Political Science Quarterly, 2025, **Vol. 00**, **No. 0**, 1–24
https://doi.org/10.1093/psquar/qqaf008
Advance access publication 19 February 2025
Original Article

PSQ POLITICAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY

OXFORD

The Spirit and/of Political Science

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Abstract

The word "spirit" appears in discipline's leading journals more often than other expressions associated with religion like "Christianity," "religion," and "faith." Yet, despite its ubiquity, it is unclear how or why the term is used in social science analysis. What do political scientists talk about when they talk about the spirit? Answering this question has important implications for conceptual clarity, for the study of religion *in* the discipline of political science, and for mapping the influence of religion *on* the discipline of political science. The article answers this question through a conceptual genealogy of the term "spirit" in the publications of classical, modern, and contemporary scholars, alongside a quantitative content analysis using a novel data set. For classical scholars, the concept of the spirit repurposed the Christian Holy Spirit to advance Enlightenment theories about human progress. For modern and contemporary scholars, the spirit was further scrubbed of Christian connotations and inscribed with liberal idealist commitments to freedom. When political scientists talk about spirit, they reveal a theoretical indebtedness to the Christian concept of a transcendent and intangible force that animates, directs, and guides humans. American political science's continued entanglement with liberal Protestantism has made the discipline's emphasis on liberal democracy appear natural and given rather than particularistic. Furthermore, explicating American political science's entanglement with liberal Protestantism helps to explain longstanding gaps in knowledge and systematic exclusions.

Keywords: American political science; religion and politics; liberalism; missionaries

> Know your people and you can lead them; study your people and you may know them. But study them, not as congeries of interests, but as a body of human souls, the least as significant as the greatest, not as you would calculate forces, but as you would comprehend life. . . . The facts are precedent to all remedies; and the facts in this field are spiritually perceived.
>
> Woodrow Wilson, 1911 American Political Science Association Presidential Address[1]

What do political scientists talk about when they talk about the "spirit?" The term is invoked in the titles of prominent books like Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Charles Louis Secondat de la Brède Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Laws*, and Larry Diamond's *The Spirit of*

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[1] Woodrow Wilson, "The Law and the Facts," *The American Political Science Review* 5, no. 1 (1911): 1–11.

Democracy.[2] It is used in public lectures, such as Hugh Heclo's John Gaus Lecture on "The Spirit of Public Administration" and in the titles of journal articles, such as Bruce Morrison's *World Politics* article on the "Restless Spirit of Innovation" and Joshua Mitchell's article in the *American Political Science Review* (APSR) on the "Republican Spirit."[3] Between 1900 and 2015, the word "spirit" appears in the *APSR* and other leading journals more often than other expressions associated with religion like "Christianity," "religion," and "faith."[4] Yet, despite its ubiquity, it is unclear how the term is used in social science analysis.

This conceptual muddiness is surprising given recent advances in scholarship. Political science scholarship on religion has seen a massive uptick over the past twenty years but has ignored the spirit. This omission includes the most prominent review essays on religion and politics.[5] Likewise, recent years have seen an upsurge in research on the spirit, spirits, spirituality, and spiritual care. In anthropology, the move beyond the world religions approach has led to the development of a more flexible vocabulary of transcendence to map religious practices in Asia.[6] The growing focus on "lived religions" in both anthropology and sociology has made visible in everyday people's lives an omnipresence of spirits and spirituality.[7] The late-modern shift away from organizational membership in unions and churches alike has led to greater attention to figures that cater to transcendence seekers across denominational lines.[8]

This conceptual confusion matters. Wald and Wilcox's influential article on the neglect of religion in the *American Political Science Review* (APSR) paradoxically neglects the term "spirit," thus underestimating the treatment of religion in the field.[9] More theoretically, understanding the term's usage and possible religious connotations can help scholars understand the influence of religion within political science. Despite decades of research to bring religion back into the discipline, that

[2] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Talcott Parsons, Trans. Scribner, 2003 [1920]; Charles Louis Secondat de la Brède Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws* (Colonial Press, 1899); Larry Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World* (Times Books, 2008).

[3] Hugh Heclo, "The Spirit of Public Administration," *PS: Political Science & Politics*. 35, no. 4 (2002): 689–94; Bruce Morrison, "Channeling the 'Restless Spirit of Innovation': Elite Concessions and Institutional Change in the British Reform Act of 1832," *World Politics* 63, no. 4 (2011): 678–710; Mitchell, Joshua. "Protestant Thought and Republican Spirit: How Luther Enchanted the World," *The American Political Science Review* 86, no. 3 (1992): 688–95.

[4] Using the Constellate application for the JStor database for the period 1900–2015 in *APSR, World Politics, Comparative Politics, The Journal of Politics, The American Journal of Political Science*, and *International Organization,* the results are spirit (6,489), religion (6,325), faith (5,673), and Christianity (1,122). This article used the period from 1906 to 2015 for text analysis because paywalls make the most recent years unavailable for full text download.

[5] Anthony Gill, "Religion and Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (2001): 117–38; Kenneth D. Wald and Clyde Wilcox, "Getting Religion: Has Political Science Rediscovered the Faith Factor?," *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 4 (2006): 523–29; Daniel Philpott, "Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?," *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 (2009): 183–202; Anna Grzymala-Busse, "Why Comparative Politics Should Take Religion (More) Seriously," *Annual Review of Political Science* 15 (2012): 421–42; Jeremy Menchik, "The Constructivist Approach to Religion and World Politics," *Comparative Politics* 49 no. 4 (2017): 561–81.

[6] Peter van der Veer, *The Modern Spirit of Asia: The Spiritual and the Secular in China and India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

[7] Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Studying Lived Religion: Contexts and Practices* (New York: New York University Press, 2021).

[8] James Bourk Hoesterey, *Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, and a Self-Help Guru* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015).

[9] Wald and Wilcox, Getting Religion, 2006.

specific question of religion's influence *on* the discipline has been almost entirely overlooked.

To address this oversight, this article undertakes content analysis and a conceptual genealogy of the use of the term "spirit" in the discipline. I used JStor to compile a novel database of all articles that used the term "spirit" in six leading journals of political science from 1906 to 2015. I followed up with an in-depth conceptual genealogy of authors and articles that used the term in a theoretically substantive way. For example, an article with a lone citation to Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* was not included. Once I located an article that used the term in a substantive manner, I added the authors' other prominent publications to see how the concept related to their broader research agenda. I also included classical scholarship by Weber, Montesquieu, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, since they used the term frequently and in theoretically influential ways. As a result, the genealogy consists of books and articles by scholars who frequently invoked (or continue to invoke) the spirit: Woodrow Wilson, Jesse Macy, Guido de Ruggiero, Gilbert Murray, Alfred Zimmern, Charles and Mary Beard, Lucian Pye, Samuel Huntington, Larry Diamond, and Hugh Heclo.

Through these analyses, the article tackles and answers three questions. First, how do scholars *use* the term "spirit?" What are their explicit and implicit definitions? I find that Montesquieu and Hegel's conception of spirit, with its Christian connection to the Holy Spirit, has been more influential than the Weberian conception of the spirit, which means "ethic" or "maxim." This distinction matters. Scholars use the Hegelian conception of spirit to imply an organic, teleological and idealist vision of political development that is unmistakably rooted in the Holy Spirit, although with evacuated and re-inscribed meanings connected to human development.

Second, analytically, what *work* does the concept do for scholars? For classical scholars, "spirit" draws on a concept from Christian theology but is repurposed to advance Enlightenment theories. Just as the Holy Spirit is believed to act in the world, Montesquieu and Hegel's Spirit is integral to history and human development. As in Christian theology, key individuals (Prophets, Saints) have agency in this unfolding story; Hegel is both author and actor in his theory. Modern and contemporary scholars inscribed the spirit with ideological commitments to liberalism. The liberal spirit animates, directs, and guides the human community toward freedom. Like Hegel, these modern and contemporary authors are also practitioners; the language of spirit facilitates a synthesis between empirical observation and a normative commitment to advancing liberal democratic institutions and values.

Third, the article *applies* the concept back to the discipline itself by asking: what is the spirit of political science? Out of the 108 published presidential addresses to the APSA, the term "spirit" appears in 58. It is easy to see why; such august occasions give rise to discussions of not *what* we do or *how*, but *why* we do political science. These are moments of disciplinary transcendence. I suggest that political science is a diverse academic field shaped by a wide range of ideas and increasingly open to ideas from outside Anglo-European political thought. While acknowledging increasing inclusiveness, I follow Huntington, Christian Smith, Helen Milner, and Ira Katznelson in suggesting that the driving spirit of political science continues to be akin to that of the Salvation army or the YMCA, part of a larger liberal Protestant movement striving toward local and national efforts at political salvation through conversion to

liberal democracy. In that respect, political scientists have not only neglected religion "out there" but also within the discipline. The conclusion suggests that explicating American political science's entanglement with liberal Protestantism helps to explain longstanding gaps in knowledge and systematic exclusions.

