

Dear Legal History Colloquium Participants,

Thank you for engaging with my work. I delivered this project last fall as the Rothbaum Lecture in Representative Government. The expectation is that the three lectures will produce a standalone book rather than a collection of the lectures themselves. To that end, I attach a draft introduction, a draft chapter (chapter 3), and an outline of the book's chapters, tentatively titled *Governing Others: Colonial Administration and the Making of American Government*.

The Rothbaum Lecture is delivered predominantly by and for political scientists. The book aims at a broader scholarly audience, particularly historians of the United States.

I would appreciate feedback on any aspect of the project. Data collection is ongoing and would benefit from suggestions at this stage. The footnotes remain preliminary and, given the breadth of the project, I would be especially grateful for reference to literatures I may have overlooked. Should you wish to read more, please do let me know.

I very much look forward to our discussion.

Very sincerely,
Maggie Blackhawk

GOVERNING OTHERS:
COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION & THE SCIENCE OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Maggie Blackhawk

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: GOVERNING OTHERS WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

CHAPTER 2: THE SCIENCE OF GOVERNING OTHERS

CHAPTER 3: THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN HISTORY & POLITICAL SCIENCE

CHAPTER 4: COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION & THE SCIENCE OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER 5: PROGRESSIVE ADMINISTRATION & COLONIES AS “LABORATORIES OF GOVERNMENT”

CHAPTER 6: WORLD WAR II & THE CRISIS IN COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

CHAPTER 7: THE ERASURE OF GOVERNING OTHERS

CHAPTER 8: THE COSTS OF ERASURE

EPILOGUE

INTRODUCTION

It is often forgotten that the constitution of representative government involves two central questions, not one. The first asks how a people will govern themselves. This question, which has occupied the better part of modern political thought, is now often treated as nearly the whole of the subject.¹ How should the power to govern be divided among different branches to best represent citizens of a state? What sort of electoral mechanisms should be adopted to hold officials accountable? Which rights should constrain the extent of the government's power over its citizens?

The second question is older, thornier, and more often goes unasked: how does a people govern those outside its polity—those over whom it has extended its borders by conquest, annexation, purchase, or cession? How does a representative government decide over whom it can extend its borders in the first instance, and where do the limits of its power lie? How does it, practically and legally, force its government on peoples that claim their own governing institutions and assert an independent sovereignty? Even more difficult, how does a representative government, one that purports to derive its authority through consent, govern other peoples through force?

Governing others is a distinct undertaking, with its own aims, its own institutions, and its own promises, powers, and pitfalls. For the better part of a century within North America, governing others was understood to require its own science.² That science had a name, colonial administration, and it once sat at the center of the study of government within the United States,

¹ The modern field of American politics generally partitions itself into the study of representative institutions, the polity, and policy arising from those institutions and that polity across both undergraduate instruction and doctoral field examinations, alike. For graduate instruction, see, e.g., “American Politics Reading List,” Department of Political Science, Yale University, updated spring 2012, <https://politicalscience.yale.edu/american-politics-reading-list>. For the same partition in undergraduate instruction, see, e.g., Theodore J. Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere, *American Government: Power and Purpose*, 18th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2024); Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, Lynn Vavreck, and Timothy Johnson, *The Logic of American Politics*, 10th ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2021); and David L. Paletz, Diana Owen, and Timothy E. Cook, *American Government and Politics in the Information Age*, v5.0 (Boston: FlatWorld, 2021).

² See Alleyne Ireland, “On the Need for a Scientific Study of Colonial Administration,” *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association* 3 (1906): 210–21; Paul S. Reinsch, *Colonial Government: An Introduction to the Study of Colonial Institutions* (New York: Macmillan, 1902); and Reinsch, *Colonial Administration* (New York: Macmillan, 1905).

notably in American history and political science.³ This book explores how that science was born, how it developed over time, and how it was ultimately erased, taking with it our ability to articulate its central questions and reason through reforms to the government it left behind.

As the great historian of ideas J.G.A. Pocock taught us, political thought is conducted not in free-floating ideas or ideologies, but in languages.⁴ Language itself is born of the available idioms, lexicons, and paradigms that a thinker inherits and through which certain topics can be unearthed, interrogated, and developed over time. To recover the political thought of the past is to recover the language that made the meanings of the time possible. To lose that language in the present is to lose not merely the answers that the language conveys, but the very capacity to ask questions about that topic at all.

Governing others once had such a language, spoken fluently across the American academy and U.S. government. Yet, in the latter half of the twentieth century, this language was erased.

³ This project builds upon pathbreaking works that began the slow excavation to unearth the connections between colonial administration and the development of political science, particularly the subfields of international relations and public administration. See Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015); Alasdair Roberts, “Bearing the White Man’s Burden: American Empire and the Origin of Public Administration,” *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance* 3, no. 3 (2020): 185–96; Jessica Blatt, *Race and the Making of American Political Science* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018); and Uma Kothari, “From Colonial Administration to Development Studies: A Post-colonial Critique of the History of Development Studies,” in *A Radical History of Development Studies: Individuals, Institutions and Ideologies*, ed. Uma Kothari (London: Zed Books, 2005), 47–66. Similar pathbreaking work has begun in sociology. See Julian Go, *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Julian Go, “For a Postcolonial Sociology,” *Theory and Society* 42, no. 1 (2013): 25–55. Historians have also begun to recognize the neo-imperial turn in studies of the history of the American state and its roots in an earlier “imperialist turn” in the late nineteenth century. See, e.g., Gautham Rao, “The New Historiography of the Early Federal Government: Institutions, Contexts, and the Imperial State,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 77, no. 1 (2020): 97–128.

⁴ J. G. A. Pocock, “Languages and Their Implications: The Transformation of the Study of Political Thought,” in *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 3–41; J.G.A. Pocock, “The Reconstruction of Discourse: Toward the Historiography of Political Thought,” *Comparative Literature* 96, no. 5 (Dec. 1981): 964–65 (“A paradigm, then, signifies in my usage a way of structuring a field of enquiry or other intellectual action which give priority to certain organizations of the field and the activity while tending to screen out others . . .”). For more on the Cambridge School method and its relationship to the language of science and the governance and law of Native peoples, see also Quentin Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969): 3–53; Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), esp. chap. 2 and the postscript; and see also Maggie Blackhawk, “Federal Indian Law as Paradigm within Public Law,” *Harvard Law Review* 132, no. 7 (2019): 1787–1877.

What follows is an attempt to unearth that language again, such that its utterances can be heard once more as the science they were taken to be.

At the center of this science was a word that survives in plain sight—a word that appears in every founding document of the United States: “Indian.”⁵ But what is an “Indian”? In declaring their independence, the former British colonists complained in the concluding and now infamous 27th grievance of the Declaration of Independence that King George III had brought on the “merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.” The term appears again, twice, in the initial and ultimately failed attempt to form a centralized government for the United States under the Articles of Confederation—once in reference to the powers of states to declare war if threatened by “nations of Indians” and again in reference to the powers of the United States to govern affairs with Indians who were “not members of any states.” Six years later, the United States Constitution also made two mentions of Indians, once in the powers of Congress to regulate commerce “with . . . the Indian Tribes” and again to exclude “Indians not taxed” from the apportionment for seats in Congress.

⁵ Given the complexity of this term, a note on terminology is in order. The term “Indian” contains, depending on the context of its use, a racializing slur and a subordinating category. It flattens the immense diversity of the peoples who inhabited North America prior to European “discovery” and their descendants. It also renders those descendant communities primitive and fixed in the past, obscuring the reality they continue to organize linguistically, culturally, and politically today, into over 570 federally recognized tribal governments, as well as others still unrecognized within the borders of the United States.

But the term “Indian” also captures the continuity of legal and governmental experience among peoples subjected to similar frameworks across U.S. history. Because the U.S. government declared Native peoples and citizens of tribal governments to be Indians in a legal sense, this book continues to center and use the term to highlight these continuities of legal and political history. Doing so also begins to disambiguate the legal term of art from the racial category. The legal category of “slave” offers an analogy: governments across North American history predominantly enslaved people of African descent, but the category never reduced solely to that racialized classification, and Native peoples were enslaved also. So, too, was the legal category of Indian not confined to Native peoples. The United States declared non-Christian inhabitants of the occupied Philippine islands to be “Indians” as well and subjected these peoples to similar governing and legal frameworks.

Beyond that legal term of art, this book employs a range of other terms to avoid perpetuating the racializing and subordinating aspects of the term Indian. When addressing specific Native peoples and their governments, it uses the term for that government used by the people who establish and run it, noting the federally recognized tribal government name also, when the terms diverge, for sake of clarity. When referencing Native peoples outside of what would become the borders of the United States, this book uses the term “Indigenous.” Finally, when addressing other peoples subjected to structures of government developed for Indians, particularly colonial administration, the book uses the terms “non-subject populations” or “colonized peoples” interchangeably.

Another appearance would arrive in 1868, with the exclusion again of “Indians not taxed” from the structural reforms of the Fourteenth Amendment.⁶ None of these documents, however, offers a definition of the term.

This lacuna would be surprising, if the documents’ goal had been to describe a particular ethnic or cultural category. But much like the term “slave,” Indian operated as a legal term of art.⁷ An individual designated an Indian held a particular legal status within the U.S. legal and constitutional framework. This legal status positioned them as the paradigmatic “other,” peoples over whom the United States and other “civilized” European nations were empowered by law to extend their borders and to govern. Indian lands were lands that were always considered under the power of another government. Indian governments were governments that were always subordinate to other “civilized” peoples. And Indian people were, necessarily, excluded from the category of United States citizen.⁸ Indeed, to become a U.S. citizen meant that a person was no longer an Indian. Prior to 1924, for example, if a community of Indians became U.S. citizens, treaties and other agreements between that community and the United States would no longer bind the U.S. government as law, since, the government held, it couldn’t form treaties with its own citizens.⁹

Yet, despite their exclusion from citizenship and the polity, Indians were not considered “foreigners” or “aliens” either. Neither citizen nor stranger, Indians occupied a status for which the constitutional order had no other name—the singular term for a person that the U.S. governed while

⁶ Declaration of Independence (1776); Articles of Confederation of 1781, art. 4; US Constitution, art. 1, sec. 10; art. 1, sec. 2, cl. 3; and amend. 14, sec. 1.

⁷ Felix S. Cohen, *Handbook of Federal Indian Law* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1942), chap. 1, sec. 2 (“The term “Indian” may be used in an ethnological or in a legal sense.”).

⁸ See, e.g., *Elk v. Wilkins*, 112 U.S. 94 (1884).

⁹ *Bd. of Comm’rs of Miami Cnty. v. Godfroy*, 27 Ind. App. 610, 60 N.E. 177, 180 (1901) (“He cannot be both an Indian, properly so called, and a citizen.”); S. Rep. No. 268, 41st Cong., 3d Sess. 1 (1870).

excluding from the polity, the paradigmatic vision of a non-subject who would nonetheless always be subject to U.S. power.¹⁰ Soon enough, however, the Indian would not be alone in this respect.

* * *

The United States would apply the same legal and administrative frameworks developed to govern Indians to the lands it annexed across the continental West, the island territories taken in the nineteenth century, and other peoples incorporated by force while still in possession of governments of their own.¹¹ What binds these instances is not the race or “savagery” of the peoples governed, but the structure of government that the U.S. imposed upon them—a structure of government born to govern others.¹²

Developing and perfecting such structure was long understood as a problem central to the science of government. Indeed, governing others was taken seriously enough, for long enough, to form its own scientific field.¹³ In his *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), the political philosopher John Stuart Mill illustrates this science and its relationship to representation most plainly.¹⁴ The “ideally best form of government,” Mill famously declared, “is representative.”¹⁵ While a benevolent despotism might deliver efficiency and meet basic needs in the short term, such governments, he argued, stifle long-term progress. Despotism—however enlightened—conditions societies to submission, leaving them vulnerable to future domination by less benign despots or even

¹⁰ See *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 30 U.S. (5 Pet.) 1, 16 (1831) (describing the relation of the Indians to the United States as “perhaps unlike that of any other two people in existence”); *Haaland v. Brackeen*, 599 U.S. 255, ____ (2023) (Gorsuch, J., concurring) (“Our Constitution reserves for the Tribes a place—an enduring place—in the structure of American life. It promises them sovereignty for as long as they wish to keep it.”).

