.

The Eclipse of Reform Science

It should be clear by now that I am arguing that the connections political science has tried to forge with reform liberalism in the polity have explained, legitimated, and provided its central identity for much of its history. Yet these connections have been far from fruitful. The reasons why are numerous, and they are perhaps instructive as well for those who try to continue this tradition in the contemporary, postbehavioral discipline.

The first reason is that the languages of political science in American politics haven't, couldn't, and probably shouldn't achieve anything like the

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authority other scientific languages have compiled in the transformation of nature or the organization and distribution of commodities in the corporate economy. Early political scientists liked to borrow from what they thought were the modernist methods and outlooks of the natural sciences when they thought about American politics. Still others, such as Merriam and Lasswell, liked to be thought of as political doctors attending to a weak but potentially curable patient.

Yet the subjects and objects of political science research could and would not be manipulated as easily as the Colorado River or numbers in a computer model. Unlike matter in a petri dish, Franklin Roosevelt used Charles Merriam's services as a technical adviser without subjecting himself to Merriam's doctoring. Similarly, Lester Ward's sincere efforts to shape the populist movement and channel its antiscientific enthusiasm into sociocracy seriously mistook the nature of the movement. Populists just weren't interested in sociocracy. It may be that American politics and political language are just too protean to be reduced to scientific discourse and action.

Second, their proclamations about "realism" aside, reform political scientists often wound up as political neophytes who simply misunderstood the histories and needs of the very publics that they tried to influence. For example, if there was more space, we could compose a list of the reasons why political scientists thought that the rise of the American state and the private corporation was entirely compatible with liberal democracy. We could also compose another list of the procedural reforms that were supposed to produce democratic accountability in the new hierarchies. Then we could assemble a bibliography of more recent political science studies that show why, despite the reforms, political accountability remained elusive and popular support for strong bureaucracies remained quite marginal. Even in the face of study after study that showed how American bureaucracies were captured by the very clienteles they were supposed to regulate, the utopia of the responsible and accountable bureaucracy lived on.

Third, reform political science was stymied by one of its own creations—the growth of the profession itself. The early leaders and founders of the discipline had fewer problems doing research, writing books, and gaining access to public life than their successors (Crick 1959; Somit and Tanenhaus 1967). But by hitching their star to disciplinary growth and specialization, to sophisticated methods and technologies to study political life, and by succeeding in their efforts to expand the new discipline into new graduate curricula, reform political scientists began to encounter a tougher time implanting their vision on an increasingly complex discipline. If there is anything that approximates a historical "law" in the discipline's history, it is the causal relationship between the discipline's leaders' perceptions that political science was not getting its message across and the call for the increased

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professionalization of the discipline itself in order to solve the problem. Even as the political claims were not realized, the professionalization once proposed as an antidote itself became a symptom.

Behavioral Interlude and Postbehavioral Impasse

To many who made the second behavioral revolution and who wrote about it, the kind of political science that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s was the crowning achievement of the discipline's history (Somit and Tanenhaus 1967). Yet from another perspective, behavioralism represents something of a distinct break from the discipline's reform political identity. Somewhere in the 1950s, reform political science became an undercurrent and behavioralism the mainstream. Several phenomena explain this development.

John Gunnell has written of the postwar behavioral revolution as a defensive response to the onslaught on reform political science launched from the Right by Leo Strauss and his followers and from the Left by the Frankfurt school (see Gunnell's essay in this volume). While reform political science and political theory had been seen as two sides of the same liberal coin throughout much of the discipline's pre–World War II history, the attack by the émigrés on liberalism hit directly at the old philosophical core of third-tradition political science. While reform political scientists had seen their liberalism in obvious and self-evident opposition to totalitarianism, their new detractors saw political science with its relativism and scientism as complicit in its rise.

The behavioral mood may be assessed as an effort to outtheorize the new challenges, but it came at great cost to reform political science. In works such as those of Heinz Eulau and David Easton, the philosophical defense of political science shifted away from a defense of the reform vocation into a defense of science, pure and simple. Critical analyses of the polity's ills gave way to methodologically sophisticated efforts to define democracy as if it was already completed in the American polity (Easton 1953; Eulau 1963).

Behavioralism might also be seen as a recognition that reform liberalism was just not all that strong in the polity itself. The qualities of quietism, complacency, and scientism later pinned on behavioral political science by its critics also reflected the disappearance of reform constituencies in the Eisenhower years. Cold War anticommunism, the fear and loathing of mass society, the critique of ideology, and the rise of pluralist theory were as much a part of the general political discourse of the 1950s as they were themes of political science itself (Connolly 1969; Green and Levinson 1970).