The remainder of the article is divided into four sections. The next section presents the theory. The following section presents a content analysis documenting trends over time. The subsequent genealogy section is subdivided into examinations of the classical, modern (twentieth century), and contemporary (late twentieth and twenty-first century) usage of the term "spirit." The genealogy is organized by author, with analysis of the work that "spirit" does explicitly and implicitly in each of their writings. The conclusion illuminates the spirit of political science and the implications for knowledge production.

Theory

Histories of political science are remarkably secular, especially after the early period and the influence of the social.[10] For example, Robert Adcock's comprehensive mapping of transatlantic political science does a wonderful job highlighting the field's embeddedness in varieties of liberalism but is silent on Protestant influences. More helpful is the work of outsiders, like historian Dorothy Ross, British political scientist Bernard Crick, and sociologist Christian Smith. Ross dates the origins of the social sciences to late eighteenth and early nineteenth century ideas at the intersection of republicanism, liberalism, and Protestant Christianity, together culminating in a celebration of American exceptionalism.[11] Crick situated American political science within the broader tradition of American political thought and its underlying belief in progress, science, and liberalism.[12] Instead of being inevitable and eternal, Smith explains the academy's secular turn as a "revolution" by activists eager to purge the Protestant establishment even while retaining its practices: "Having drunk deep from the wells of the Enlightenment, these secularizing activists pressed out its moral order, as if on a mission, in their own careers and professions."[13] Elizabeth Shakman Hurd has persuasively argued that such strong secular commitments in the discipline have made it harder to understand religion.[14] Tracing the genealogy of the spirit and its usage can reveal the latent influence of religion on the discipline. More specifically, a genealogy of the spirit demonstrates the

[10] Robert Adcock, *Liberalism and the Emergence of American Political Science: A Transatlantic Tale* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Rogers M. Smith, "The Puzzling Place of Race in American Political Science," *Political Science and Politics* 1, no. 1 (2004): 41–45; Vitalis Robert, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: the Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015); Jessica Blatt, *Race and the Making of American Political Science* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018); Ricci, David M, *The Tragedy of Political Science: Politics, Scholarship, and Democracy* (New Have, CT: Yale University Press, 1984).

[11] Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[12] Bernard Crick, *The American Science of Politics: Its Origins and Conditions* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1959).

[13] Smith, Christian. "Introduction: Rethinking the Secularization of American Public Life," in *The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life*, ed. Christian Smith (2003), 58.

[14] Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

way that Christian theological understandings of the Holy Spirit have shaped the field and directed its aims.

The English language word "spirit" has its origins in multiple languages. One is the classical Latin *spīritus,* defined as breath, translated in the Old Testament as *ruach* and in the New Testament in Greek as *pneuma* and borrowed into English from the French *espirit*.[15] Another relevant origin is from the Proto-Germanic *Geist*, which also connotes "ghost." The verb form of "spirit" in the Oxford English Dictionary has only one germane entry: "To make (the blood, a liquor) of a more active or lively character."[16] This usage is uncommon in political science, and when it does appear, is more stylistic than theoretical, such as the adjectival reference to "spirited" elections in Taiwan (see also later on).[17] The noun form has four main definitions with twenty-two subentries. The relevant ones include,

> (1) The animating or vital principle in man (and animals); that which gives life to the physical organism, in contrast to its purely material elements; the breath of life. (2) The Spirit of God (Holy Spirit), the active essence or essential power of the Deity, conceived as a creative, animating, or inspiring influence. (3) The immaterial intelligent or sentient element or part of a person, frequently in implied or expressed contrast to the body.[18]

As we will see, these are the common meanings in the discipline.

Specifically, for classical scholars, the concept of the spirit repurposed the symbol of the Christian Holy Spirit to advance Enlightenment theories about human progress. Montesquieu argued that the spirit was an animating force steering the public and the state. The popular spirit produced public preferences for forms of government, while the law's spirit reflected the popular spirit and, in democracies, gently steered society against despotism and toward freedom. To Hegel, the Spirit (*Geist*) was collective consciousness coming into being over time. Hegel's Spirit was the engine and ends of that progression. Hegel's teleology was explicitly indebted to the Christian Holy Spirit, an intangible and immanent force that animated, directed, and guided human progress.

For modern and contemporary scholars, the spirit was further scrubbed of Christian connotations and inscribed with liberal idealist commitments to freedom. Woodrow Wilson, one of the early presidents of the APSA as well as a famous policy practitioner, argued that democracy was made possible by an organic connection between the national spirit (*Volksgeist*) and the state. The spirit of America was timeless in form and content and emblematic of the possibilities that derived from liberty. Another APSA president, Jesse Macy, wrote that the Christian spirit was the impulse toward honesty, truth, and openness. The political spirit consisted of opposition to tyranny and installation of that truth in democratic form. Macy likewise used the concept of spirit to bridge scholarship and practice: "Until the men of science make good their spirit and method in the citadel of contentious politics they remain in the infantile or kindergarten stage of development."[19] More recent political administration scholars, most notably a recipient of APSA's John Gaus lifetime achievement award Hugh Heclo, have argued

[15] While there are scholars who trace the lineage of the New Testament conception of the Holy Spirit to the Stoics' "divine spirit," this is a minority view (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* (Penguin Classics, 1964 [1626]), 25.

[16] Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "spirit (v.)," 2024, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/2814608154.

[17] Yun-han Chu and Larry Diamond, "Taiwan's 1998 Elections: Implications for Democratic Consolidation," *Asian Survey* 39, no. 5 (1999): 808–12.

[18] Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "spirit (n.)," 2024a, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1195099195.

[19] Jesse Macy, "The Scientific Spirit in Politics," *American Political Science Review* 11, no. 1 (1917), 8.

that the spirit provides the field's animating presupposition: "The spirit lifts it up from beneath, so to speak. And that is not something grasped and appreciated with a purely analytic eye or dissecting hand."[20] Heclo's writings exemplify this article's argument: the term "spirit" helps us to map the Christian influence on political science, provides a bridge between empirical research and normative preferences, and serves as a vehicle to explain not *what* political scientists do, but *why*.

In a slightly different vein, de Ruggiero, Murray, Zimmern, the Beards, and Diamond rebaptized the concept as the "liberal spirit." De Ruggiero dates the origins of the liberal spirit to the Protestant Reformation; religious liberty birthed political liberty, and the emancipation of the individual spirit born of the Reformation gave rise to the emancipation of the individual spirit in politics. Liberation was born not of institutions but from this individual conversion. Likewise, Murray and Zimmern's reformulation of the Christian spirit envisioned the liberal spirit as a transcendent and intangible force that like Hegel's provides the engine and endpoint for human progress. Charles and Mary Beard also used the spirit to transpose a religious belief in human progress onto historical narrative. Drawing on ideas from Signor Benedetto Croce, an Italian philosopher heavily influenced by Hegel and other German idealists, the Beards injected into historiography an ethical imperative to center liberal virtues as the ends and means to which history was oriented. Diamond's liberal spirit also had origins in Montesquieu, possessing agency and concrete qualities such as being disillusioned, strong or weak, strengthened or eroded. Its motive, and his, is the gradual, universal installation of liberal democratic institutions.

In sum, when political scientists talk about spirit, they reveal a theoretical indebtedness to the Christian concept of a Holy Spirit, a transcendent, immanent, and intangible force that animates, directs, and guides humans. Montesquieu, Hegel, Wilson, Macy, the Beards, and Heclo acknowledged and celebrated this heritage even while repurposing the concept. Murray, Zimmern, de Ruggiero, and Diamond masked that indebtedness while embracing a similarly idealist, organic, teleological conception of the liberal spirit. Huntington celebrated the discipline's Protestant heritage and its co-constitution with American national identity to describe the spirit of political science: advancing a gradual, ideological, and institutional conversion to democracy and modeled on the work of liberal Protestant missionaries.

Content Analysis of Spirit in Political Science Journals

Drawing on a data set of all uses of the term "spirit" in leading political science journals from 1906 to 2015, this section describes the results of the quantitative content analysis. During that period, the term "spirit" was used in 5,344 documents in the *APSR*, *World Politics*, *Comparative Politics*, *The Journal of Politics,* the *American Journal of Political Science*, and *International Organization*. That count includes the stem word "spirit," as well as the adjectives "spiritual" and "spirited," and the nouns "spiritedness" and "spirituality." Figure 1 shows usage over time, with a massive uptick in the 1940s, peaking in the period from 1950–1980, and decreasing but remaining common to the present.