¹¹ Maggie Blackhawk, “The Supreme Court, 2022 Term — Foreword: The Constitution of American Colonialism,” *Harvard Law Review* 137, no. 1 (2023): 1–152.

¹² Maggie Blackhawk, “The Crisis in Colonial Administration: American Indians and Japanese American Incarceration,” *American Historical Review* (forthcoming).

¹³ See, e.g., L. P. Mair, “Colonial Administration as a Science,” *Journal of the Royal African Society* 32, no. 129 (October 1933): 366–71; and Lord Lugard, “Colonial Administration,” *Economica*, no. 41 (August 1933): 248–263 (noting also the longstanding specialized schools in colonial administration in France and Holland).

¹⁴ John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, vol. 19, *Essays on Politics and Society, Part II*, ed. John M. Robson, intro. Alexander Brady (Toronto: University of Toronto Press; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), 371–577.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 183.

conquest by barbarous nations. Only representative government, in which sovereignty is vested in the entire community and every citizen participates at least occasionally in governance, could cultivate the moral and civic capacities necessary for enduring liberty.

Yet, in the very next chapter, Mill set out the conditions under which representative government was, in his view, “inapplicable.”¹⁶ Peoples that Mill deemed “uncivilized” instead demanded, first of all, the “first lesson of civilization, that of obedience.”¹⁷ Representative institutions would merely reinforce the “savage independence” of these peoples, delaying the civilizing process and with it the requisite conditions for self-government.¹⁸ Only a “vigorous despotism” would furnish the tutelage that might one day make uncivilized peoples fit for self-rule.¹⁹

How, then, should this despotism be imposed by a people who had built a representative government for themselves? The answer was not simply to extend the authority of that representative legislature over uncivilized peoples. After all, how could a government established by and for one people possibly represent “others”? Theorists of government at the time believed that differences in language, culture, and religion would render insurmountable the distance between a representative government and those others ruled by it. Representative institutions alone could neither support “savage” peoples toward self-government, nor could those institutions established to represent certain peoples also represent those diverse others whose interests it must take into account.

Instead, for Mill and many others, the problems of “savagery” and diversity could be resolved only through colonial rule by “delegated administration.”²⁰ Mill envisioned these delegated administrations as intermediate bodies: expert, apolitical, and morally committed to the betterment

¹⁶ *Id.* at 209.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 214.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.* at 416.

²⁰ *Id.* at 421.

of their subjects. Such governance, removed from the turbulence of metropolitan politics, would be more focused, more informed, and ultimately more just for those governed. It was, he claimed, the best form of rule available for societies not yet capable of governing themselves—scientific government by administrative technocrats, rather than representation.

Mill's theory of governing others, developed by a man who had worked in colonial administration in India for the East India Company,²¹ became refined over decades, taught as a pillar in the study of government. What is noteworthy, for our purposes, is the fact that Mill treated colonial rule as inseparable from the questions of representative government itself. To govern others was not an ancillary question to the science of government. Governing others formed a necessary precondition to representation in the first instance and, thus, the science of governing others demanded as much reasoning and analysis as governing the polity.

What Mill and others of his era cast as a deficiency in certain “savage” peoples, we might now recognize as a shortcoming of the modern state itself. James Scott described the modern state as governing by rendering its subjects legible—fixing them to surveyable land, counting and naming them in standardized ways, and drawing them onto maps and tax rolls.²² There have always been people, Scott argues, that the state cannot capture—peoples who were mobile, self-governing, and organized into forms of government that the modern state could not read and therefore could not rule. The “uncivilized” of Mill's account were, in this light, not children awaiting development by more mature peoples and their governments but populations the modern state had not yet learned to grasp.

²¹ Abram L. Harris, “John Stuart Mill: Servant of the East India Company,” *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 30, no. 2 (May 1964): 185-202.

²² James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

Within the United States, Indians were the paradigmatic group judged to be beyond the reach of ordinary government, ungovernable by the instruments that governed everyone else. Following Mill's schema, government officials saw the science of colonial administration as a means by which these populations could be captured in order to subject them to the power of the state, and thus as a solution to the essential challenge of the modern state: making the ungovernable governable.²³ This science included treaties, Indian agents, the reservation, the allotment, the tribal roll, the boarding school, a separate census for "Indians not taxed," and an entire apparatus by which a state rendered a self-governing people into an administrable population.

With Indians, however, the science of colonial administration met the limits of its own political vision, for what the apparatus set out to capture and civilize was not a fugitive or formless people but nations that possessed their own governments and law. As much contemporary scholarship suggests, Indians were not polities that were illegible to the state so much as nations inconvenient to it, and the apparatus of colonial administration did not so much discover as dissolve these communities.²⁴

A century after Mill, the language that offered a science of governing others was gone. When the political theorist Hanna Fenichel Pitkin penned *The Concept of Representation* in 1967, she reduced Mill's logic to a single word: fascism.²⁵ The word lays bare the power and mechanic of erasure. Pitkin did not offer an alternative science or a means by which the United States might finally end its practice of governing others. She instead, with a single word, reduced the science to a pathology. Government that lacked accountability to the governed was simply despotism by

²³ For a paradigmatic example, see the report known commonly as the Meriam Report, but its original title is itself revealing: Lewis Meriam et al., *The Problem of Indian Administration*, Institute for Government Research, Studies in Administration (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1928).

²⁴ For practices of both removal and extermination as an end to forms of colonial administration, respectively: See Claudio Saunt, *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2020); and Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846–1873* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016).

²⁵ Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

another name. The problem of mismatch between representative government and those deemed unfit for representation went unasked and unanswered.

This book explores this near century between Mill and Pitkin, during which the question of “how shall we govern others?” gradually ceased to be regarded as a serious question for experts of government to ponder. What Pitkin inherited was a language in which government was either representative or not legitimate government at all. The careful distinctions Mill draws in his approach to government between subject and non-subject populations registered only as an apology for tyranny, rather than a genuine study of the preconditions—and, for the U.S., the ongoing conditions—of self-government. The science of governing others became unspeakable.

The erasure was so complete that the paradigmatic case of governing others also fell out of view.²⁶ The Indian—featured so prominently in the founding documents of U.S. government—has become nearly absent from the disciplines built to study American politics and government. The field best equipped to analyze how a state governs, and particularly whom it may govern, lost the language through which one of the oldest things the American state does can be described. When that language dies, Pocock reminds us, a way of seeing is often lost to the present.²⁷ Having lost the language of governing others, political science lost the capacity to recognize that the United States still governs others at all.

²⁶ Documenting absence is empirically difficult. But the discipline of political science has experienced such an omission that its absence has become notable and generated debate over its causes. See, e.g., Kennan Ferguson, “Why Does Political Science Hate American Indians?” *Perspectives on Politics* 14, no. 4 (2016): 1029–38; Daniel Carpenter, “Sovereignty and Survivance—The Pathways of Native Politics,” *ibid.*, 1039–41; Paul Frymer, “Why Aren’t Political Scientists Interested in Native American Politics?” *ibid.*, 1042–43; Lauren M. MacLean, “Marginalizing Politics: The Conceptual and Epistemological Barriers to American Indians,” *ibid.*, 1044–45; Joely Proudfit, “Actualizing Political Science,” *ibid.*, 1046–47; David E. Wilkins, “Absence Does Not Make the Indigenous Political Heart Grow Fonder,” *ibid.*, 1048–49; Franke Wilmer, “Indigenizing Political Science or Decolonizing Political Scientists?” *ibid.*, 1050–51; and Kennan Ferguson, “Response to the Symposium Panel,” *ibid.*, 1052–53.

²⁷ J. G. A. Pocock, “The Concept of a Language and the *métier d'historien*: Some Considerations on Practice,” in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 19–38; and Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957).

Yet while the language of governing others was erased, the practice was not. Here, again, the treatment of the Indian is exemplary. The word that political science can no longer identify with depth and precision still identifies an entire title of the United States Code—Title 25, Indians; an entire federal bureau, the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and, beneath these legal and administrative frameworks, hundreds of treaties between the U.S. and tribal governments, reams of regulations, and a body of administrative practice that governs daily life for Native nations and their citizens today.²⁸ This practice of governing others remains alive and well; it has merely been stripped of the language that once made it visible and intelligible as government and, with it, the science that analyzed, criticized, and refined those forms of government over time.

Recovering the science of governing others reveals that the erasure of the Indian from political science and the erasure of colonial administration from the study of government are, in the end, the same erasure observed at different scales. To undo that erasure is to make evident the ways that the United States has never governed solely through forms of representative government. It has also governed others by top-down administration, tutelage, and force, from the founding to the present. It developed a science to build, refine, and expand its governing of others. Then it forgot that language and science—which remains buried in the archive, in out-of-print books and journals, as well as unpublished manuscripts and course syllabi—obscuring the practice from view.

The chapters that follow trace the arc of this history. The first recovers the practice of governing others within North America, including the forms of colonial government that the United States built beginning with the Northwest Ordinance, referred to at the time as the first U.S.

²⁸ See generally 25 U.S.C. (Indians); Act of July 9, 1832, ch. 174, 4 Stat. 564 (establishing the office of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, with the direction and management of all Indian affairs); Act of June 30, 1834, ch. 162, 4 Stat. 735 (providing for the organization of the Department of Indian Affairs); Act of Mar. 3, 1849, ch. 108, 9 Stat. 395 (transferring the Office of Indian Affairs to the newly created Department of the Interior); 25 U.S.C. §§ 1, 2, 9 (Commissioner, management of Indian affairs, and rulemaking authority); 25 C.F.R. (Indians); Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 7 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904–71), esp. vol. 2 (Treaties); and 7 Stat. (Indian treaties, 1778–1842).

“colony.”²⁹ This form of government served as the “blueprint for empire,” laid down before the Constitution and applied again and again across the continent and beyond.³⁰ Wherever the U.S. extended borders over lands and peoples by force, the blueprint for empire followed and provided the legal and constitutional framework to structure the government for these non-subject populations.

The next four chapters recover the science of governing others, particularly through the study of “colonial administration.” Mill’s thought joined the already well-established work of many other colonial administrators worldwide to lay the intellectual groundwork for the founding of colonial administration as a formalized field of scientific inquiry within North America. For decades within the American academy, the disciplines of history, sociology, and political science took colonial administration seriously, treating it as a key pillar of statecraft.

Colonial administration was a particular focus of the early development of the discipline of political science in the United States. The first president and vice President of the American Political Science Association (APSA), founded in 1903, were scholars of colonial administration. APSA founding President Frank Goodnow drafted a manuscript on the field, which, while he never published, was used to teach his classes at Columbia on colonial administration.³¹ Founding APSA

²⁹ Andrew C. McLaughlin, *The Confederation and the Constitution, 1783–1789*, vol. 10 of *The American Nation: A History*, ed. Albert Bushnell Hart (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1905), 1.

³⁰ Maggie Blackhawk, “Foreword: The Constitution of American Colonialism,” *Harvard Law Review* 137, no. 1 (2023): 1, 32 (defining the phrase “blueprint for empire”); Peter S. Onuf, *Statehood and Union: A History of the Northwest Ordinance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), xxix; Andrew C. McLaughlin, *The Confederation and the Constitution, 1783–1789*, vol. 10 of *The American Nation: A History*, ed. Albert Bushnell Hart (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1905), 1; Paul Frymer, *Building an American Empire: The Era of Territorial and Political Expansion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); and Saler, Bethel. *The Settlers' Empire: Colonialism and State Formation in America's Old Northwest*. Early American Studies. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.