Finally, there is the phenomenon of yet more increased professionalization. Each succeeding generation of political scientists had criticized the preceding one for simplistic methods and premature and excessive political

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advocacy. Merriam had done this in *New Aspects of Politics* (1925). By the time David Easton wrote *The Political System* (1953), the scientization of political science had reached the point where it denied rather than reasserted the reform political science tradition. Behavioral scientists of the 1950s and 1960s might have been the first generation of social scientists to consider democratic publics and American institutions as mere objects of inquiry rather than as subjects of political change (Easton 1953; Poschman 1982).

Postbehavioralism and the Reform Tradition Today: The Case of the Disappearing Democracy

What, then, of the legacy of the behavioral movement in the last twenty years or so, particularly its connections with politics? Like past turnarounds in the history of political science, the postbehavioral period also began with time-honored *mea culpa* about its excessive distance from the polity and reform. Some of the reformers were those who had themselves led the behavioral revolution, such as David Easton and his 1969 appeal for a "new revolution in political science." Now, as before, the discipline sought to draw itself more closely to politics, to become more truly professional, and to revive the reform tradition by modernizing it in the light of new political conditions and the fact of disciplinary growth. And, in repetition of the past, the impetus to return to founding principles came from outside the discipline, from the very visible reality of a polity and state whose nature and trajectory could not be understood or predicted by behavioral methods or pluralist theory. Imagistically, when Dahl's *Who Governs?* and Richard Neustadt's *Presidential Power* encountered the Black Panthers and Richard Nixon's Watergate Plumbers, something in behavioral political science had to give.

Yet unlike previous refoundations in political science, the initial phase of postbehavioral ferment did not and has not achieved its political, professional, or reformist goals. In the aftermath of the sixties, there has been no Woodrow Wilson, no Progressive movement, no Charles Merriam, and no New Deal, nor even V. O. Key and rational voters, to carry the torch forward and to unify the discipline behind a common scientific and political reform agenda. Parts of political science have undeniable relevance to existential politics. Rational-choice theory and public policy are notable in this regard, but, generally speaking, these subfields cannot really be considered part of the reform political science legacy. The former seems closely tied to the rise of economic discourse in the age of Reagan, and the latter's ambitions are much more limited to the kind of technical claims that reform political scientists always tried to encapsulate within a larger political vision. Overall, the proliferation of subfields and their attendant and sometimes impenetrable languages are notable consequences of refoundation. Another is the rise of academic subcultures that, while not behavioralist, eschew public discourse nonetheless.

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The Caucus for a New Political Science

What, then, became of the reform tradition in political science? One way of charting an answer to this question is to look at what became of the most outspoken organizational form of that tradition, the Caucus for a New Political Science.

Formed at the 1967 APSA meetings, the caucus's bylaws were quite forthright in their call for "a new concern in the Association for our great social crisis." The caucus would try to "stimulate research in areas of political science that are of crucial importance and have thus far been ignored" (Lowi 1973).

From its inception, the CNPS made considerable headway within the profession. After 1969, the APSA's procedures were democratized to a degree, and some elections to APSA leadership positions were contested. Annual panels devoted to critical research were established, as was a new journal, *Politics and Society,* and, much later, *New Political Science.*

Within these terms, the caucus has been a limited success. But its achievements only highlight the inherent problems in postbehavioral reform political science. Somewhere along the line, inclusion of new research and people in the APSA's convention agenda displaced or even replaced reform of the discipline's *public* role; reform politics became *disciplinary* reform politics, and the passion and power plays of real politics raged within the confines of the discipline as if the profession was the polity itself. Debate about the Vietnam War, race, class and gender inequality, and other matters were converted into debates about methods of study, promotions, hirings, and firings. In the words of one well-known caucus member, the "Caucus for a New Political Science was converted into the Caucus for a New Political Science Association" (Lowi 1973).

In the caucus, the nexus of critical political science with the prescribed rules of university success and disciplinary professionalism was never questioned. The whole panoply of ranks, Ph.D.'s, specialized research, journal articles, and arcane vocabulary was accepted. What was demanded—and largely achieved—was acceptance *into* the profession, not a rethinking of the conditions under which intellectual life was defined and sustained. Thus, absent from the caucus's efforts was the essential component of past efforts at political science refoundation. Nowhere was a reform public addressed; seldom, if at all, were bridges built between intellectual inquiry and ongoing movement politics. Instead, the caucus eschewed such connections between a "new" political science and reform movements in the polity. The "reform public" became other colleagues in the profession, and critiques became an effort to educate and mobilize other professionals.