[20] Hugh Heclo, The Spirit of Public Administration, 690.

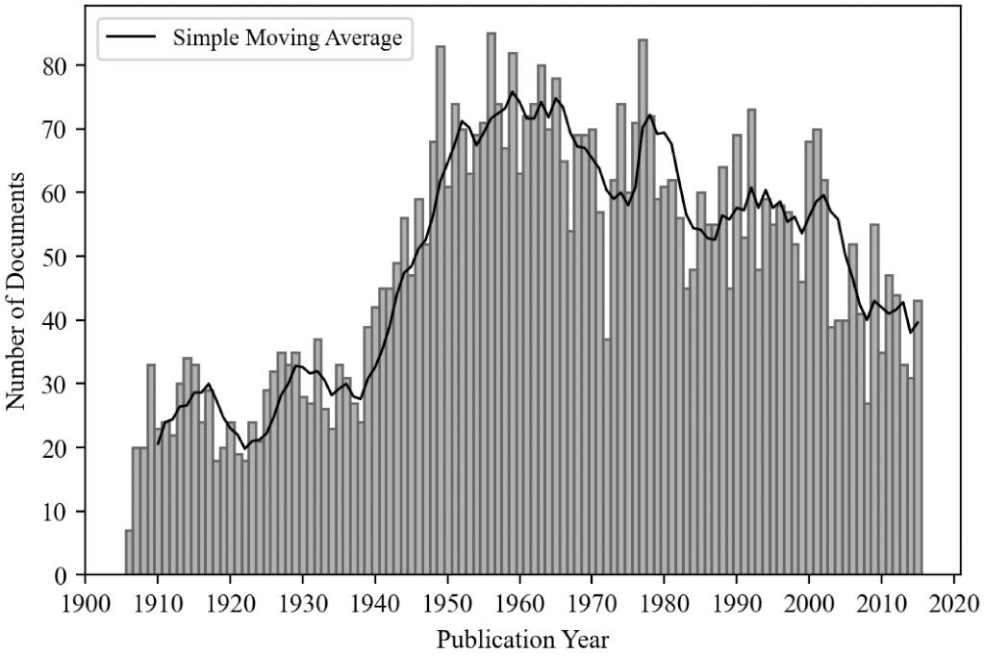

Figure 1. "Spirit" in Political Science Journals (1906–2015), Inclusive.

Applying more stringent criteria for inclusion in the data set, I removed ephemera documents (front matter, volume information, etc.) to show only usage in theoretically substantive sections of the journals. The result was similar. [21] That said, political science journals have published a greater number of documents over time. As a percentage of the total, documents using the term "spirit" have declined over time with peaks in the 1900s (73 percent) and the 1940s (28 percent), with steady usage in the period from 1940 to 1970s (16 percent to 28 percent), and lower usage in the past few decades (5 percent to 7 percent).

The data also allow us to examine whether spirit is principally used a synonym for religion or in more theoretically substantive ways such as Montesquieu's "spirit of the law" and Weber's "spirit of capitalism." To do so, I categorized the uni-grams and bi-grams from the data set. Bi-grams are sequences of two strings of characters interrupted by a space such as spirit + law, after stop words (for example "of," "the") are removed. For example, Montesquieu's conception includes spirit + law, spirit + constitution, and spirit + letter. I also created a category of uni-grams and bi-grams used synonymously for religion (spiritual, spirituality, holy + spirit). I categorized all bi-grams with a count of 15 of more, as well as bi-grams that occurred less than 15 times but were highly relevant to a certain author's characteristic usage. In total, I categorized 5,060 out of a total of 6,914 bi-grams, or 73 percent.

The results affirmed that spirit is used in theoretically meaningful ways and not simply as a synonym for religion. Examples of theoretical references include conceptions of the spirit clearly linked to Montesquieu (675), Macy (382), Hegel (315), Wilson (309), Weber (232), Beard (161), Ruggiero (135), Diamond (74), Pye (52), and Aristotle (18). The quantitative data

[21] See the Supplementary Appendix for more detailed content analysis.

also confirmed that the spirit was sometimes used as a synonym for religion, but that represented a fraction (1,330, 19 percent) of total usage. To understand further, the next section explains what these authors talk about when they talk about the spirit.

Genealogy of Spirit in Political Science

This section is organized chronologically to demonstrate how references to spirit have been used over time, the continued influence of Christianity, and the recurring reconceptualization of a seemingly archaic term.

Classical Conceptions of the Spirit

Montesquieu, one of the most influential philosophers of the Enlightenment, sought in his work to explain the origins and purpose of government. Montesquieu was both a theorist and a practitioner of politics. The title of his masterwork, *The Spirit of Laws*, was a reference to the book's two goals. The first goal was to explain the origins of a people's spirit, akin to the people's "nature." He said that a people's spirit is a product of the climate of each country, the quality of its soil, and the occupation of the indigenous population, religion, manners, wealth, population size, commerce, and custom.[22] Contemporary synonyms include the "essence" or "disposition" of a people.

The book's second goal was to explain the spirit of laws, which here is akin to "purpose." The purpose of law was to both reflect the popular spirit and, in democracies, gently steer society against despotism and toward freedom. Such steering was never revolutionary; "Better is it to say that the government most conformable to nature is that which best agrees with the humor and disposition of the people in whose favor it is established."[23] Yet, the laws should do more than reflect the spirit of the people. The laws should push, gently, in the direction of liberty by countering forces in nature that bolster despotism, such as inequality. The political theorist Ana J. Samuel notes, "This is the ultimate purpose of understanding the spirit of the laws, to learn how to heighten the role that these other orders of law play in human life, so as to promote freedom."[24]

Montesquieu's popular spirit (disposition) was picked up by Hegel, whose *Volksgeist* is the spirit of the nation upon self-consciousness. Hegel was a German idealist known for his teleological account of history, which later shaped Karl Marx's more materialist account. Due to the centrality of consciousness to Hegel's work, *Geist* is sometimes translated as "consciousness." Unlike Montesquieu, Hegel made explicit the term's origins in the Christian concept of the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost because he was convinced that the religious conception was passé: "Spirit has now got beyond the substantial life it formerly led in the element of thought, that is beyond the immediacy of faith, beyond the satisfaction and security of the certainty that consciousness then had, of its reconciliation with the essential being, and of that being's presence both within and without."[25] Hegel

[22] Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, 1899, 6.

[23] Montesquieu, 1899, 6.

[24] Ana J. Samuel, "The Design of Montesquieu's 'The Spirit of the Laws': The Triumph of Freedom over Determinism," *The American Political Science Review* 103, no. 2 (2009): 318.

[25] G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, A.V. Miller, Trans. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1977a[1807]), 4.

instead immanentized the concept with the human experience. Just as children become conscious through maturation, so too humans are maturing so that with time, the collective will achieve consciousness. "For Hegel, history is in fact the story of our gradual achievement of self-consciousness, which is simultaneously the realization of our freedom, our capacity for self-determination. With this achievement, which truly occurs in the modern period, human spirit is fully realized."[26]

Unlike Montesquieu, Hegel was not speaking of spirit as a metaphysical force; he used the term figuratively to refer to the collective consciousness coming into being. This was most clear in his compound usage: national spirit (*Volksgeist*), world spirit (*Weltgeist*), spirit of the times (*Zeitgeist*), absolute spirit (*der absolut Geist*), subjective spirit (*der subjektive Geist*), objective spirit (*der objektif Geist*). The first three terms merit exploration since they become influential.

The *Volksgeist* (national spirit) is the self-conscious nation:

> The ethical life of the actual national spirit rests partly on the immediate trust of the individuals in their nation as a whole, partly on the direct share which all, regardless of differences of class, take in the decisions and actions of the government. In the union which, to begin with, is not a permanent arrangement but only for the purpose of a common action, that freedom of participation by each and all is, for the time being, put on one side.[27]

The national spirit mediates the universal spirit as a stage of its development. The *Weltgeist* (world spirit) is an all-embracing, historical consciousness that is self-realizing through the work of philosophers. "The great form of the world spirit that has come to cognizance of itself in these philosophies, is the principle of the North, and from the religious point of view, of Protestantism."[28] Here, the world spirit is humanity and its consciousness. When Hegel looked at history, he could see the inner logic of the self-realization of the world spirit: " . . . the history of the world is a rational process, the rational and necessary evolution of the world spirit. This spirit [is] the substance of history; its nature is always one and the same; and it discloses this nature in the existence of the world."[29]

Zeitgeist (spirit of the times) is popularly associated with Hegel despite not being his usage. Here, each period and its spirit are part of the process of humanity's coming into consciousness. Individuals are expressions of that place in history, although there are figures like Napoleon whose projects coincide with the aims of spirit. Like Montesquieu's, Hegel's spirit is an immanent force integral to human development. Hegel's spirit is the engine of that development, explicitly indebted to the Christian Holy Spirit. Hegel is again author and actor in his theory, *in* the world but not *of* the world.