³¹ “History and Principles of Colonial Administration,” typescript, n.d., box 20, folders 21–22, Frank J. Goodnow Papers, MS-0003, Special Collections, Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, https://aspace.library.jhu.edu/repositories/3/archival_objects/2542; and Jedidiah Kroncke, “An Early Tragedy of Comparative Constitutionalism: Frank Goodnow and the Chinese Republic,” *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal* 21, no. 3 (2012): 533–590.

Vice President, and later president, Paul Reinsch published his second and third books on colonial administration, titled *Colonial Government* and *Colonial Administration*, respectively.³²

When the Saint Louis World's Fair, also known as the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, introduced the field of political science on a national stage in 1904, colonial administration formed one of five pillars of the discipline.³³ The field was a subject of study at most, if not all, of the top programs in political science. When the American Association of Universities was founded in 1900, all fourteen of the founding universities employed at least one faculty specialist in colonial administration. By 1920, Yale, Columbia, Harvard, the Universities of Chicago and California employed as an average of seven faculty specialists in colonial administration, with Harvard offering a specialized PhD in the subject through their newly established political science department. (Among those who trained in colonial administration at Harvard were Ralph Bunche and W.E.B. Du Bois, as efforts to decolonize lands and populations, it was believed, required an understanding of the history, science, and practice of colonial administration.) Abbott Lawrence Lowell, a later President of the APSA and of Harvard University, crafted a book-length call for American universities to develop specialized colleges in colonial administration like those that had been founded since the earliest days of the nineteenth century in England, Holland, and France. Rather than a brief shelf life amidst the so-called "age of empire" within U.S. history, the field of colonial administration lived on as a robust field for decades, at least well into the 1940s.³⁴

Scholars of colonial administration came to treat the colonies, also known as territories, as "laboratories of government"—testing grounds for administrative statecraft that would soon be

³² Reinsch, *Colonial Government*, 44; and Reinsch, *Colonial Administration*, 112.

³³ Howard J. Rogers, ed., *Congress of Arts and Science: Universal Exposition, St. Louis, 1904*, 8 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1905–7), esp. vol. 7, *Economics, Politics, Jurisprudence, Social Science*; A. Lawrence Lowell, *Colonial Civil Service: The Selection and Training of Colonial Officials in England, Holland, and France; With an Account of the East India College at Haileybury (1806–1857)*, by H. Morse Stephens (New York: Macmillan, 1900).

³⁴ Notably, after the second World War, the field of colonial administration experienced a documented "crisis" that scholars tackled over the following two decades before the field fell into disrepair. See, e.g., Solon T. Kimball, "The Crisis in Colonial Administration," *Applied Anthropology* 5, no. 2 (1946): 8–16.

carried home—and those trained in this field moved between the academy, colonial service, and the highest levels of domestic government.³⁵ The most well-known progressive and New Deal leaders Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt all trained under, specialized in, and continued to work closely with specialists in colonial administration within the academy. Many, like Frank Murphy, whom FDR would later appoint to the United States Supreme Court, built forms of top-down, scientific administrative government in both colonial and domestic contexts without differentiating between them.³⁶

By this time, non-representative government by administration was no longer reserved exclusively for “Indians” but for everyone and was seen as the solution for problems of modernity as well as for problems of savagery. Murphy himself began by bringing the “New Deal” to Detroit during his stint as mayor of the city during the Great Depression.³⁷ He then, along with his academic mentor from the University of Michigan Joseph Ralston Hayden, brought the “New Deal” to the Philippines as Governor-General for the island colonies. Murphy, himself Irish Catholic and who had trained alongside Irish-Catholic independence leaders in the days following Woodrow Wilson’s call for self-determination in 1918, saw these forms of unrepresentative, administrative government as the precondition for independence and the solution to colonial government.

The two chapters that close the book trace the crisis that colonial administration experienced in the years following the Second World War and its subsequent erasure from the academy. Condemned as fascism and abandoned by the disciplines that had built it, the science of governing others was quickly forgotten. The final chapter turns to the costs of this erasure. It examines what

³⁵ Reinsch, *Colonial Government*, 174, 294; See also Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco A. Scarano, eds., *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009); and Alfred W. McCoy, *Policing America’s Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

³⁶ See Sidney Fine, *Frank Murphy: The New Deal Years* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); J. Woodford Howard, “Frank Murphy and the Philippine Commonwealth,” *Pacific Historical Review* 33, no. 1 (February 1964): 45-68.

³⁷ See “New Deal for the Moros; Governor Replaces Filipinos with American Officials,” *New York Times*, February 22, 1934, 13.

political science lost when it lost the capacity to see one of the oldest powers and functions of the United States government, and what we all lose when the discipline best equipped to study government cannot recognize the colonial government still operating within its midst. For the danger is not merely erasure of past, but of present also. The practices identified and studied by this science—the practices of governing others—were never themselves abandoned. Indeed, the forms of government built at the periphery, government unbounded by representation, the Constitution, or the courts, have returned to the center, circling back like a boomerang to govern the very people who first established them.³⁸ To recover the science and with it the language of governing others is, in the end, to regain the capacity to recognize this return before it completes itself and, perhaps having now seen it, hone the expertise to finally reform these institutions of government for all.

³⁸ For more on the boomerang theory of empire, see Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), originally published as *Discours sur le colonialisme* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1955). See also Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951; New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 155.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

CHAPTER 1: GOVERNING OTHERS WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

This Chapter begins the history of the establishment of the “first colony” of the United States over the Northwest Territory with the Northwest Ordinance, and the development of that first colony’s government into the “blueprint for empire,” as well as the founding of U.S. government as an outgrowth of colonial government. It then charts the expansion of the blueprint for empire across the West—beginning with the Louisiana Purchase and then moving across the West and then overseas. It also brings together the history of the American West with more traditional forms of nationalist history, including the visions of territorialization of the southern states after the Civil War and the forms of colonial administrative intervention implemented through federal policy and the Reconstruction Amendments.

CHAPTER 2: THE SCIENCE OF GOVERNING OTHERS

This Chapter begins with the Revolution as a rebellion against certain forms of colonial administration and the ways that the colonial rebellion in North America began a process of further professionalization and specialization in the field of colonial government—including the establishment of the first specialty schools in colonial administration by Britain, and then later by Holland and France. It then charts the development of the specialization of colonial government—a field deeply embedded into the development of political thought around government and representative government more generally—closing with Mill and others who inspired the establishment of the field in North American institutions.

CHAPTER 3: THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE & HISTORY

This Chapter begins with the Burgess’s establishment of the first department of political

science at Columbia University in the wake of the Civil War and continent-wide efforts at unification of the United States into a modern “nation-state” from a patchwork of imperial and contested jurisdictions. It then loops back to Burgess’s and Baxter Adam’s training in Germany during the unification of the Prussian Empire connecting visions between the study of imperial government and its unification, and the burgeoning study of the modern nation-state under a homogenized and unified form of government. Finally, it charts how Burgess and Baxter Adam’s ideas were largely aligned about the centrality of colonial government to the study of government writ large, and it documents how these ideas took root during the birth of American political science as a discipline and how the field of colonial administration began to spread across U.S. academic institutions.

CHAPTER 4: COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION & THE SCIENCE OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

This Chapter overviews the field of colonial administration and its relationship with the science of government, particularly representative government and the development of the modern nation-state, within United States academic institutions. The Chapter opens with DuBois, as a student of Bushnell Hart and following calls for territorialization of the South, studying Reconstruction and the Freedman’s Bureau as a mechanism of colonial administration. The Chapter surveys the breadth of the field as well as describe its primary methods and analytical frameworks and focuses through the life and work of Paul Reinsch, student and colleague of Frederick Jackson Turner, and scholar of colonial administration. It further describes the ways that scholars of colonial administration worked to develop the field and to insulate the institutions of colonial administration from electoral accountability and representative politics, as well as from judicial review, primarily told through the story of Frank Goodnow, as well as his contemporaries, acolytes, and predecessors within the fields of public administration, colonial administration, and administrative law. The chapter closes with a description of the scope of the field across all major disciplines, as well as

within law schools through the development of the field of administrative law, before the Second World War.

CHAPTER 5: PROGRESSIVE ADMINISTRATION & COLONIES AS “LABORATORIES OF GOVERNMENT”

This Chapter describes the development of progressive philosophies of government as arising from the field of colonial administration and the view and practice of the colonies serving as “laboratories of government” through the lens of Frank Murphy. Murphy, trained in colonial administration at the University of Michigan under Joseph Ralston Hayden, first brought top-down administrative government to Detroit as Mayor during the Great Depression (1930-33), and he then moved seamlessly between implementing these forms of government for domestic government and the colonies as the last Governor-General and first High Commissioner of the Philippines. There, he along with Hayden, implemented the “little New Deal” in the colonies. Throughout, the Chapter charts how Murphy was one of many progressive leaders that moved between colonial administration and domestic public administration, blurring the lines between each, as they saw administrative intervention the best form of government to resolve social problems writ large. This Chapter also weaves in Woodrow Wilson, Felix Frankfurter, W.E.B. Du Bois, Brandeis, and others.

CHAPTER 6: WORLD WAR II & THE CRISIS IN COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

This Chapter introduces the crisis in colonial administration that arose after the Second World War through the lens of John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, involvement in developing and managing the concentration camps for Japanese Americans during the War. It describes his establishment of a social science research institute in the first concentration camp (Poston) and his efforts to establish a training center for colonial administrators, who would be trained with the Japanese American concentration camps, Indian reservations, and the territories. It

then charts how Collier's efforts were thwarted after the War and how his academic colleagues, as well as scholars and practitioners of colonial administration across North America and Europe began to describe a "crisis in colonial administration" after the War. The Chapter describes the contours of this global crisis through an academic forum held in Europe with European scholars and practitioners of colonial administration holding forums after WWII that documented the revolts that occurred when occupying European powers attempted to return to and reassert institutions of colonial administration after the War ended.

CHAPTER 7: THE ERASURE OF GOVERNING OTHERS

This Chapter charts the erasure of colonial administration through the initial lens of Hanna Pitkin and her work on representative government. The Chapter, with Pitkin as an anchor, describes how the practices of colonial administration and colonial government lived on, and experienced dramatic transformation during Pitkin's lifetime. It closes with the symposium "Why does political science hate Native Americans?" and explores the ways that the science of government today has erased colonial government as a serious focus of analysis.