As Alan Wolfe noted at the time (1971), those "who formed the Caucus cut themselves adrift from the dynamics of political change in America and

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thereby lost touch with reality." In postbehavioral political science, reform liberalism became a rather odd species of internal dissent, dedicated to self-reflection about theories and methods generated within its own ranks. In a way, such consequences are only the logical culmination of past tendencies to equate improvement of the profession with more professionalization—in Yogi Berra's terms, déjà vu all over again. Nor were political scientists alone in their penchant to equate organizational revolt with new public postures. Russell Jacoby (1987) has argued recently that public intellectuals concerned with the enrichment of the democratic debate are in very short supply across the political spectrum, and most notably on the Left.

In an earlier time, German Social Democrats and Italian Communists used to refer to the "long march through institutions" as a way of describing their political strategy. In postbehavioral political science, this strategy has been implemented in the form of the caucus. Unfortunately for the dissenters, the institutions have emerged victorious.

A Liberalism beyond Politics

Besides the caucus, much of contemporary political theory inherited the impulses and identity of reform political science. Although political theorists have waged the most concerted attack on the positivist philosophy of science in behavioral political science, the political theory subfield was undeniably born within the political science discipline. The material and bureaucratic conditions under which political theory is today produced and taught is thus closely allied with the fate of political science and its existence in universities and colleges (Gunnell 1983).

Just as much, if not more, than Ward, Wilson, Beard, and Merriam, political theorists today address what are taken to be public concerns. Like these political science predecessors, political theorists of the reform variety take seriously the revival of an active citizenry. Many write books and articles that are designed, somehow, to catalyze citizens to thought, action, and reconstitution of the terms of American public life. These are of course noble goals, befitting the historical traditions of the discipline and of American public intellectuals. Yet perhaps political theory bears more of the burdens of its disciplinary origins and development than its critique of behavioral political science might otherwise suggest.

Consider as an example of this dilemma Benjamin Barber's *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (1984). Barber's work merits consideration because it is one of the most publicized recent efforts of a political theorist to regenerate public discourse. The book is about liberalism (what he calls "thin democracy") and his alternative, "strong democracy." Thin democracy, Barber argues, does not capture the protean quality of hu-

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man needs, particularly the need for communal involvement in public life. This is a time-honored critique of liberalism that may indeed require constant revival in the present American context. Since the publication of this book, Barber has become something of a public intellectual himself and certainly cannot be charged with shutting himself up in the academy.

Yet while Barber's book begins with much talk about the alienation of people from public life and the crisis of politics in the West, there is hardly a word in the entire treatise about any historical or contemporary practice, event, or behavior. There is virtually no discussion of how thin democracy as a kind of power relationship grew, what power relations it sustains, and how it effects contemporary practices. Liberalism and capitalism, strong and thin democracy, appear not as existential realities embodied in institutions, personal lives, social and political movements, or power relationships within which many are born and live. The emergence and existence of thin democracy is not really discussed; its advocates appear to be nothing more than poor political theorists with nothing to lose but their chains of weak arguments. The converse, strong democracy, assumes a curiously abstract nature as a disembodied ideal or value to which everyone should aspire. In passages like the following, Barber (1984) reveals that not much has changed about the *expectations* of reform political science:

> How then can we expect either the self-interested or the apathetic to identify with a program of participation and civic renewal in which their most immediate interests would be ignored . . . ? Through persuasion, through the self-education yielded by democratic participation itself, and through the logic of political priority which demonstrates that even in a privatistic politics dominated by economic interests, it is only the autonomy of politics and rights of citizens that give modern men and women the real power to shape their lives. (p. 265)

There is a peculiar kind of abstraction here that would appear to typify the dilemma of postbehavioral democratic political theory. Many would hope, with Barber, that the problem of self-interest in American politics could be solved in the way he prescribes. Yet it might be doubted that the kind of organized self-interest that gave us supply-side economics, Iran-Contra, and the Savings and Loan imbroglio could be wished away by such arguments. While a passage such as the one above might be convincing within the context of academic political theory, it neglects the fact that academic political theory simply does not possess the authority or the audience to justify such hopes and expectations. Like reform political scientists before him, Barber brings to his work forthright political intentions and objects. Yet partly because of the failures of reform political scientists that have been described, Barber's work

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assumes the intellectual authority that is in fact absent from our current politics and lacking for the reform wing of our discipline. The dilemma is only reenforced by Barber's naïveté about the complex of powerful institutions, ideas, and people that uphold "thin democracy." In the end, discussion of strong democracy appears merely as just another academic debate. Yet by the very nature and intention of Barber's argument, it cannot be.