Max Weber's usage departed sharply from Hegel and Montesquieu's. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1920) argued that the dual Calvinist ethics of hard work and thriftiness created the cultural conditions for the emergence of middle-class capitalism. Other puritan Protestant sects likewise combined this impulse to accumulation with a frugal lifestyle, developing pots

[26] Glenn Alexander Magee, *The Hegel Dictionary* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), 227.

[27] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 1977a, 439–40.

[28] G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, Walter Cref, Trans. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1977b[1802]), 57.

[29] David Walsh, "The Historical Dialectic Of Spirit: Jacob Boehme's Influence on Hegel," in *History and System: Hegel's Philosophy of History*, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984), 30.

of capital that were continually reinvested. The capitalist spirit was thus born of the moral energy of the entrepreneur. Weber used "spirit" as a synonym for ethic and pointed to an essay by Benjamin Franklin urging the reader toward thriftiness and the accumulation of capital as an "ethically coloured maxim for the conduct of life."[30] Weber didn't envision spirit as an immanent force as in Hegel and Montesquieu. Nor did Weber see himself as central to his story. With important exceptions such as Huntington and Macy, subsequent conceptions of the spirit followed Hegel and Montesquieu, and it is only in the late 1970s that the Weberian usage gained influence.

Modern Conceptions of the Spirit

Modern scholars inherited their predecessors' legacies. The spirit was implicitly conceptualized as a transcendent and intangible force, and Hegel's teleology was common. Subtler but enduring was the author as actor, bridging empirical and normative research. The writings of Wilson, Macy, Murray, Zimmern, and the Beards demonstrate these themes.

Woodrow Wilson was the son, grandson, and nephew of Presbyterian preachers, born in 1856 in the manse of the First Presbyterian Church of Staunton, Virginia. Wilson was president of Princeton University from 1902 to 1910 and president of the APSA (1909 to 1910). Wilson devoted his scholarly career to the study of public administration and was part of the progressive movement whose scholarship, teaching, and political practice were oriented toward gradual political reform in the service of democracy. Wilson was a Christian internationalist whose vision for global reform became foundational to liberal internationalism.[31]

The first recorded use of the term "spirit" by Wilson is from his time as a law student at the University of Virginia, when he participated in a debate on the question: "Is the Roman Catholic element in the United States a menace to American Institutions?" Wilson took the negative position on the grounds that while the "Romish Church" did indeed seek to dominate Anglo-Saxon people, "The priestly polity had gained no permanent foothold in Northern Germany, and had been predominant as a political power in England whither the sturdy races of North Germany had migrated, only until the breaking away of the feudal system and the full growth of the national spirit."[32] Wilson here followed Hegel's "national spirit" (*Volksgeist*). Wilson similarly drew on Montesquieu in his seminal 1885 treatise "The Modern Democratic State," explaining that American democracy is sustained by the national spirit:

> There is a law greater than it which cannot be changed, —a law which makes the Constitution possible, without which the Constitution would be but a dead letter; a law which is the supreme rule of the national life. This is that law written on our hearts which makes us conscious of our oneness as a single personality in the great company of nations; conscious of a common interest, a common vocation, and a common destiny:—not only a "spirit of '76," but a spirit for all time.

[30] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1920, 17.

[31] Jeremy Menchik, "Woodrow Wilson and the Spirit of Liberal Internationalism," *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 22, no. 2 (2021): 231–53.

[32] Woodrow Wilson, "News Item in the *Virginian University Magazine*," in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Vol. 1*, ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), 645.

That national spirit originated in the American Revolution and continued to shape national life ("descendants either in blood or spirit").[33] In political office, Wilson used language nearly identical to Montesquieu's: "A law cannot work until it expresses the spirit of the community for which it is enacted. And, if you try to enact into law what expresses only the spirit of a small coterie or of a small minority, you know, or at any rate you ought to know beforehand, that it is not going to work."[34] Wilson channeled Montesquieu in describing the popular spirit as moving toward liberty: "We strive to show in our life as a nation what liberty and the inspirations of an emancipated spirit may do for men and for societies, for individuals, for states, and for mankind."[35] The spirit was the soul of America, emblematic of the possibilities that derive from liberty.

Wilson was prone to using the language of the spirit to welcome newcomers to the American body politic. In a speech to new immigrants he noted:

> You have said, "We are going to America, not only to earn a living, not only to seek the things which it was more difficult to obtain where we were born, but to help forward the great enterprises of the human spirit—to let men know that everywhere in the world there are men who will cross strange oceans and go where a speech is spoken which is alien to them, if they can but satisfy their quest for what their spirits crave; knowing that, whatever the speech, there is but one longing and utterance of the human heart, and that is for liberty and justice." And, while you bring all countries with you, you come with a purpose of leaving all other countries behind you—bringing what is best of their spirit, but not looking over your shoulders and seeking to perpetuate what you intended to leave behind in them. . . . We cannot exempt you from work; we cannot exempt you from the strife and the heartbreaking burden of the struggle of the day—that is common to mankind everywhere. We cannot exempt you from the loads that you must carry. We can only make them light by the spirit in which they are carried, because that is the spirit of hope, it is the spirit of liberty, it is the spirit of justice."[36]

Those immigrants became converted to be a part of "bone and sinew and spirit of America itself."[37] To Wilson, America's spirit made it exceptional: "America was intended to be a spirit among the nations of the world, and it is the purpose of conferences like this to find out the best way to introduce the newcomers to this spirit, and by that very interest in them to enhance and purify in ourselves the thing that ought to make America great and, not only ought to make her great, but ought to make her exhibit a spirit unlike any other nation in the world."[38] Wilson thus demonstrates the endurance of the intangible concept of the spirit that originated in the Christian Holy Spirit. As both scholar and policy practitioner, Wilson is also emblematic of how the language of spirit provided a bridge across the discipline's empirical/normative division. Decades later, his view of America's exceptional spirit would influence the Beards and Huntington.

[33] Woodrow Wilson, "The Author and Signers of the Declaration of Independence," in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Vol. 17*, ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 250.

[34] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address on the American Spirit," in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Vol. 37*, ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 416.

[35] Woodrow Wilson, "An Annual Message to Congress," in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Vol. 31*, ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 424.

[36] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address in Philadelphia to Newly Naturalized Citizens," in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Vol. 33,* ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 147–50.

[37] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address on Preparedness to the Manhattan Club," in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Vol. 35,* ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 5.

[38] Woodrow Wilson, "An Address on the American Spirit," in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Vol. 37*, ed. Arthur S. Link, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 415.

Like Wilson, Macy was president of the APSA (1915 to 1916) and a politician affiliated with the progressive movement. His APSA presidential address on the "Scientific Spirit in Politics" makes explicit the goals of the discipline and the centrality of the concept of the spirit to it.[39] Macy used the term "spirit" in two related ways. The first was synonymous with an "approach" toward scientific experimentation to improve the functioning of government: "A parallel thus appears between two fields of science—one dealing with oxygen, hydrogen, and gravitation; the other with cities, states, and numerous other political and social institutions. Both furnish occasion for the exercise of the same spirit and method."[40] The scientific spirit in politics meant each citizen should observe and participate in institutions to work toward their improvement. The second way Macy used the term was to link modern scientific truth with political truth. Macy believed the Christian spirit underlay both scientific truth and political truth and thus linked the two. Scientific truth came into being through laboratory experimentation; political truth came into being through experimentation with forms of government: "There could be no science worthy of the name until generations of martyrs to the cause of truth and righteousness had weakened the forces of tyranny. Science and democracy have come into the modern world at the same time. They are mutually related as cause and effect."[41] This linkage makes explicit the second meaning of spirit: "The modern scientific spirit is simply the Christian spirit realized in a limited field of experience."[42] The Christian spirit is the impulse toward truth. The Christian spirit in politics is opposition to tyranny and the installation of truth in government, advancing progress through experimentation. Here, too, we see an early example of the spirit leading in the direction of liberal democracy.