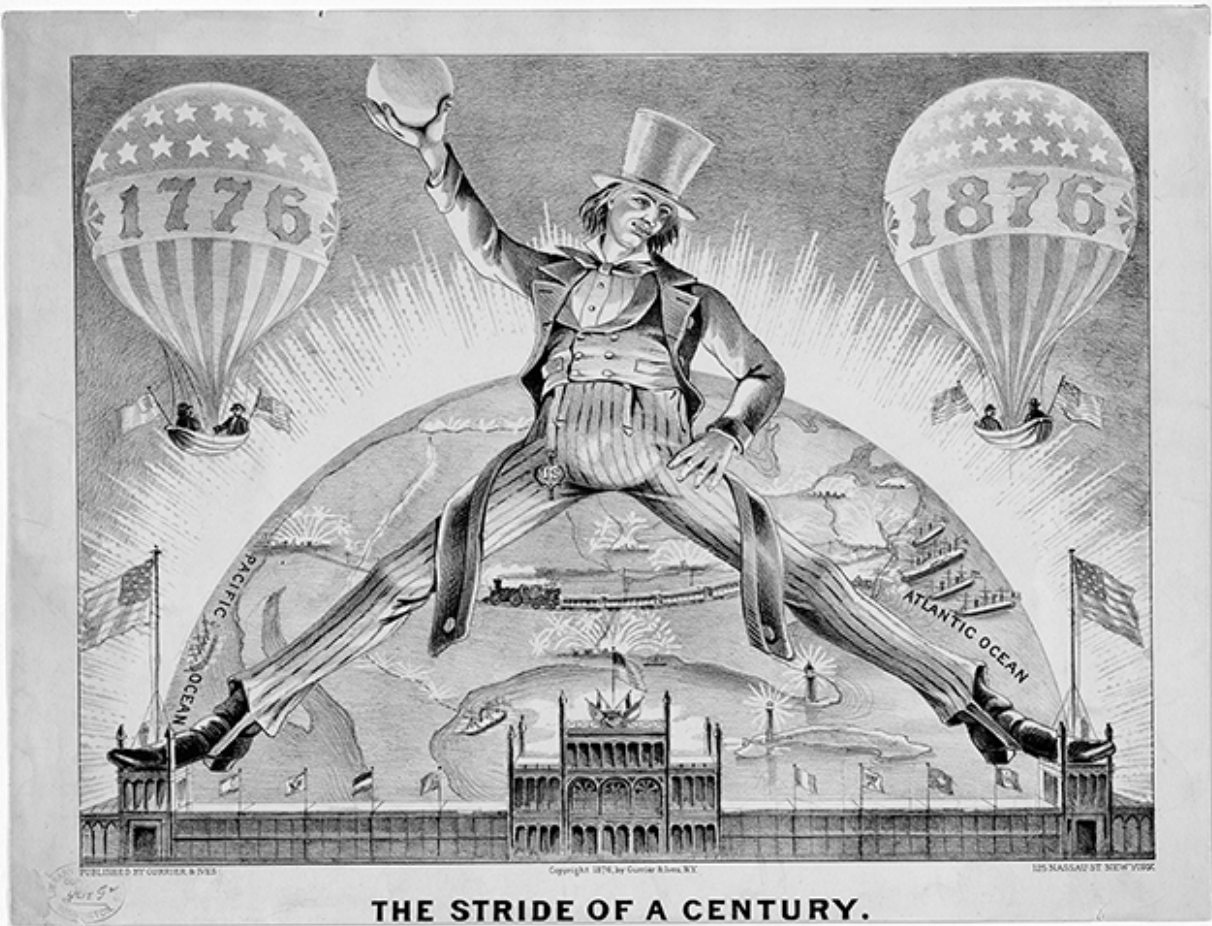
CHAPTER 8: THE COSTS OF ERASURE

This Chapter introduces the costs of erasure in two respects: first, through the inability to identify and address ongoing U.S. colonial government; and, second, through the inability to identify the "boomerang of empire" and address the ways in which forms of colonial administration, through domestic forms of top-down administrative government, have been implemented throughout the United States. The chapter explores the cost of the inability to identify and reform American colonialism through the life and perspective of Ralph Bunche, his training in colonial administration, and his pathbreaking work at the United Nations establishing rules and reporting regarding "non-

self-governing territories.” It contrasts Bunche against the forms of colonial government now applied to island colonies like Puerto Rico, as well as Native nations through the IRA and other Indian law frameworks. Next, the Chapter closes with an exploration of the costs of erasure through the lens of William Howard Taft, Felix Frankfurter, and the remnants of the implementation of colonial administration domestically, including through the unitary executive and top-down, non-accountable forms of administrative government. (I’m still mulling over whether to bring in the idea of administrative intervention domestically through Du Bois and the Freedman’s Bureau, as well as his cautions against unaccountable administrative government—despite his overall support of the ability of administration to solve the problems of racism and other forms of domestic inequality.)

EPILOGUE

The Epilogue concludes the book with reference to the ways in which those people subjected to colonial administration have resisted the most virulent forms of top-down administrative government, and what we can learn from those lessons in beginning to rethink a future science of colonial government and particular reforms for those institutions of government that we all live with today. The Epilogue opens with the story of White Earth Ojibwe brothers, Augustus “Gus” & Theodore Beaulieu’s efforts to found a tribal newspaper on the White Earth Reservation in the late nineteenth century. Indian Agent Major Timothy Sheehan then seized the press once he heard that the Beaulieu brothers planned to print, in the first edition of the paper, arguments that the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian agent system violated the United States Constitution. The brothers were able to secure the return of the press and finally publish their tribal newspaper following a state law suit charging theft against Agent Sheehan, as well as a congressional hearing that would develop over the years to inspire the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934—the statute that still governs the relationship between the United States and tribal governments today.



In 1876, the United States marked one hundred years of independence with the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, the country's first world fair. Millions traveled to the city to celebrate what one broadside described as "The Stride of a Century"³⁹—the expansion and development of a country that, as another put it, began as "THREE millions of colonists on a strip by the sea" and, a century later, numbered "FORTY millions of freemen ruling from ocean to ocean."⁴⁰ The celebration presented a national narrative that the country was eager to tell about itself: that its

³⁹ *The Stride of a Century*, lithograph (New York: Currier & Ives, 1876), Popular Graphic Arts, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, LC-DIG-pga-05034, <https://lccn.loc.gov/93506699>.

⁴⁰ *Centennial Commemoration at Philadelphia, July 4, 1776–1876: Three Millions of Colonists on a Strip by the Sea; Now Forty Millions of Freemen Ruling from Ocean to Ocean*, color woodcut poster, (1876), Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, LC-USZC4-8269, <https://lccn.loc.gov/2001695178>.

expansion and development were not historical accidents but comprised the very engine of state building and the path to national maturation. The American experiment had, according to this national myth, not merely survived its first century; it had progressed through successive stages of territorial expansion, political unrest, and diverse state development toward the form of a modern nation-state.

The Centennial Exposition celebrated not only American achievement, but also a particular theory of political development. Expansion was not simply the ad hoc accumulation of territory; it was a process through which a diverse people become a nation, fragmented jurisdictions become unified under a common political identity, and a state matures into a modern constitutional government. The year 1876 was also, and not coincidentally, a prescient year for the scientific study of American government.

The scholars who would soon convert that national narrative into a scientific discipline arrived at their academic appointments only a few months later. That fall, John William Burgess assumed a professorship at Columbia University, where he would found the first department of political science in the United States in 1880 and become known as “the father of American political science.”⁴¹ Herbert Baxter Adams, meanwhile, began a fellowship that same semester at the newly-established Johns Hopkins University, where he would become the “founding father of professional historians” and, in 1884, establish the American Historical Association.⁴²

Their appointments marked the beginning of two disciplines that, though they would later separate, emerged from a shared intellectual foundation. Political science and history were both rooted in a broader nineteenth-century effort to understand how fragmented political communities

⁴¹ Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus, *The Development of American Political Science: From Burgess to Behavioralism* (1967; New York: Irvington, 1982); Dennis J. Mahoney, *Politics and Progress: The Emergence of American Political Science*, foreword by Harry V. Jaffa (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004).

⁴² W. Barksdale Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

transformed themselves into modern nation-states. And it is no accident that the scholars who founded these disciplines had been trained to see nations as organic entities that expanded, developed, and unified over time. Both Burgess and Adams had arrived at their academic appointments following remarkably similar educational paths. Each had trained in history at Amherst college before joining the thousands of young Americans flocking to the recently unified German Empire for educational opportunities in the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁴³ What many of these young scholars carried home was not only a doctoral degree, but a shared discipline, method, and, ultimately, a shared focus of inquiry: the development of peoples and nations over time.

The Call of the German Academy

To understand why an American with scholarly ambitions in these years looked east, it helps to first appreciate how little U.S. universities could offer these students at home. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, higher educational institutions within the United States expanded rapidly in scale. The Morrill Land Grant Act, passed in 1862, supported the development of U.S. universities, particularly across the west.⁴⁴ Under the Act, States could apply for 30,000 acre “land scrips” of public lands on which to build public universities, provided that the resulting institutions contributed to public knowledge through instruction in areas such as agriculture, mechanical arts, and the applied sciences.

⁴³ Charles Franklin Thwing, *The American and the German University: One Hundred Years of History* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 12; and, for scholarly treatments, Jürgen Herbst, *The German Historical School in American Scholarship: A Study in the Transfer of Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965); Carl Diehl, “Innocents Abroad: American Students in German Universities, 1810–1870,” *History of Education Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1976): 321–41; and Konrad H. Jarausch, “American Students in Germany, 1815–1914: The Structure of German and U.S. Matriculants at Göttingen University,” in *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917*, ed. Henry Geitz, Jürgen Heideking, and Jürgen Herbst (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 195–212.

⁴⁴ An Act Donating Public Lands to the Several States and Territories which may provide Colleges for the Benefit of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, ch. 130, 12 Stat. 503 (1862).

Yet these newly founded educational programs lacked the depth and institutional infrastructure required to sustain advanced research. Prior to the Civil War, graduate education in the United States remained largely limited to the master's degree, and many colleges focused those masters programs on applied sciences, paradigmatically agriculture.⁴⁵ Few universities, predominantly located on the east coast, aspired to be research institutions comparable to those emerging in Europe.⁴⁶ Yale University, for instance, awarded the first class of doctorate of philosophy degrees in the United States in 1861 to three students, including Eugene Schuyler, who notably became the first American to travel to central Europe and later studied the colonial administration of Czarist Russia.⁴⁷ But degree programs of this kind were rare, and the institutional apparatus required to sustain them remained thin.⁴⁸ American colleges could educate citizens and professionals, but they had not yet developed the seminar systems, archival collections, research cultures, library infrastructure, and faculties necessary to train scholars who would contribute to the production of knowledge itself.

That scarcity mattered because these nascent scientific disciplines—including history, political science, and sociology—were then the primary domains for contesting the great political questions of the age. It was within the realms of science and scholarship that contemporary debates unfolded about state-development, including the benefits and burdens of expansion, the transformation of empires into nation-states, the relationship between peoples and governments, and the conditions required for modern constitutional governments to form.⁴⁹ These debates,

⁴⁵ Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (1962; Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990); and Roger L. Geiger, ed., *The American College in the Nineteenth Century* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000).

⁴⁶ Rudolph, *American College and University*, 248-49.

⁴⁷ Ralph P. Rosenberg, "The First American Doctor of Philosophy Degree: A Centennial Salute to Yale, 1861-1961," *Journal of Higher Education* 32, no. 7 (October 1961): 388; see also Eugene Schuyler, *Turkistan: Notes of a Journey in Russian Turkistan, Khokand, Bukhara, and Kuldja*, 2 vols. (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, 1876).

⁴⁸ Note here critique of McDonald's Harvard PhD dissertation of 78 (badly) handwritten pages

⁴⁹ Stefan Collini, Donald Winch, and John Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 15.

though academic, were not wholly rooted in abstractions. Across the nineteenth-century world, as former empires fractured and unified into nation-states, governments confronted these matters as pressing practical problems. The latter half of century witnessed efforts to consolidate fragmented jurisdictions, standardize law and administration, define national populations, and create political institutions capable of governing increasingly expansive and increasingly urban, densely populated territories.⁵⁰ The making of modern nation-states became simultaneously a political project and an intellectual problem. Scholars sought to explain the forces driving national development and to harness that knowledge to support further development.