A Politics beyond Liberalism: The Critical Pessimism of Walter Dean Burnham

There is yet a third course that reform political science has taken in the postbehavioral era, and it is best represented by the intellectual adventure of Walter Dean Burnham. Here is a scholar whose career begins with the most time-honored preoccupations of reform political science, including the belief that political science could and should help to keep alive the potential for democratic change through voting and elections. Yet such concerns lead to the kind of despair that would have surely disappointed his forebears.

In his now classic *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (1970), Burnham argued that the American party system generally refracted and even repressed fundamental social conflicts and divisions in most elections. Yet occasionally and under unusual conditions, "critical" elections occurred that restored a rather tenuous balance between voting and the exercise of political power. Their periodic occurrence, as in 1896 and 1932, indicated that there were important if spasmodic episodes of democracy and that they could occur again.

Without critical elections, democratic politics itself was deemed all but impossible, as political and economic elites became ever more insulated from elections as checks on their power. The key, Burnham argued, was strong political parties. Without them, critical elections were impossible, and the civic consciousness and dispositions that were the fabric of democratic culture would erode. In its place a party of nonvoters grew, and with it a citizenry without the possibility of politics and vulnerable to the hegemony of ever more monolithic cultural, economic, and political institutions.

Its tone critical but ultimately hopeful, its methods rigorous and its prose readable, its conclusions tentative but strong enough to provoke debate with a varied lot of defenders of the U.S. party system, *Critical Elections* was in many ways the epitome of a reform political science study. Yet, reflective of the fate of this brand of postbehavioral political science, by the 1980s faith in the future had expired.

In the aftermath of the 1980 and 1984 elections, Burnham began to argue that the political system was now incapable of undergoing a critical "realignment," with all its attendant democratic possibilities. American electoral poli-

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tics was, in fact, dealigning, with even sharper declines in voter turnout and accompanying decay in partisan ties and linkages amongst the mass electorate. In conjunction with defeat in Vietnam, economic decline, and cultural and social turmoil, partisan dealignment had catalyzed the formation of a sharp ideological Right intent on a "one-sided declaration of class war on most of the American people." Reform political science's traditional hopes are shattered with Burnham's (1982) simple statement that "you cannot get there from here in American politics if the direction is leftward, since the basis for a collective energizing left consciousness and will does not exist in this country. But you can if you are headed to the right."

What is one to make of all this? All of the former reform actors seem to be on Burnham's stage—the electorate, the political parties, the political actors bent on change—but they are no longer performing the old roles written for them by reform political science. Insofar as postbehavioral reformers share the traditional concerns and questions of political science, they can no longer sustain its politics. Democratic mass publics have become the atomized nonvoters of Burnham's imploding electoral universe. The positive democratic state has become the right-wing Leviathan, and American "uniqueness," once the distinctive characteristic that made American liberalism possible, is now notable for its inability to resolve social tensions democratically.

The significant point is this: the very prominent work of Walter Dean Burnham suggests that reform political science, once the core identity of the discipline, is now very near at an end.

Conclusions

Academic disciplines, like any other institutions, may thrive long after their founding identities have been forgotten, discarded, transcended, or simply altered. If this argument has any validity, postbehavioral political science may be experiencing just such a fate. In its weakened and fragmented contemporary form, the residues of reform political science seem either irrelevant, quaint, despairing, or hopelessly out of touch with broader intellectual developments in American letters and the political climate in American society.

Meanwhile, the major trends in postbehavioral political science have developed in other and varying directions. Rational-choice theory, the new institutionalism, and other schools of thought contend or sometimes just grow without contention. Given what I have argued about reform political science, all this may not be so tragic. If the core identity of political science at its origins led to disenchantment, utopianism, or poor science, lamentations about its passing may be more crocodile tears.

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Yet, founding identities are surpassed and displaced at considerable cost. The case of reform political science is no exception. Just like the political liberalism to which it was so attached, reform political science had its nobler themes and moments. Among them was its penchant for criticism, its search for political clarity, and its ambition to have a transformative public role. At the very least, reform political science took the time to justify its own historical project. Can the same be said of the postbehavioral present?

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