Indeed, a few years later, the Italian scholar and politician Guido de Ruggiero's influential text, *The History of European Liberalism*, laid out a more transcendent conception of the liberal spirit.[43] De Ruggiero defined liberty as unfettered development and self-expression, which then were embodied by society and the state and understood, developed, deepened, and spread through spiritual means. De Ruggiero argued that religious liberty born from the Protestant Reformation in turn birthed political liberty. Such emancipation arose not from institutions but from conversion to a consciousness of the liberal spirit: "Liberty is consciousness of oneself, of one's own infinite spiritual value; and the same recognition in the case of other people follows naturally from this immediate revelation. . . . This is the true development of liberalism, and the soul of whatever other development it may have."[44]

Like Hegel, de Ruggiero conceptualized the spirit as an intangible force that moved society toward progress. Individuals have equal access to this spirit; it is labor, not class, race, education, nor religious station, that enables such salvation:

> Liberalism is conscious that the formation of human individualities is the work of freedom. No demand of the higher life can be effectually made, unless it is made spontaneously by the spirit; no progress will be enduringly achieved, unless it is a conscious development from within. To raise to

[39] Macy, The Scientific Spirit in Politics, 1917.
[40] Macy, 1917, 3.
[41] Macy, 1917, 6–7.
[42] Macy, 1917, 7.
[43] Guido de Ruggiero, *The History of European Liberalism* (Boston, MA: Beacon Paperback, 1959 [1927]).
[44] de Ruggiero, *The History of European Liberalism*, 1959, 13–14.

> our own level those who are living a lower life, we cannot either by grace or by force excuse them from the labour and pains that are the price of human progress, or from the necessity of traversing step by step the distance which divided them from us. This freedom is therefore no privilege, but rather a task which the spirit imposes as the price of the benefits it confers: no one can obtain them freely; any one can obtain them by application, toil, and sacrifice.[45]

De Ruggiero's idealism implied a belief in the eventuality of liberalism's triumph:

> But further, the liberation of the natural world, and of the passive elements in human nature, by the energy of spirit, is very far from complete; it might be described as barely begun. It has been hitherto the privilege of a few, who have completed within themselves, intensively, the entire process of human emancipation; extensively considered, much remains to be done, since the majority of human beings are very far from having achieved a genuinely human level of existence, and a share in the gifts and burdens of a free spiritual life.[46]

De Ruggiero here points to a missionary aspect of liberal idealism that mirrors (and shares origins with) Christian missionaries and Huntington's characterization of political science (discussed later on). The saving power of the liberal spirit meant that de Ruggiero believed it would move society writ large:

> All the various forms of political Society, arising and developing in the nineteenth century, have been the creatures of liberty. Without freedom of speech, of the press, and of association, neither democracy, nor Socialism, nor nationalism, nor any of their infinite varieties, could have arisen. Their luxuriant growth is a living proof of the power of human freedom to propagate and expand through its products, to create a rich variety of forms, institutions, and attitudes, to intensify the rhythm of historical life. But at the same time, it is also a proof of the lofty impartiality with which the Liberal spirit distributes its gifts, to the enrichment even of those who spurn and deny them.[47]

In sum, de Ruggiero's writing demonstrates the influence of Hegel on his conception of the spirit, including the Christian conception and agency of the spirit. Echoing Wilson and Macy and anticipating Murray and Zimmern, he endowed the spirit with commitments to liberalism.

Gilbert Murray and Alfred Zimmern were prominent English scholars and collaborators who wrote on international relations in the interwar period. Jeanne Morefield argues that Murray and Zimmern sought to redeem the liberal project in the interwar period by appealing to a Hegelian spirit of the individual that would make the world "as interdependent in its spiritual relations just as it is in its economic relations."[48] Liberalism to Zimmern was a political religion: "To liberalism spiritual forces are the centre of life; and the supreme aim is the application of moral and spiritual principles both to politics and to industry."[49] Even liberal political institutions did not guarantee freedom in the absence of an organized social and collective belief in freedom: "But nations cannot achieve true freedom through diplomacy or even through war. They must win it for themselves in the region of the spirit."[50] At a time when the future of liberalism was in doubt, Zimmern gestured to his eschatological belief in a transcendent, intangible force propelling liberalism: "No thinking man can live through such a time as this

[45] de Ruggiero, 1959, 358–59.

[46] de Ruggiero, 1959, 358–59.

[47] de Ruggiero, 1959, 437.

[48] Jeanne Morefield, *Covenants without Swords: Idealist Liberalism and the Spirit of Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 15.

[49] Alfred E. Zimmern, *Nationality & Government with Other Wartime Essays* (Chatto and Windus, 1918), xx.

[50] Zimmern, *Nationality & Government with Other Wartime Essays*, 1918, 70.

and preserve his faith unless he is sustained by the belief that the clash of States which is darkening our generation is not a mere blind collision of forces, but has spiritual bearings which affect each individual living soul born or to be born in the world."[51] Like the previous authors, they envisioned the spirit as a transcendent and intangible force that provided the engine for human progress. Likewise, their enactment of their politics bridged the empirical/normative distinction of political science.

Charles Beard was a historian, political scientist, and president of the APSA from 1926 to 1927. To Beard, the spirit was an attitude that drove social behavior toward civic democracy. Beard's scholarship similarly promoted self-described Christian ideals of stewardship, association, and collectivism. In a speech to the American Historical Society, Beard echoed Hegel in critiquing historiography that was materialist, as well as Marxist or objective. Beard argued that the historian's job was to see the hand of God at work in the world:

> Does the world move, and if so, in what direction? If he [the historian] believes that the world does not move, the historian must offer the pessimism of chaos to the inquiring spirit of mankind. If it does move, does it move backward toward some old arrangement, let us say, of 1928, 1896, 1815, 1789, or 1295?[52] Or does it move forward to some other arrangement which can be only dimly divined—a capitalist dictatorship, a proletarian dictatorship or a collectivist democracy? The last of these is my own guess founded on a study of long trends and on a faith in the indomitable spirit of mankind.[53]

Beard used the term "spirit" to transpose a religious belief in human progress onto historical narrative, suggesting that historians frame their work within the narrative of development driven by a providential hand. The end of that speech featured a letter from Signor Benedetto Croce, an Italian philosopher influenced by Hegel. Croce likewise imbued in historiography an ethical imperative to center liberal virtues as the ends and means to which history is oriented. His approach to history, like Hegel's and Beard's, was a liberal Protestant missionary approach in contrast to materialist (Marxist) or ethnic (nationalist) approaches, which centered class and nation as the narrative; Beard critiqued historians who would attempt objective research. More apt was to use history, following Hegel, to show the hand of providence: "History was 'the way of God in the world.'"[54]

The final modern usage was in Charles and Mary Beard's most prominent work on American civilization, which used the Hegelian spirit as a metric to evaluate other authors. *The American Spirit: A Study of the Idea of Civilization in the United States* was not well received.[55] It was lambasted in the *American Economic Review*, *APSR*, and *American Sociological Review* for its use of select and unrepresentative material, and for a xenophobia in critiquing British ideas about individualism which were "alien" to the American spirit.[56] The Beards' desire to hold up American civilization as exceptional and independent drew from

[51] Zimmern, 1918, 170.

[52] Years of major institutional change in Europe or the US.

[53] Charles Beard, "Written History as an Act of Faith," *The American Historical Review* 39, no. 2 (1934): 228.

[54] Charles Beard, "That Noble Dream," *The American Historical Review* 41, no. 1 (1935): 77.

[55] Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *The American Spirit; A Study of the Idea of Civilization in the United States* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942).

[56] Joseph Dorfman, *The American Economic Review* 33, no. 3 (1943): 644–47; T.V. Smith, *The American Political Science Review* 37, no. 1 (1943): 137–38; Florian Znaniecki, *American Sociological Review* 8, no. 2 (1943): 225–27.

Wilson's similar usage and was intended to show American history converging toward cultural autonomy. Once again, the language of spirit enabled the authors to transcend the normative/empirical distinction of the social sciences; the Beards were American civilizationalists, evaluating historical figures based on their own normative preferences. The similarities with Huntington's *Who Are We?* will become clear later on.

Contemporary Conceptions of the Spirit

References to the spirit peak in the postwar period. Focusing on Pye, Huntington, Diamond, and Heclo, this section documents the enduring legacy of Hegel and Montesquieu, the Christian influence on the discipline, and the utility of the term "spirit" for scholar-practitioners.

Lucian Pye's *The Spirit of Chinese Politics: A Psychocultural Study of the Authority Crisis in Political Development* (1992 [1968]) is known for its oft-cited quip, "As a collectivity, China is not just a normal nation-state; it is a civilization trying to squeeze itself into a modern state."[57] Pye viewed Chinese politics as a function of a civilizational culture or "national character" rooted in hierarchy, elitism, and conformity, encountering a modern world rooted in equality, mass participation, and diversity. That encounter tension created conflict, with the result being the endurance of traditional political culture: " . . . [I]n spite of the far-reaching effects of social and political change, the spirit of the modern Chinese political culture has remained close to that of the traditional political culture."[58] Pye thus conceptualized the spirit as a national character akin to Montesquieu's popular spirit. So, too, Pye gave the spirit agency, following Hegel and in anticipation of Diamond: "Although powerful and persistent, Chinese culture seems to lose its essential spirit when consciously defended."[59] Like the Beards' final work, the book received a hostile reception in the major journals due to its essentialist account of Chinese culture and lack of clear research methods or data. In that respect, Pye's book marked the disciplinary end of overtly Hegelian accounts of political development, even while similar assumptions persist.