American universities, however, were poorly equipped to participate these debates. They lacked structured graduate programs, professionalized research communities, and the disciplinary fields and methods required to train doctoral students in the emerging academic sciences.⁵¹ For such training, prospective American scholars were told to look eastward to the highly valued doctoral degrees offered by universities within the German Empire and, particularly, the Kingdom of Prussia. The contrast between the model of the American college and that of the German university was notable. Whereas American colleges traditionally emphasized broad moral and civic education, Prussian institutions increasingly focused on the production of knowledge through student-led research seminars, archival investigation, and the systematic methods of empirical scholarship.⁵² Graduate students in Germany did not simply memorize existing knowledge through lectures. They apprenticed themselves in the research process itself. Through the seminar method, students

⁵⁰ Political scientist Daniel Ziblatt refers to this decisive period in European political development as the “national moment” that saw the creation of modern nation-states across Europe like that of “Greece, Belgium, Italy, Germany Bulgaria, and Romania,” as well as the newly unified German Empire. Daniel Ziblatt, “Rethinking the Origins of Federalism: Puzzle, Theory, and Evidence from Nineteenth-Century Europe,” *World Politics* 57, no. 1 (October 2004): 70–98; and Ziblatt, “Introduction: How Nation-States Are Made,” chap. 1 in *Structuring the State: The Formation of Italy and Germany and the Puzzle of Federalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

⁵¹ Rudolph, *American College and University*, 244–45.

⁵² Fritz K. Ringer, “Higher Education in Germany in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 2, no. 3 (July 1967): 123–38; see also Herbert B. Adams, *Methods of Historical Study*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, 2nd ser., nos. 1–2 (Baltimore: N. Murray, 1884).

worked directly with primary sources, debated interpretations, and learned the practices through which scholarly claims were constructed and defended. Unlike many American academics, German faculties were expected not only to teach but to disseminate original research through publication, contributing directly to the production of knowledge in their disciplines. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, Germany had become the leading producer of academic publications in the world.⁵³

American scholars who studied in Germany thus gained valuable disciplinary and methodological training. As importantly, they absorbed a set of beliefs about what scholarship should focus on and what it could accomplish. The German historical sciences did not merely seek to describe political development after it had occurred. These scholars sought to uncover the principles through which peoples, governments, and states developed over time so that they could shape that development. Americans arrived in a newly unified German Empire where questions of national identity, administrative government, legal uniformity, and state formation were not only objects of academic inquiry but ongoing governmental projects. The same institutions that trained scholars to analyze historical development existed within a society actively experimenting with a range of interventions to produce that development.

For Burgess and Adams in particular, this convergence of theory and praxis proved formative. Their German education prepared them to view the modern nation-state not as a fixed category but as a historical achievement—something produced through the discursive interaction of peoples, governments, law, and administration over time. The question that would follow them

⁵³ Rainald von Gیزیcki, "Centre and Periphery in the International Scientific Community: Germany, France and Great Britain in the 19th Century," *Minerva* 11, no. 4 (October 1973): 474-94; George Haines IV, "German Influence upon Scientific Instruction in England, 1867-1887," *Victorian Studies* 1, no. 3 (March 1958): 215-44; and Heinz Sarkowski, "The Growth and Decline of German Scientific Publishing 1850-1945," in *A Century of Science Publishing: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Einar H. Fredriksson (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2001), 25; R. Steven Turner, "The Growth of Professorial Research in Prussia, 1818 to 1848 — Causes and Context," *Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences* 3 (1971): 137-82; Lenore O'Boyle, "Learning for Its Own Sake: The German University as Nineteenth-Century Model," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 25, no. 1 (January 1983): 3-25.

home was therefore not simply how to understand the reality of the United States in 1876. It was how the United States might develop from a patchwork of confederated jurisdictions into a modern and unified nation-state, and how they might harness science to contribute to that development.

Coming of Age Amidst Conflict

If the German seminar supplied the method, Burgess and Adams's own respective histories supplied the motive. Both men came of age on a continent fragmented by decades of conflict, with borders and governments defined by successive movements of annexation, conquest, settlement, and invasion that had left North America a patchwork of contested and varied jurisdictions.⁵⁴ Territories, states, federal governments, Native nations, military occupations, and other contested forms of authority defined the political landscape of the long nineteenth century.⁵⁵ They also came of age in a country increasingly preoccupied with the costs of that fragmentation, and each learned early on what such costs meant on a human level. Born on either side of what would become a war over human enslavement, as well as over the arc of history for North America, Burgess and Adams first encountered questions of national unity not as an abstract philosophical problem but as a defining personal and national experience. Both men encountered the German project of nation-building with a particular sensitivity because they had themselves witnessed how a loose and expanding confederation struggled again and again over whether the Union would hold.⁵⁶

Burgess, born in 1844 in Cornersville, Tennessee, to a family that enslaved Black people, experienced the sectional conflict within the community that had raised him and whose political

⁵⁴ Before the Civil War, the United States more closely resembled a "union with serious imperial ambitions" and it only "became a nation, a nation-state—as many others did—in the midst of a massive political and military struggle in the 1860s; and that the new American nation reconfigured the character of its empire." Steven Hahn, *A Nation Without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830–1910*, vol. 3 of *The Penguin History of the United States*, ed. Eric Foner (New York: Viking, 2016); Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860–1898* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963); see also Dorothy Ross, "'Are We a Nation?': The Conjunction of Nationhood and Race in the United States, 1850–1876," *Modern Intellectual History* 2, no. 3 (2005): 327–60.

⁵⁵ Paul Frymer, *Building an American Empire: The Era of Territorial and Political Expansion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

⁵⁶ Hahn, "Death of a Union," chap. 6 in *Nation Without Borders*, 192–232.

future the war would determine.⁵⁷ His undergraduate education was cut short when he fled his first university, Cumberland in Lebanon, Tennessee, during the Civil War.⁵⁸ Although Burgess's family supported the institution of human enslavement, they had long supported the Union as the proper political outcome for the United States.⁵⁹ Caught in the middle of war that divided his home-state, Burgess fled deeper into Union Army-occupied territory in West Tennessee, where Union forces eventually pressed him into military service.⁶⁰

Primarily tasked with repairing southern infrastructure, including railroad trestles and bridges, Burgess later described the transformation he experienced while working deep in the Tennessee swamps and under attack by Confederate forces: "I then registered the vow in Heaven that, if a kind Providence should deliver me alive from the perils of war, I would devote my life to teaching men how to live by reason and compromise instead of by bloodshed and destruction."⁶¹ The vocation and science to which Burgess would eventually commit that vow—the scientific study of how nations form, develop, and hold together—was, in his own telling, forged in the swamps of a country that was coming apart. His scholarly path was not driven by mere intellectual curiosity about constitutions and institutions, but, as it he would later describe it, by fundamental questions of survival: how could a people divided by fundamental disagreements over values and governments remain unified?⁶²

After the war, Burgess would again take up his studies, but this time at Amherst College in

⁵⁷ William R. Shepard, John William Burgess, in Howard W. Odum, ed., *American Masters of Social Science* (New York: Henry Holt, 1927), 23-60; Ralph Gordon Hoxie, "John W. Burgess, American Scholar, Book I: The Founding of the Faculty of Political Science" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1950), ProQuest (304360232); and John W. Burgess, *Reminiscences of an American Scholar: The Beginnings of Columbia University* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934). Odum, Howard W., ed. *American Masters of Social Science*. New York: Henry Holt, 1927.

⁵⁸ Hoxie, "John W. Burgess, American Scholar," 16–21.

⁵⁹ William R. Shepard, John William Burgess, in Odum, *American Masters of Social Science*, 24.

⁶⁰ Hoxie, "John W. Burgess, American Scholar," 22–24.

⁶¹ Burgess, *Reminiscences of an American Scholar*, 29.

⁶² "American nationhood, free of sectionalism at home and of control abroad, was an inspiration to the boy's childhood, and an ideal of his later years." William R. Shepard, John William Burgess, in Odum, *American Masters of Social Science*, 24.

the North and only a few short miles from the lands where Herbert Baxter Adams's family had lived for generations.⁶³ Adam's relationship to place and lineage was as settled as Burgess's had been disrupted. He took pride in his Puritan ancestry and grew up in a home deeply enmeshed with the town and institution of Amherst. Educated in Amherst public schools and briefly refined at Philips Exeter, Adams took a far less circuitous route to Amherst College, where he would arrive just a few short years after Burgess.

These divergent experiences would later shape Burgess and Adam's distinct perspectives on the question of how political unity could coexist with geographic expansion and social diversity. Burgess, who experienced first-hand the collapse of government amidst expansion by decentralized government, became drawn to the problem of political organization and the constitutional structures and administrative processes through which peoples could achieve unity.⁶⁴ Adams, whose experience was more rooted in continuity and institutional development, became drawn to the historical processes through which governments themselves evolved.⁶⁵

Yet however divergent their origins and later perspectives, both men would leave Amherst for Germany carrying the conviction that the fate of their people turned on whether, and how, they could remain unified under a singular form of government.

Burgess's Lessons Abroad

Burgess reached Germany first, in the summer of 1871, five years before arriving at Columbia, and he did so in the company of a classmate whose future academic career in physics

⁶³ John Martin Vincent, "Herbert Baxter Adams," in *American Masters of Social Science*, ed. Howard W. Odum (New York: Henry Holt, 1927), 99–127; John W. Burgess, "How I Found Amherst College and What I Found," *Amherst Graduates' Quarterly* 17 (1927): 3–XX.

⁶⁴ Wilfred M. McClay, "John W. Burgess and the Search for Cohesion in American Political Thought," *Polity* 26, no. 1 (Autumn 1993): 51–73.

⁶⁵ Raymond J. Cunningham, "Is History Past Politics? Herbert Baxter Adams as Precursor of the 'New History,'" *History Teacher* 9, no. 2 (February 1976): 244–57; and John Higham, "Herbert Baxter Adams and the Study of Local History," *American Historical Review* 89, no. 5 (December 1984): 1225–1239; Raymond J. Cunningham, "The German Historical World of Herbert Baxter Adams: 1874–1876," *Journal of American History* 68, no. 2 (September 1981): 261–75.

would rival his own in political science.⁶⁶ That summer, Burgess and his Amherst classmate, the physicist-in-training Elihu Root (not to be confused with his famous statesman cousin of the same name), set sail for Germany aboard the steamship *SS Tarifa* from Boston. The trans-Atlantic journey took nearly sixteen dark and unsettling days. Their bedrooms were located at the very end of the ship, a position that exposed them to every shift in the vessel's motion, and the small windows in each room were almost always under water.

The two classmates eventually landed in London and made their way across Europe just in time to witness what Burgess would later describe as the “grand entrée” of the German army as it paraded through the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin on June 16, 1871.⁶⁷ Only months earlier, the end of the Franco-Prussian War set the stage for formal unification of the German Empire into a modern nation-state.⁶⁸ The now-unified German army marched beneath the leadership of the newly-crowned Emperor Wilhelm I, himself accompanied by the heads of the individual states that had been consolidated into the new empire.

For Burgess, the spectacle was more than a military celebration. It was a visible demonstration of a political transformation that would become a near-singular academic obsession. He was witnessing a former patchwork of independent jurisdictions present itself as a unified nation. A people who had long been divided among competing states, legal systems, and political authorities now appeared before him as a single political community organized around a shared national identity and a centralized constitutional government. Decades later, he continued to return to the scene as a foundational moment in his understanding of government, and he repeatedly drew parallels between

⁶⁶ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 86; Hoxie, “John W. Burgess, American Scholar,” 106–9.

⁶⁷ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 89; Hoxie, “John W. Burgess, American Scholar,” 110. Although his biographer, Hoxie, raises some doubt as to Burgess's having witnessed either of these parades, given the timing of them and the peculiarities of Burgess's travel timeline.

⁶⁸ Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870–1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Theodore S. Hamerow, *The Social Foundations of German Unification, 1858–1871*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969–72): vol. 1, *Ideas and Institutions* (1969); vol. 2, *Struggles and Accomplishments* (1972).

the Berlin parade and his own experiences as a Union soldier witnessing the return of the Grand Army of the Republic as they paraded through the streets of Washington, D.C. after the Civil War.⁶⁹

The United States and Germany, Burgess believed, were facing remarkably similar political moments. Both began as a loosely confederated and contested empires; both had experienced internal conflict over the nature of political union; and both faced the challenge, following years of war, of transforming those fragmented jurisdictions into modern states capable of exercising authority across those expanding territories.⁷⁰ The Berlin parade, he would later remark, conveyed a far greater “manifestation of power” than anything he had previously witnessed.⁷¹ The German parade did not merely signal the end of a particular conflict within a tenuous union; it signaled the intention to construct a nation-state that had never before existed in that form. Thereafter, it was the study of the political conditions that had produced this powerful expression of nationalist unification to which Burgess would commit his scholarly life.

The parallels that Burgess drew between these two nations might, at first blush, appear inapt. After all, the empire whose army marched through the Brandenburg Gate that fateful June day had, until very recently, never been a nation at all.⁷² Yet for Burgess and other scholars of the period, who did not yet take for granted the familiar political geography of the United States stretching from “ocean to ocean,” the American nation was itself still in the earliest stages of consolidation. The United States remained a landscape of diverse and competing jurisdictions, of states, territories, military districts, Native nations, and contested borderlands.⁷³ The Civil War had resolved some

⁶⁹ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 89-90.

⁷⁰ James J. Sheehan, *German History, 1770–1866*, Oxford History of Modern Europe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

⁷¹ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 89.

⁷² As historian James Sheehan began his comprehensive *German History, 1770-1866*, “[w]e can begin this book on German history from 1770 to 1866 by stating the equally obvious and no less significant fact that ‘Germany’ did not exist.” James J. Sheehan, *German History, 1770–1866*, Oxford History of Modern Europe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

⁷³ Daniel Ziblatt, “The National Moment in Germany: The Dynamics of Regionalism and National Unification, 1834–1871,” chap. 3 in *Structuring the State: The Formation of Italy and Germany and the Puzzle of Federalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 32–56.

questions of union, but it had not eliminated the broader problems of territorial governance, political membership, and national identity.⁷⁴

Germany offered Burgess a model for understanding those problems. Like the United States, what would become the German Empire existed before unification as a loose confederation of diverse jurisdictions. Before 1871, a patchwork of thirty-five predominantly German-speaking states occupied central Europe, each maintaining distinct forms of government and each with its own body of laws.⁷⁵ Much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had been consumed by competition among those jurisdictions, particularly between northern and southern contingents, as different political powers sought dominance over the future of the confederation and its expanding empire.⁷⁶

The southern contingent, led by the linguistically and culturally diverse Austrian Empire, had historically exercised substantial influence over the confederation and pursued expansion across central and eastern Europe.⁷⁷ That balance shifted decisively when the North German Confederation, dominated by the predominantly Protestant and German-speaking Kingdom of Prussia, entered into conflict with the southern, Catholic Church-led Austrian Empire. Following Prussian victory in 1866, Prussia excluded Austria from the emerging German political order,⁷⁸ much as the Union victory in the American Civil War had resulted in the temporary exclusion of the former Confederate states from participation in Congress and the national government.

The analogy between Prussia's victory and Union victory was not lost upon American observers.⁷⁹ In both cases, war became the mechanism through which competing political visions

⁷⁴ Hahn, *Nation Without Borders*, 449–500.

⁷⁵ Ziblatt, *Structuring the State*, 48; Abigail Green, *Fatherlands: State-Building and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, New Studies in European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁷⁶ Green, *Fatherlands*, 9.

⁷⁷ Wawro, *Franco-Prussian War*, 45.

⁷⁸ *Id.*

⁷⁹ *Id.*

were resolved and stronger national authority emerged. German unification in the latter half of the nineteenth century, however, was less a “reconstruction” of a nation-state that had fractured amidst war than the “construction” of a modern German nation-state for the first time: a nation-state built in the image of Prussian primacy.⁸⁰ Following formal unification in January of 1871, the German Empire confederated the remaining twenty-five distinctive states into a singular nation. Above all, Prussia retained primary structural control over the federation, and Prussia’s hereditary king became the emperor of Germany and appointed the head of government, the chancellor. Nevertheless, at least initially, each distinct state retained their original forms of government, from aristocracy to monarchy to territory.⁸¹

Viewing the confederation as fragile because of its diversity, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck oversaw a formalized process to transform that loose confederation into his idealized image of a modern nation-state from 1871-76—the very years during which Burgess and Baxter Adams came of scholarly age within the German Empire.⁸² Nationalization, Bismarck believed, required more than formal political consolidation. It required the creation of shared institutions, standardized laws, and national identity capable of binding together populations that had long understood themselves through local and regional affiliations.⁸³ For, Burgess and Adams, these efforts provided both an archive and a laboratory. The nascent German Empire was a place where the process of state formation, administrative consolidation, and national development could be observed in situ.

Burgess and Adams’s German training placed them at the center of the scholarly project that theorized these processes, and they were mentored by a lineage of teachers who understood the science of history as the study of how peoples, governments, and nations develop over time.

⁸⁰ Ziblatt, *Structuring the State*, 48; Green, *Fatherlands*, 9.

⁸¹ *Id.*

⁸² Erich Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1950).

⁸³ *Id.*

Burgess was guided in his German graduate training by the famed U.S. historian George Bancroft, who had served as U.S. Minister to Prussia since 1867.⁸⁴ Bancroft, who himself had travelled from New England to study at Gottingen and Berlin, trained directly under the late philosopher Georg Hegel at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin,⁸⁵ an experience which instilled in him a vision of history as the study of “Geist”—a term Hegel coined to capture the spirit of development and progress.⁸⁶

As Burgess’s “patron and the director of [his] studies,” Bancroft crafted a program of instruction for Burgess that guided him through the intellectual centers of the German Empire, taking him from Gottingen to Leipzig and ultimately to the University of Berlin.⁸⁷ There, Burgess soon gravitated to Hegel’s former student and most prominent successor, Johann Gustav Droysen, under whom he completed his doctoral studies. It was from Droysen that Burgess would learn “the methods of historical research and construction,” through coursework, seminar study in Droysen’s home, and as a researcher working within the Prussian archives that Droysen had personally constructed and developed.⁸⁸

Droysen’s “national archive” was a central pillar of his method and represented the material foundation of his understanding of history itself.⁸⁹ A nation could not be constructed solely through a collection of stories or national memories. The modern nation-state required a body of documentary evidence through which scholars could scientifically reconstruct the development of

⁸⁴ M. Patricia Dougherty, *American Diplomats and the Franco-Prussian War: Perceptions from Paris and Berlin*, foreword by Peter F. Krogh (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University, 1980); and Henry Blumenthal, “George Bancroft in Berlin: 1867–1874,” *New England Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (June 1964): 224–41.

⁸⁵ Bancroft was one of a handful of students whom Harvard had subsidized to continue their studies in Germany after graduation. Carl Diehl, “Innocents Abroad: American Students in German Universities, 1810–1870,” *History of Education Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1976): 341. He could also have been the first American to receive a PhD from a German university. *Id.* at 337 (noting Robert Bridges Patton as the second recipient after Bancroft).

⁸⁶ See, e.g., Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Hegel und der geschichtliche Geist,” *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 100, no. 1–2 (1940): 25–37.

⁸⁷ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 121.

⁸⁸ *Id.* at 126.

⁸⁹ Johann Gustav Droysen, *Outline of the Principles of History (Grundriss der Historik)*, trans. E. Benjamin Andrews, with a biographical sketch of the author by Hermann Krüger (Boston: Ginn, 1893).

political communities within the nation over time. The archives of the state, therefore, served as an empirical foundation for claims made by the science of history about national development, allowing historians to trace the origins, struggles, and eventual consolidation of governments and peoples.⁹⁰

Burgess described Droysen not only as a model scholarly mentor but as an ideal scholar-citizen.⁹¹ Droysen demonstrated how academic inquiry could be directly connected to the pressing political questions of the era. More specifically, he modelled how the careful study of historical development could provide insight into the formation of modern nation-states and offer guidance to those engaged in their construction.

Like Burgess, Droysen's early life was shaped by the costs of fragmentation: war, conflict, and occupation.⁹² Droysen was born in Pomerania, now modern-day Poland, in the months following French occupation during the Napoleonic Wars. During his early childhood, Pomerania was occupied yet again, as Prussian forces recaptured the territory and incorporated it into a broader project of administrative reform. For the next sixty years, from 1808 until German unification in 1871, Pomerania underwent successive processes of administrative integration and nationalization under Prussian oversight, as officials sought to integrate diverse territories into a more centralized political order. Reformers such as Karl August von Hardenberg and, later, Otto von Bismark transformed the structures of government through administrative reform, the development of railroads, agricultural reform, electoral restructuring, and efforts toward secularization through the reorganization of the relationship between religious institutions and the state.

⁹⁰ *Id.*

⁹¹ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 126.

⁹² Robert Fairbairn Southard, "The Rise of the Prussian School to 1851: The Historical-Political Careers of Droysen, Duncker, Haym, and Sybel" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1974), ProQuest (302712113): iv.

Droysen developed an early attachment to the Prussian Empire that his biographers attribute to his longstanding commitment to German unification.⁹³ During the first phase of professional life, he pursued that commitment directly, serving as an early member of the Frankfurt Parliament, a product of the 1848 revolutionary movement toward German unification. Droysen also served as secretary to the thirty-member drafting committee that produced the Frankfurt Constitution, an early effort to create a unified German government through parliamentary institutions and constitutional authority.⁹⁴ Although the effort failed when the Prussian King refused to accept the German imperial crown in April 1849, the constitutional framework they developed was not forgotten. The 1871 North German Constitution, which referenced heavily Droysen's draft, served as the foundation for the constitution of the German Empire, and the latter would borrow the Frankfurt Constitution's national parliamentary framework coupled with a hereditary emperor.⁹⁵

After the failure of the Frankfurt Parliament and its unification movement in 1848, Droysen translated his passion for unification from legislative advocacy and constitutional drafting to its theorization through historical scholarship. If he could not directly construct the preconditions of a unified Germany, he could analyze and disseminate the historical processes through which such a nation-state would emerge and demonstrate why Prussia represented its natural unifying force. Over his lifetime, Droysen produced the definitive historical account of Prussian development. His fourteen-volume *History of Prussian Politics*, the last volume of which was published posthumously by

⁹³ Edward Włodarczyk, "Conditions of the Economic Development of Towns in the Province of Pomerania in the Interwar Period," trans. Agnieszka Chabros, *Zapiski Historyczne* 83, no. 1 (2018): 111–36, <https://doi.org/10.15762/ZH.2018.18>; Jan Musekamp, *Shifting Lines, Entangled Borderlands: Mobilities and Migration along the Prussian Eastern Railroad* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2024); and Patrick O'Brien, ed., *Railways and the Economic Development of Western Europe, 1830–1914*, St Antony's Series (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1983).

⁹⁴ Mark Hewitson, "The Old Forms are Breaking Up, ... Our New Germany is Rebuilding Itself: Constitutionalism, Nationalism and the Creation of a German Polity during the Revolutions of 1848–49," *English Historical Review* 125, no. 516 (October 2010): 1173–1214; and James J. Sheehan, "A Political Professor: A New Biography of J. G. Droysen," review of *Johann Gustav Droysen: Ein Leben zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik*, by Wilfried Nippel, *German History* 27, no. 4 (October 2009): 580–82.

⁹⁵ Hewitson, "The Old Forms are Breaking Up," ____.

the Berlin publisher Verlag von Veit & Company, presented Prussia's rise not as an accident of power politics or war but as the culmination of a longer, and more principled historical development.⁹⁶ Volume by volume, Droysen's history traced the emergence of Prussia as the political force capable of ushering forth German unity.