Huntington was a giant of the discipline. His work on political order, deterrence, democratization, and religion and international affairs was path-breaking; it was his writings on the latter two topics where his use of the term "spirit" emerged, primarily in discussions of faith (1975, 2004a, 2004b) and democracy.[60] Here, however, I want leap ahead to the question of the spirit of political science, connecting Huntington to Wilson and Macy through his 1987 presidential address to the APSA, in which he addressed the question endemic to such occasions: *why* political science exists. He said that most political scientists want to advance the values of justice, well-being, order, equity, liberty, democracy, responsible government, security, tolerance, and peace: "The impetus to do good in the sense of promoting political reform is, I would argue, embedded in our profession."[61] Huntington traced the roots of this inclination

[57] Lucian Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics* (Harvard University Press, 1992[1968]), ix.

[58] Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*, 1992, 49.

[59] Pye, 1992, 55.

[60] Samuel P. Huntington,"The Democratic Distemper," *The Public Interest* (Fall 1975): 9–39; Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (Simon and Schuster, 2004a); Samuel P. Huntington, "Are We A Nation 'Under God'?," *The American Enterprise* 15, no. 5 (2004b), 18–21.

[61] Samuel P. Huntington, "One Soul at a Time: Political Science and Political Reform," *The American Political Science Review* 82, no. 1 (1988), 4.

to the progressive movement, led by names that should now be familiar: Macy, Wilson, as well as Lawrence Lowell, Frank Goodnow, and Albert Bushnell Hart.

He went on to argue that political science developed first and foremost in the United States because "the US was the first and fullest democracy in the modern world."[62] Discounting British, Roman, or Greek predecessors, as well as the disenfranchisement of African Americans for much of United States history, Huntington argued that democracy and political science developed together: "The emergence of democracy encourages the development of political science, and the development of political science can and has in small ways contributed to the emergence and stabilization of democracy."[63] Political science should continue in that spirit abroad, in a manner modeled on Christian missionaries:

> The Salvation Army has a motto, "Save the world, one soul at a time." Political Science has helped, can help, and should help save the world by generating understanding of political processes, by illuminating the feasibility and consequences of alternative governmental arrangements, and by enhancing appreciation of the potentialities and the limits of political engineering. The most fundamental lesson in the study of politics, however, is that there are no shortcuts to political salvation. If the world is to saved and stable democratic institutions created, it will be done through *incremental* political reform undertaken by moderate, realistic men and women in the spirit of one-soul-at-a-time. That is the sobering yet hopeful message of our discipline.[64]

Huntington here makes clear the connection argued earlier: American political science is entangled not just with Christianity, but more specifically with liberal Protestantism. Huntington's support for liberal Protestantism became sharper in *Who We Are*, which argued that America is a Protestant nation: "America was created as a Protestant society just as and for some of the same reasons Pakistan and Israel were created as Muslim and Jewish Societies in the twentieth century."[65] Huntington was being less descriptive than prescriptive; his vision was intertwined with the marching orders of the Salvation Army and his support for national unity embedded in a liberal creed.[66]

Before concluding with Heclo and Diamond, it is worth adding an aside on Huntington. What is remarkable is that Huntington was not a liberal idealist like de Ruggiero. He was known for his realist view of political development, his pessimism about spreading Western values and support for civilizational theories of human development, and his opposition to Hispanic immigration to the United States.[67] But, like Wilson, Beard, and Macy, Huntington viewed the United States as an exceptional and a unique force for good in the world. The unique spirit of America is Protestant, and the spirit of political science is Protestant; to Huntington, it could not have been otherwise.

Larry Diamond is a political sociologist known for his work on democracy and especially for being the founding co-editor of the *Journal of Democracy* (JOD), published with support from and in collaboration with the congressionally funded National Endowment for Democracy (NED). In other words, Diamond is a

[62] Huntington, One Soul at a Time, 1988, 6.

[63] Huntington, 1988, 7.

[64] Huntington, 1987, 9.

[65] Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 2004a, 63.

[66] Samuel P. Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Boston, MA: Belknap Press, 1981), 12.

[67] Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968); Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* (Summer, 1993): 23–49; Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 20024a.

scholar and practitioner. Among his contemporaries, Diamond is the most frequent user of the term "spirit." In a 1984 article for *Foreign Affairs* on a military coup in Nigeria, Diamond wrote: "Many early reactions in the West have portrayed the coupmakers as a bunch of power-hungry soldiers, with no appreciation for democracy, eager to dip their hands into the nation's coffers. This is a gross misreading of the coup. . . . Its motivating spirit has been popular and redemptive, not authoritarian."[68] Here, "spirit" is a synonym for "goal": redemption for the nation (*Volksgeist*).[69] In a 1999 article by Diamond with Yun-han Chu, the authors use "spirit" to connote vibrant electoral competition where political parties are backed by mass mobilization and political participation, instead of by patronage via party bosses and factions: "Even if one argues that in Taiwan's electoral context vote buying is not perceived as bribery, it undermines progress toward the consolidation and deepening of democracy. Because it is not only against the law, and thus inconsistent with a culture of respect for law, vote buying also contradicts the spirit of democracy (in which voters are free to choose based on their public policy preferences and political party identities)."[70] Here the usage connotes the ethical value—representation of public preferences—that should guide voting in liberal democracies.

The Spirit of Democracy provides the best data for explaining what Diamond talks about when he talks about the spirit. The text opens with quotes from Gandhi: "The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within." "The spirit of democracy is not a mechanical thing to be adjusted by abolition of forms. It requires change of the heart."[71] Here Diamond is gesturing to non-Western support for liberal democratic values, as well as to a transcendent ethical commitment to liberal democracy.

The goal of the book is to answer "yes" to the question, "Can the whole world become democratic?" Elsewhere Diamond has made explicit his support for the global spread of liberalism.[72] Here, Diamond critiques the U.S. government policy of supporting "our" dictators in Latin America. "But the democratic and idealist impulse in the American national spirit—that we must stand *for* something in the world, and that something must involve our core founding faith in freedom—could not be extinguished."[73] Diamond suggests the American national spirit is faith in human freedom. Diamond points to his experience observing the democracy movement in Portugal:

> [T]he future of democracy is not simply driven by abstract historical and structural forces. It is a consequence of struggle, strategy, ingenuity, vision, courage, conviction, compromise, and choices by human actors—of *politics* in the best sense of the word. This is what I mean by the *democratic spirit*. In the end, the democrats won in Portugal, in part because of the tenacity, courage and skill of democrats like Mario Soarer, leader of the Socialist Party, who would later become prime minister and then president, and in part because of the heavy investment Western

[68] Larry Diamond, "Nigeria in Search of Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 62, no. 4 (1984): 905.

[69] In hindsight, it was in fact a military coup that initiated a significant crackdown on civil liberties, the press, and trade unions over the next two years.

[70] Yun-han Chu and Larry Diamond, "Taiwan's 1998 Elections: Implications for Democratic Consolidation," *Asian Survey* 39, no. 5 (1999): 808–22.

[71] Larry Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World* (Times Books, 2008), i.

[72] Larry Diamond, Kenya Tsuda, and Barron Young Smith, "Authoritarian Learning: Lessons from the Colored Revolutions," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 12, no. 2 (2006): 222.

[73] Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy*, 2008, 2.

> democracies made in support of the democratic peace. That international solidarity to advance freedom was the harbinger of a much greater effort to come and the manifestation of another dimension of the democratic spirit.[74]

Diamond argues against structural approaches to explaining democratic transitions. Instead, in the first use of the term "spirit," he argues that agentive individuals, acting collectively, enact democracy through struggle toward freedom. While he does not reference Hegel, Diamond's conception is beholden to the *Volksgeist,* a people struggling together to bring into being their collective consciousness. In the second use, spirit is international solidarity between democrats, Hegel's *Weltgeist*, bringing democrats together across time and space to act collectively.

Similarly, Diamond argues that the spirit is a factor that will determine whether democracy blooms or withers (his metaphor):

> In other words, for democracies to endure, their leaders and citizens must internalize the spirit of democracy. If many new and unstable democracies do not last, the challenge before us will not be extending the democratic tide but instead managing the implosion of democracy, what Samuel Huntington would call the *third reverse wave*. It is a basic principle of any military or geopolitical campaign that at some point an advancing force or cause must consolidate its gains before it conquers more territory than it can possibly hold.[75]

Here, the spirit is moving humanity forward as part of a geopolitical campaign, but sometimes haltingly, in line with Hegel's teleology. The spirit is an intangible force doing battle with the enemies of freedom; Diamond does not specify why democracy's conquest sometimes stalls, but one can imagine a different, more demonic force at work.