Droysen carried his perspectives on unification and development of the nation-state directly into his lectures and lessons on the burgeoning science of history and the ongoing debate over historical methodologies. Like many of his era, the question of method to Droysen became inseparable from the question of history's purpose. His 1858 précis on historical methodologies, *Outline of the Principles of History*, introduced the fundamental principles of history as the empirical study of the "constant development" and "ceaseless growth" of peoples within a "moral world" (*sittliche Welt*) that structured the experiences of peoples and their development over time.⁹⁷ Collectively, the moral world in which people lived and the development of those peoples over time within that world constituted the "Geist" or "spirit" of the age that history sought to capture.⁹⁸ Droysen borrowed the term "Geist" directly from his teacher, Hegel, as later, Burgess and his fellow scholars, borrowed the term from Droysen.⁹⁹

Training in history and historical methods, Droysen described, aimed to equip the scholarly eye to see the Geist in earlier ages and to inscribe it in the present. "Historical things," Droysen argued, "have their truth in moral forces"—that is, in the development of a shared moral world between peoples—and "to *think* historically" was to see the "truth in the actualities resulting from that moral energy."¹⁰⁰ As Droysen argued in his earliest work, documenting the history of Alexander

⁹⁶ Johann Gustav Droysen, *Geschichte der preußischen Politik* [History of Prussian politics], 5 pts. in 14 vols. (Berlin and Leipzig: Veit, 1855–86).

⁹⁷ Johann Gustav Droysen, *Outline of the Principles of History (Grundriss der Historik)*, trans. E. Benjamin Andrews, with a biographical sketch of the author by Hermann Krüger (Boston: Ginn, 1893).

⁹⁸ *Id.* at 46; 92.

⁹⁹ See, e.g., Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Hegel und der geschichtliche Geist," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 100, no. 1–2 (1940): 25–37.

¹⁰⁰ Droysen, *Outline of the Principles of History*, —.

the Great, ultimate progress or Geist was achieved through expansion and the inevitable unification of culture and state that expansion wrought.

Unification was, thus, the work of empires spreading their own visions of reason, language, and culture. Put simply, Droysen saw the Geist toward the unified modern nation-state as a result of conquest, invasion, and top-down administrative government.¹⁰¹ Further, “historical thinking,” according to Droysen, could facilitate the process of moral development in the present.¹⁰² In his telling, history was not merely a passive record of inevitable progress. Rather, by studying processes of unification and nationalization, the methods and science could be used as an active instrument of national development—an irresistible draw for scholars like Burgess who hoped for unification and nationalization within the United States.

Adams Abroad

In the summer of 1783, just as Burgess was called from Germany to join the faculty of Amherst College,¹⁰³ Herbert Baxter Adams completed his undergraduate education at Amherst and left for Germany.¹⁰⁴ Likely passing each other in steamships across the Atlantic, Adams made his way through Europe and began navigating German universities as Burgess had before.¹⁰⁵ He even took up lodgings in Berlin under the recommendation of Burgess’s former travel companion and fellow Amherst alum, Elihu Root.¹⁰⁶ Like Burgess, Adams began his studies through the seminar method and under the tutelage of Johann Gustav Droysen. Yet where Burgess completed his training with Droysen’s science of history, Adams would become a pupil of Johann Kaspar Bluntschli—one of Burgess’s early professors of constitutional law at the University of Heidelberg

¹⁰¹ Johann Gustav Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen* [History of Alexander the Great] (Hamburg: Friedrich Perthes, 1833).

¹⁰² Droysen, *Outline of the Principles of History*, ____.

¹⁰³ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 138.

¹⁰⁴ Vincent, “Masters of Social Science,” 471.

¹⁰⁵ Cunningham, Raymond J. “The German Historical World of Herbert Baxter Adams: 1874–1876.” *Journal of American History* 68, no. 2 (1981): 261–75.

¹⁰⁶ *Id.* at 265.

and the then-president of the Institute of International Law.¹⁰⁷ That difference in mentorship marked a difference in theoretical framing that each man would carry home.

The distinction was not a division between history and politics. Both Droysen and Bluntschli rejected the idea that states simply existed as fixed political arrangements independent of historical circumstances, and both sought to explain how peoples and governments developed through processes of growth, conflict, adaptation, and institutional change.¹⁰⁸ Their difference lay in where they located the primary force of development. Droysen emphasized that the development of a shared moral world, or *Geist*, drove communities toward increasingly unified and refined political forms. Bluntschli, by contrast, identified the forces of state building, unification, and nationalization within the institutions of the state itself.¹⁰⁹ The institutions, laws, and governmental structures were the forces through which societies were organized and transformed. For Burgess, Droysen provided a framework for understanding national development as a historical movement toward the modern nation-state, which later became the focus of his new science of politics.¹¹⁰ For Adams, Bluntschli provided a framework for understanding government as the mechanism through which historical development occurred.¹¹¹

From Bluntschli, Adams learned that “Nations . . . are organic beings and as such are; subject to the natural laws of organic life.”¹¹² Nations possessed agency, stages of development, a lifespan, and a will of their own, Bluntschli argued. But unlike a purely philosophical account of historical progress through reason or moral development, Bluntschli emphasized the concrete mechanisms through which development occurred. “[G]overnment and law are the real forces

¹⁰⁷ *Id.*; Herbert B. Adams, *Bluntschli's Life-Work* (Baltimore: John Murphy, 1884), 21.

¹⁰⁸ Johann Caspar Bluntschli, *The Theory of the State*, authorized English translation from the sixth German edition, trans. D. G. Ritchie, P. E. Matheson, and R. Lodge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885).

¹⁰⁹ Cunningham, “German Historical World,” 271; Bluntschli, *Theory of the State*, ____.

¹¹⁰ Droysen, *Outline of the Principles of History*, ____.

¹¹¹ Bluntschli, *Theory of the State*, 85.

¹¹² *Id.* at ____.

which bind society and the world together.”¹¹³ It was laws, rather than a shared culture or common spirit, that structured social worlds, and administrative intervention that transformed political communities from the top-down. The establishment of governments and the use of law and administration pressed world development toward what Bluntschli described as “great aggregations” of “states, empires, and federations,” including “the United States of America and the United States of Europe.”¹¹⁴ Where Droysen taught Burgess to interpret unification as a predestined result, one that arose naturally from within a shared moral world between peoples, Bluntschli taught Adams to understand the process of nationalization as a product of government.

As Burgess had witnessed the army parade through Berlin, which Droysen would teach him to see as the culmination of a more principled historical development, so Adams would witness his own teacher’s theory of development being put into legislative practice.¹¹⁵ After the establishment of the Constitution of the German Empire in April 1871, the new national government promptly undertook a range of measures aimed at building a homogenous and centralized nation-state from the top down. Legislation passed by parliament replaced state currencies with a unified national currency, the Gold Mark, and supplanted local criminal law with a national Imperial Penal Code. The parliament also led a series of judicial and administrative reforms to standardize judicial systems, civil codes, and bankruptcy laws across the empire.

Beyond wresting power away from state governments, the national parliament also undertook a series of measures regarding family law, education, and the documentation of vital

¹¹³ Herbert B. Adams, *The Study and Teaching of History*, Phi Beta Kappa address at William and Mary College, Williamsburg, Va., February 18, 1898 (Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, 1898): 73; see also Johann Caspar Bluntschli, *Lehre vom modernen Stat*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1875–76): vol. 1, *Allgemeine Statslehre* (1875); vol. 2, *Allgemeines Statsrecht* (1876); vol. 3, *Politik als Wissenschaft* (1876).

¹¹⁴ Adams, *Study and Teaching of History*, —.

¹¹⁵ Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law, 1870–1960*, Hersch Lauterpacht Memorial Lectures (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 64; Hendrik Simon, “Theorising Order in the Shadow of War: The Politics of International Legal Knowledge and the Justification of Force in Modernity,” in *Politics and the Histories of International Law: The Quest for Knowledge and Justice*, ed. Raphael Schäfer and Anne Peters, Studies in the History of International Law 18 (Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2021), 129.

statistics—measures that were aimed at both homogenization under a singular vision of Germany and the concentration of power within the nation-state.¹¹⁶ In particular, these measures sought to transfer power away from the religious institutions, most prominently the Catholic Church, that held sway within the German Empire. As the nationalized state reached into each of these previously decentralized or autonomous domains, Adams watched a theory of development become a program of administration—a lesson, in situ, in how a nation is not simply born but made and made through forms of top-down administration.

Bringing the Lessons of the German Empire Home

So it was, that in the fall of 1876, the year of the centennial, Burgess and Adams took up their academic posts at Columbia and Johns Hopkins, respectively, and began to establish American disciplines drawing upon their German education. Their arrival came at a time when the United States was attempting to define itself after a century of expansion, civil war, and state-building.¹¹⁷ In Philadelphia, the country had celebrated a century of growth and territorial expansion, but the philosophical questions underlying that celebration remained unresolved: what transformed a collection of jurisdictions into a nation-state? How did governments consolidate authority across diverse population and contested territories? What institutions and forms of development were necessary to sustain a modern constitutional nation-state?

Burgess and Adams returned from Germany with different answers to these questions, but they shared a common belief that resolving these questions would require rigorous scholarly research.¹¹⁸ The disciplines they created in the United States thus emerged not simply as academic

¹¹⁶ Erich Eyck, *Bismarck and the German Empire* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1950).

¹¹⁷ The year 1876 saw a contentious electoral contest over the future of postbellum state-building and, with it, marked an important turning point in the course of construction for a particular region, the South. But the project of construction had begun years before with subsidies to western railroads, land policy, and the violent intervention into Native and Mormon communities in the West. Hahn, *Nation Without Borders*, 362–400; White, *Republic for Which It Stands*, “Greater Reconstruction,” 103–35; and Hopkins, *American Empire*, “From ‘Union’ to ‘America,’” 377–83.

¹¹⁸ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 196–98; and Hoxie, “John W. Burgess, American Scholar,” 181–84.

fields but as sciences designed to understand the construction of modern government, and to contribute to that modernization over time.

Burgess's path, as always, remained circuitous. He initially began his teaching career at his alma mater, Amherst College, where he planned to "establish a school of political thought."¹¹⁹ His first effort toward realizing this plan began with an informal graduate seminar, organized for a small group of his most promising and ambitious undergraduates.¹²⁰ The students volunteered to continue their study after their graduation, meeting outside of the School's established curriculum, to pursue the intensive research practices that Burgess had been socialized into in Germany.

The students affectionately referred to Burgess as *Weltgeist*, roughly translated as "World Spirit"—a Hegelian term referring to the historical progression of human development toward reason and eventually political organization.¹²¹ The name reflected both Burgess's intellectual inheritance and the content of the seminar itself. Over the course of the semester, his students engaged in close study of the history of European political development from the fall of the Holy Roman Empire to the unification of the German Empire in 1871. After the semester, many of the students would eventually follow in Burgess's footsteps and head to Germany to continue their education.¹²² Some would later join Burgess in the academy, with a few of his seminar students even joining him as colleagues.¹²³

Yet the discipline of political science would not take root at Amherst College. When Burgess proposed expanding the College to include a graduate program, his colleagues balked, questioning the utility of Burgess's experimental seminar.¹²⁴ The administration even decided to

¹¹⁹ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 139; Hoxie, "John W. Burgess, American Scholar," 152–53, 164.

¹²⁰ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 140–41; Hoxie, "John W. Burgess, American Scholar," 169–70.

¹²¹ Hoxie, "John W. Burgess, American Scholar," 228.

¹²² Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 139; Hoxie, "John W. Burgess, American Scholar," 181–82.

¹²³ *Id.*

¹²⁴ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 147; Hoxie, "John W. Burgess, American Scholar," 171.

punish Burgess by adding to his formal teaching requirement. If he had the time to teach informal classes, his colleagues argued, then he had the time to teach more formal courses. Burgess' relationship with his beloved alma mater would not recover. Despite his misgivings about joining "a small old-fashioned college, or rather school" where classes were taught only from 10 am until 1 pm and all students commuted, Burgess departed for Columbia shortly thereafter.¹²⁵ There, he assumed a joint appointment in the School of Arts, where he taught history and political science, and in the School of Law, where he taught constitutional and international law.