A third usage is Hegelian: "The 1980s and '90s exposed the spirit of democracy in a third sense. During the two decades, democracy became a *zeitgeist*, literally (from the German) 'the spirit of the time.'"[76] Likewise, after describing the downfalls of Marcos, Diamond notes, "The spirit of democracy was spreading to East Asia."[77] In the mid-1990s it became clear to Diamond that since 60 percent of the world's countries had become democracies, the rest of the world could, too, and he urged, "We have to identify the historical and structural obstacles to democracy around the world and the conditions not only for getting to democracy but for sustaining it and making it work."[78] Here's where Diamond switches from scholar to activist. He, the NED, and the JOD are inside "the global struggle for democracy." Most recently, Diamond has been the discipline's most vocal advocate of an assertive American military, ideological, and diplomatic campaign so that the global "Zeitgeist can shift back to democracy."[79]

There are moments in the text when Diamond uses the term to indicate a spirit with agency akin to the Holy Spirit: "The democratic spirit survived in Nigerian society, but it was sorely disillusioned, and it lacked a democratic state and political class to give it room to grow."[80] Likewise, "These surveys seem to indicate a weakness in the democratic spirit in the former Communist bloc."[81] And,

[74] Diamond, 2008, 4–5.
[75] Diamond, 2008, 294.
[76] Diamond, 2008, 6.
[77] Diamond, 2008, 44.
[78] Diamond, 2008, 6.
[79] Larry Diamond, "All Democracy is Global," *Foreign Affairs* (2022) September/October: 197
[80] Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy*, 2008, 74.
[81] Diamond, 2008, 193.

"Moreover, the spirit of democracy survives in Africa despite the most brutal efforts to crush it."[82] In Bangladesh, "the spirit of democracy has been badly eroded by the blood feud between the two major parties."[83] To Diamond, the spirit can be dead, alive, disillusioned, strong or weak, strengthened or eroded. Like the NED's predecessor, Wilson, Diamond's writings help to demonstrate the discipline's entanglement with the liberal Protestant movement striving toward salvation through conversion to liberal democracy.

Hugh Heclo was a prominent scholar of public administration who, like Wilson, Macy, Beard, and Huntington, also wrote about the importance of Christianity to democracy. His 2002 John Gaus speech, "The Spirit of Public Administration," is the most conceptually and theologically explicit writing of any in the sample. Heclo begins with a more overtly Christian conception of the Spirit than anyone since Hegel:

> In the end, I suppose each one of us, in our heart of hearts, knows that it does make sense to talk of there really being a "spirit" of something or someone. A beloved friend or family member is not just a checklist of personal traits. There's more there than what you might write out as a personality profile. There is the living quality of their personhood. And when that person finally leaves you, what you grieve having lost is not a characteristic or collection of characteristics. What you miss is the animating truth of who that person was, the essential spirit of *Being* that no longer lives in that dead body.[84]

The spirit of a person is their soul. Heclo goes on to say, "Spirit expresses a claim about ultimate things, about the underlying rightness of what a thing is."[85] He then uses "spirit" in the Weberian sense of an ethic or maxim: "When a vocation is truly heard and accepted, we might say that it is the spirit of the thing that is doing the calling and stirring an answering spirit, deep calling to deep."[86] But quickly Heclo switches back to the Christian Holy Spirit:

> In the West's Christian tradition, (the only one known to American public administration), such teaching is recorded in the gospel of John. There Jesus says, "It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing" (citing John 6: 63). . . . On the level we are dealing with here, it is saying that spirit bestows an animating quality while material concerns can do nothing more than rearrange what is already there.[87]

Heclo's spirit is the Holy Spirit that provides the animating presupposition for the discipline. "The spirit lifts it up from beneath, so to speak. And that is not something grasped and appreciated with a purely analytic eye or dissecting hand."[88] Once again, Heclo smashes the line between empirics and normative values: "The wall of separation between fact and value is a half-truth pretending to be the whole truth of the matter, and so at its heart it is a lie."[89] In doing so, he draws parallels to the spirit: "The spirit does not split the difference between idealism and realism but unites them into one realm. It is both unconditional and incarnate, the universal in living particulars. Gazing neither up or down, right or left, its face is set

[82] Diamond, 2008, 258.
[83] Diamond, 2008, 227.
[84] Heclo, The Spirit of Public Administration, 2002, 689 italics authors.
[85] Heclo, 2002, 689.
[86] Heclo, 2002, 689.
[87] Heclo, 2002, 690.
[88] Heclo, 2002, 690.
[89] Heclo, 2002, 691.

forward like a flint toward a central moral ideal that is a reality meant for real people."[90] Heclo is arguing against the fact/value distinction, since objectivity is important for assessing evidence but does not sustain motivation. Heclo uses an analogy to firefighters; they are objective and impartial in evaluating the facts but not in distinguishing burning and not burning. He critiques rational choice and postmodernism specifically because they are purportedly valueless.

His critique of rational choice then goes deeper. In response to an imagined objection to his idealist vision, Heclo argues:

> The brief answer is that while the real public administrator is certainly different from the ideal public administrator, that in itself is no logical reason for overlooking the reality at the root of the ideal. The longer answer involves pausing and listening to what is [sic] actually lies behind the question. When the so-called realist asks this question, it is actually a demand that spirit should be something less than spirit, which is to say, less than something that is both unconditional in its claim and incarnate in its expression. It amounts to demanding either that the unconditional should be banished to a realm of meaningless abstraction, or that the incarnate should have free rein to use its conditional circumstances as the ruling standard. Either way, it amounts to the demand to kill the spirit. And as it is written, blaspheming the spirit is the one unforgivable sin. But the spirit is not killed. Either it animates or it grieves and goes missing. Either it bestows its gift or it leaves behind the dead body of a person, an institution, or a discipline—a spiritless body that profits nothing.[91]

Here Heclo makes complete the move from secularized Protestant theology back to theology. "Blaspheming the spirit" is a reference to a Christian view on sin, where there are some eternal or unforgivable sins which will not be forgiven by God, such as blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Heclo is saying that the "so-called" realist critique of normative virtues as animating public administration is blasphemy and will kill the discipline.

Yet, Heclo's overarching argument is not about blasphemy. Heclo wants to identify the spirit (animating presupposition) of public administration. He contemplates many options: impartiality, efficiency, nonpartisanship, rationality, public service, and fiduciary responsibility. He settles on stewardship: "This means a calling to take care for the wellbeing of the public household."[92] In identifying stewardship as the spirit of public administration, his argument may appear Weberian, but that misses Heclo's broader thrust:

> Stewardship of the king's household is certainly not identical with stewardship in a modern democratic society. However the spirit changes by becoming a more complete realization of what it is—not by an evolution of new species or dialectic of contradictions, but by an unfolding of inner possibilities. In other words, change in the spirit of public administration resembles what Cardinal Newman called "the development of doctrine."[93]

This is Hegel once again: Spirit is an intangible force that unfolds through history with the coming together of collective consciousness.

To summarize, Heclo argues that the ideal of stewardship, which emerged from liberal Protestants in the progressive movement, drives and sustains the field of public administration. This is a constant even amid changing theories of rational choice, postmodernism, or shifting labels from public administration to

[90] Heclo, 2002, 691.
[91] Heclo 2002, 694.
[92] Heclo 2002, 692.
[93] Heclo, 2002, 694; John Henry Cardinal Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (University of Notre Dame Press, [1845] 1989).

bureaucracy. This is the soul of the discipline. This normative commitment is sustained through the deeper development of doctrine (inner possibilities), and the teaching of this virtue. Conversely, those realists who prefer to study public administration as it is (rather than as it ought to be) are committing blasphemy. Heclo is not being metaphorical: the spirit is the soul of the discipline; its denunciation kills the body.

The Spirit of Political Science

"The spirit of liberalism will arouse itself."[94]

What is the *geist* of political science, the animating presupposition driving the discipline? This may be an unanswerable question. But one possible answer can be found in Huntington's presidential address, seventy-five years after Wilson's: salvation is received through individual and institutional conversion to liberal democracy "in the spirit of one-soul-at-a-time."[95] That answer can likewise be heard from APSA president (1955–1956) Harold Lasswell's call for his colleagues to be "policy scientists of democracy," studying human behavior in the service of liberal democracy.[96]

This motivation is not new. Seidelman and Harpham's history of the discipline focuses on the tight connection between the liberal state, liberal political theory, and political science: "Liberal theory as well as liberal practice rested upon the loyal and careful description of the state of affairs and documentation of explanations to the fullest extent possible."[97] Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner situate the discipline's origins in liberal Protestantism. "Late nineteenth and early-twentieth century U.S. studies of the state went hand in hand with a concern to tame state power by liberal values and practices, including consent, toleration, representation, and individual rights."[98] They use Wilson's 1887 essay on public administration as a quintessential example and then trace these normative concerns through the subfields and over time. Similarly, Katznelson has demonstrated that the social scientists of the post-WWII period—Lasswell, Hannah Arendt, Robert Dahl, Richard Hofstadter, Charles Lindblom, and Karl Polyani—sought to create a field of study with a similar normative commitment. They reinvented a "realistic and proficient political science in an extended sense of the term that, at once, was institutional and historical, normative and behavioral."[99]

There is, of course, heterogeneity in the discipline; Marxist, realist, and civilizational theorists have long pushed back against the liberal spirit. Huntington's clairvoyance as to the discipline's spirit came from his own commitment to American exceptionalism and skepticism that liberal values would take root in non-Anglo-Protestant cultures. While the use of the term "spirit" is common in the fields of public administration, religion and politics, and democracy, it is less conspicuous in scholarship on political

[94] Woodrow Wilson, "Suggestion of a Statement." Joseph Tumulty Papers, Box 47. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. 1917, nd.

[95] Huntington, 1987, 9.

[96] Ira Katznelson, *Desolation and Enlightenment* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2003), 126.

[97] Seidelman, Raymond, and Harpham, Edward J, *Disenchanted Realists: Political Science and the American Crisis, 1884–1984* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1985), ix.

[98] Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner. "Introduction," in *Political Science: The State Of The Discipline*, ed. Katznelson, Ira and Helen Milner (W.W. Norton, 2002), 8.

[99] Katznelson, *Desolation and Enlightenment*, 2003, 16.

economy, gender, identity, and foreign policy. Nevertheless, contemporary practitioners will recognize that these concerns continue to motivate large portions of the field. Political science—or at least the portion of the discipline represented here—is entangled with liberal Protestantism.

This entanglement affects knowledge accumulation. American political science's entanglement with liberal Protestantism has led to recurrent gaps in knowledge and systematic exclusions. Take, for example, the study of authoritarianism. Political science's bias toward democracy has long distorted research in the study of the Middle East.[100] In other regions, too, that bias has held the field back from studying durable authoritarianism.[101] Much has been learned about authoritarianism in the twenty years since the discipline moved beyond the democratization paradigm, but the spirit of political science is such that we continue to be surprised by modern authoritarian, such as the use of new technologies for social control rather than liberation.[102] It is those scholars who depart from the missionary mandate to spread liberal democracy through ethnography, realist theory, or long-term field research in rural America have helped us to peek beyond the blinders of liberal Protestantism.[103] And yet, as Amaney Jamal notes: "It is fair to say that, more than 20 years later, we are still struggling to get it right."[104]

A second example should by now be familiar: religion. For much of the twentieth century, American political scientists assumed and theorized the evolution of religion based their mapping of the trajectory of liberal Protestantism: churches as incubators for civil society, Christian ideals for public administration, gradual secularization, and increasing differentiation.[105] In scholarship, as in politics, Catholics were long viewed with disquiet.[106] Likewise, Islam was often demarcated as beyond redemption whether through empirical study or conversion.[107] Those assumptions meant that the global Islamic revival, the deprivatization of evangelical Protestantism, the rise of the Hindu right, religious nationalisms, and the continuous public role of the Catholic Church continue to be anomalies in search of explanation. Islamic, Hindu, Evangelical Christian, Buddhist, and Confucian political thought are still nascent fields despite most of the world's population avowing some connection to those traditions. In that respect, the increased visibility of religion at the end of the twentieth century should be understood not as a departure from global patterns of secularization but from the specific vision for modernity to which the discipline is committed and embedded.

[100] Lisa Anderson, "Searching Where the Light Shines: Studying Democratization in the Middle East," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9, no. 1 (2006): 189–214.

[101] Joseph Fewsmith, *Rethinking Chinese Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

[102] Larry Diamond, "Liberation Technology," *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 3 (2010): 69–83.

[103] Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Seva Gunitsky, "Corrupting the Cyber-Commons: Social Media as a Tool of Autocratic Stability," *Perspectives on Politics*, 13, no. 1 (2015): 42–54; Kathy Kramer, *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

[104] Amaney Jamal, "Ambiguities of Domination: 20 Years Later and We Are Still Not Getting It Right," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 55, no. 1 (2022), 48–51.

[105] Wald and Wilcox, Getting Religion, 2006; Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 2008.

[106] Richard Alba, "Diversity's Blind Spot: Catholic Ethnics on the Faculties of Elite American Universities, *Ethnicities* 6, no. 4 (2006): 518–54; Menchik, Woodrow Wilson and the Spirit of Liberal Internationalism, 2021.

[107] Murad Idris, "Islam, Rawls, and the Disciplinary Limits of Late Twentieth-Century Liberal Philosophy," *Modern Intellectual History* 18, no. 4 (2020): 1–24.

This embeddedness is also social. An "unquestioned racism was part of the bedrock of the political science discipline" until the civil rights movement.[108] Until relatively recently, political science's treatment of race was like Ralph Ellison's "invisible man"; the discipline viewed black individuals through the lens of stereotypes rather than as fully human.[109] That treatment has helped to make racial hierarchies and inequalities seem more legitimate, including within the discipline.[110] The same remains true for Islam, which the preeminent liberal theorist of the twentieth century, John Rawls, addressed though an imagined and stereotypical Muslim nation of "Kazanistan" rather than engaging with Muslims as fully human.[111] The discipline has similarly excluded Native identity, Native philosophy, Native history, and as a result avoided the need to engage with Native claims.[112] The lack of recognition of the discipline's rooting in liberal Protestantism has made the disciplinary emphasis on liberal democracy appear natural and given rather than particularistic.

Nonetheless, there are counter-trends. Paula D. McClain's APSA presidential address lambasted the discipline's racist origins to celebrate and uplift scholarship on race, ethnicity and politics.[113] The 2020 notes from the incoming APSR editorial team celebrated work pushing disciplinary conventions and boundaries.[114] The growing diversity of the discipline brings in perspectives that are pushing against the traditional boundaries.

Changing the spirit of political science may not be possible. Given that most prominent scholars of political science are themselves normatively committed to liberalism, and that there is no serious ideological competitor to liberalism, it is unlikely that appeals to gaps in knowledge will persuade scholars to expunge their normative commitments. Instead, scholars might more often acknowledge their normative commitments and draw on other bodies of thought. Katznelson argues that the discipline's commitments render it difficult to see structures that constrain agency and reproduce systems of domination such as economic inequality, political inequality, racism, secularism, and imperialism, which is why he draws from the socialist tradition.[115] Saba Mahmood, likewise, suggests that in engaging with those outside the liberal tradition, we "hold open the possibility that we may come to ask of politics a whole series of questions that seemed settled when we first embarked upon the inquiry."[116] After all, while missionary ventures are often bedeviled by gaps in knowledge and exclusions, they may also expand knowledge and understanding through the act of exploration and engagement with the other.

[108] Paula D. McClain, Gloria Y. A. Ayee, Taneisha N. Means, Alicia M. Reyes-Barriéntez and Nura A. Sediqe, "Race, power, and knowledge: tracing the roots of exclusion in the development of political science in the United States," *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 4, no. 3 (2016), 467–482.

[109] Smith, The Puzzling Place of Race in American Political Science, 2004, 41; Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*, 2015; Blatt, *Race and the Making of American Political Science*, 2018.

[110] Smith, 2004, 44.

[111] Idris, Islam, Rawls, and the Disciplinary Limits of Late Twentieth-Century Liberal Philosophy, 2020.

[112] Kenan Ferguson, "Why Does Political Science Hate American Indians?" *Perspectives on Politics,* 14, no. 4 (2016): 1029–38.

[113] Paula D. McClain, "Crises, Race, Acknowledgement: The Centrality of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics to the Future of Political Science," *Perspectives on Politics* 19, no. 1 (2021): 7–18.

[114] "Notes from the Editors," *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 4 (2020): v–vii.

[115] Katznelson, 1996.

[116] Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 39.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material is available at *Political Science Quarterly* online.

Acknowledgments

This article is related to a book project titled *The Missionary Impulse in World Politics*. I am grateful for support from Boston University's Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs (CURA), as well as for invaluable feedback from Thomas Bruce, Susan Eckstein, Faisal Kamal, Tim Longman, Lida Maxwell, Tom Pepinsky, Alexandra Zirkle, the anonymous reviewers, and the editor of *Political Science Quarterly* Robert Y. Shapiro. I am grateful to Maneesha Khalae, Alexis Pfalzgraf, and DEVONthink for research assistance. And I am indebted to Jeanne Morefield for continued inspiration from afar.