Adams' path was once again more straightforward. He returned from Germany in the fall of 1876 to take up a fellowship at Johns Hopkins, where he would bring the study of national development into the heart of American history.¹²⁶ He also brought with him the particulars of a German graduate education, including a focus on study and interpretation of primary texts and on research. In establishing the seminary method at Hopkins, Adams began to reshape the architecture, along with its pedagogy. He constructed a legendary seminar room with walls filled with books and where, across the only wall without bookshelves, he had painted the famous phrase that embodied lessons from Droysen and Bluntschli: "History is past Politics and Politics is present History."¹²⁷

A Science for Nation-States

Burgess and Adams would eventually part ways toward their respective disciplinary homes. Yet, before Burgess established the first School of Political Science and U.S. graduate program in political science at Columbia University in 1880, what would become the discipline of American political science was widely understood as a specialized branch of the newly professionalized science of history.¹²⁸ The distinction between the two fields had not yet hardened. Rather, questions of

¹²⁵ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 161.

¹²⁶ Vincent, "Masters of Social Science," 468.

¹²⁷ Vincent, "Masters of Social Science," 471; Cunningham, "Is History Past Politics?," 248.

¹²⁸ Burgess began to challenge the orthodoxy publicly and make the case for a distinctive field of American political science at the 1896 meeting of the American Historical Association. As Secretary Herbert Baxter Adams' notes revealed,

government, constitutions, administration, and state development were generally approached through historical inquiry, and the study of politics was conceived as one component of a broader investigation into the historical development of civilization itself.¹²⁹

Throughout the nineteenth century, history furnished both the methods and the philosophical assumptions through which political life was understood.¹³⁰ The emergence of constitutional governments, the rise and fall of states, and the development of political institutions were all events interpreted as historical processes of development unfolding over time. To study politics significantly meant that, for many American scholars, to study history scientifically. The disciplinary divide that scholars now take for granted simply did not yet exist.

The early careers of Francis Lieber and Herbert Baxter Adams exemplified this unity. Lieber, the first professor of politics at Columbia and the scholar whom Burgess was hired to replace, taught both history and government.¹³¹ Likewise, Adams would later chair Johns Hopkins University's combined History and Political Science department, where he founded the now-famed

the presentation provoked strong responses on both sides, including a critique of Bluntschli's *Theory of the State* which, following English translation in 1885 was used as a foundational teaching text for the new discipline. John W. Burgess, "Political Science and History," *American Historical Review* 2, no. 3 (April 1897): 401–8; and Herbert B. Adams, "Report of the Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Meeting," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1896*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1897), 14–15. The intellectual history of the disciplines marked a similarly conjoined trajectory in Europe.

¹²⁹ Even those who sought to define "political science" constructed that definition, in large part, as a description of the discipline and methods of history. See, e.g., Bluntschli, *Theory of the State*, 1–2.

¹³⁰ In response to Burgess's presentation before the AHA in 1885, calling for an independent discipline of political science, Professor H. Morse Stephens of Yale replied: "The political scientists claim too much for themselves. They cut up the imperial body of history, taking all the vital elements for themselves, and leave the rest as a so-called 'residuum' for history." Adams, "Report of the Proceedings," 15.

¹³¹ See Francis Lieber, "History and Political Science, Necessary Studies in Free Countries ('An Inaugural Address Delivered on the 17th of February, 1858, on Assuming the Chair of History and Political Science, in Columbia College, New York')" (1858), in *Discipline and History: Political Science in the United States*, ed. James Farr and Raymond Seidelman (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 21. Yet, like Burgess and Baxter Adams, Lieber also centered the nation-state and unification within his understanding of history and political science; connections that he too saw as central between both German and the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century and connections he explored in close conversation with Bluntschli. See, e.g., "With regard to Germany, I hold to my opinion that the beginning of all good for the nation must come from its union under one head, and the demolition of the many principalities. Perhaps this can only be effected by a revolutionary king. One thing is essentially true and of the greatest importance. The national polity is the normal type of modern government. And one of the greatest processes in all history is the process of nationalization . . ." Francis Lieber to Johann Caspar Bluntschli, April 16, 1866, in *The Life and Letters of Francis Lieber*, ed. Thomas Sergeant Perry (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1882), 362.

“Johns Hopkins Seminary of History and Politics,” its very title reflecting the prevailing assumption that political questions belonged with historical scholarship. Indeed for Adams, the modern study of politics could not be separated from the historical development of peoples, institutions, and civilizations.¹³² History supplied both the empirical record and the theoretical framework through which governments could be understood.

For Burgess, however, this arrangement appeared increasingly insufficient. He believed that the emergence of modern constitutional governments, together with the rapid political transformations occurring through Europe and North America during the nineteenth century, demanded a distinct scientific enterprise. If history sought to explain the development of humanity across time, political science, in his view, should isolate and study the characteristics and preconditions of a particular object: the modern nation-state. The rise of these constitutional nation-states worldwide represented not merely another historical phenomenon, but the culmination of political development toward the pinnacle of government and politics.

Like Lieber, Burgess had been appointed professor of political science and history at Amherst College before his appointment at Columbia.¹³³ Burgess, however, believed that the new “science of politics” demanded its own field of inquiry, and even its own department—not solely to train future civil servants, but also to offer depth and method to the study of American government and its maturing institutions.¹³⁴ His drive to divide the fields, allowing further specialization in graduate education, was yet another motivation that drove him from his beloved alma mater and into the heart of Manhattan.

¹³² Herbert B. Adams, “Is History Past Politics?,” *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, 13th ser., nos. 3–4 (1895): 67.

¹³³ Hoxie, “John W. Burgess, American Scholar,” 146.

¹³⁴ John W. Burgess, “The Founding of the School of Political Science,” *Columbia University Quarterly* 22 (1930): 351–396.

Described today as the “father of American political science,” Burgess published the fullest statement of this vision in 1890 in his first manuscript, a two-volume work titled *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law*.¹³⁵ Though the work grew directly out of Burgess’s dissertation, he understood the project as something far more transformative than the culmination of an intellectual project that he had begun years earlier within the newly unified and nationalizing German Empire. He envisioned the treatise, which spanned nearly seven hundred pages, as a comprehensive theoretical framework, a comparative study of constitutional systems, and a textbook through which future generations of political science would be trained.

The intellectual debt to his German training was not subtle. Burgess dedicated both volumes of the work to “the memory of my former friend and teacher,” “Prof. Dr. Johann Gustav Droysen,” which he described as “the first-fruits of a work begun many years ago under his guidance.”¹³⁶ The fundamental structure of *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law* reflected Droysen’s theoretical framework around state-building, a framework developed explicitly in the context of German unification. For both Burgess and Droysen, political development began not with governments but with “nations.”¹³⁷ Governments were contingent institutional arrangements. Nations, by contrast, constituted the fundamental social and historical communities from which legitimate political authority emerged. Consequently, rather than treating governments as the primary object of inquiry, Burgess relocated the science of politics focal point of analysis one level deeper. Political science would not merely classify constitutions, compare governments, or analyze the separation of power; it would explain why certain institutions emerged among particular peoples and why some forms of government represented higher stages of political development than others.

¹³⁵ John W. Burgess, *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law*, 2 vols. (Boston: Ginn, 1890–91): vol. 1, *Sovereignty and Liberty*; vol. 2, *Government*.

¹³⁶ *Id.*

¹³⁷ Burgess, *Political Science*, 1:1 (Book I. The Nation).

Accordingly, on the very first page of seven hundred, Burges introduced what would become the discipline's primary unit of analysis: "a nation."¹³⁸ The first volume of the set focused on defining the concept of a "nation," constructing a typology of different kinds of nations, tracing their historical development, and surveying the current state of nations worldwide. Only after establishing the nation as the discipline's foundational category could Burgess turn to constitutions and forms of government. The order of work reflected the logic of the science he sought to establish: nations preceded states analytically, just as they preceded states historically.

Burgess traced the term *nation* etymologically to the Latin *nascor*, meaning "to be born" or "to spring forth."¹³⁹ Yet his substantive definition drew less from classical sources than from what he explicitly called German "political and legal nomenclature."¹⁴⁰ A nation he argued, was "[a] population of ethnic unity, inhabiting a territory of geographic unity."¹⁴¹ Importantly, Burgess was careful to distinguish the "ethnic unity" from unity of biological race. Shared language, religion, historical memory, customs, and culture formed the essential ingredients of national cohesion, not common ancestry alone. Race might facilitate national development, he acknowledged, but it remained neither a necessary, nor a sufficient condition. What mattered most was the gradual emergence of a people who understood themselves as sharing a common historical path. In this respect, Burgess's concept of nation echoed the broader nineteenth-century German notion of *Volksgeist*, a notion drawn upon by Droysen and Hegel to describe the shared historical spirit through which a people came to recognize itself as a shared political community.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ *Id.*

¹³⁹ *Id.*

¹⁴⁰ *Id.*

¹⁴¹ *Id.*

¹⁴² See G. W. F. Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. T. M. Knox and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). Yet, it bears noting that Droysen eschewed a self-perpetuating vision of *Volksgeist* for the more dialectical terms of *Fortschritt* or progress and *Entwicklung* or development. Johann Gustav Droysen, *Grundriss der Historik* (Leipzig: Veit, 1868).

Beyond ethnic unity, a nation required also territorial unity which Burgess defined as “a territory separated from other territory by high mountain ranges, or broad bodies of water, or impenetrable forests and jungles, or climactic extremes.”¹⁴³ These natural divisions of geographic territories should place “great difficulties in the way of external intercourse or communication.”¹⁴⁴

Throughout his treatise Burgess remained careful to distinguish nations from governments.¹⁴⁵ Sharing a government did not necessarily produce a nation, nor did the absence of common government prevent a nation from existing. Peoples divided among several states might nevertheless constitute a single nation, just as populations governed by a single governing authority might remain several nations cobbled together. Governments were temporary arrangements of political institutions and subject to change. Nations existed prior to states, independently of them, and ultimately supplied the social and moral foundation upon which legitimate constitutional states could later be constructed—“[w]here the geographic and ethnic unities coincide, or very nearly coincide, the nation is almost sure to organize itself politically,--to become a state.”¹⁴⁶

This distinction became one of the central theoretical moves of Burgess’s new science. By locating the origins of the political order in the nation rather than the state, Burgess transformed the nation from a description of a historical process or contingent result and into a scientific category. In doing so, he was not merely describing the political world he observed. He was constructing an ontology for the new discipline of political science and a teleology for political development in which nations were assumed to be the natural and indispensable preconditions for the modern constitutional state.

¹⁴³ Burgess, *Political Science*, 1:2 (Book I. The Nation).

¹⁴⁴ *Id.*

¹⁴⁵ Burgess, *Political Science*, 1:49 (Book II. The State).

¹⁴⁶ *Id.* at 3.

At the very heart of Burgess's concept of nation lay the imperative of unification. A nation was not simply a population sharing a common language, culture, and historical memory; it was a people continually moving toward greater political, territorial, and cultural cohesion. The nation was less a description of an existing population. Populations of this kind, were "hardly yet anywhere to be found"; at present, "either the geographic unity is too wide for the ethnic, or the ethnic is too wide for the geographic, or the distinct lines of the geographic unity partially fail, or some of the elements of the ethnic unity are wanting."¹⁴⁷ The concept instead captured an ideal to which peoples should naturally develop toward over time. This commitment to unification was so fundamental that Burgess began the fourth chapter of his first volume, after defining nation in the first three chapters, with the declaration that "national unity is the determining force in the development of the modern constitutional states."¹⁴⁸ If national unity drove political development, then the central task of every modern nation-state necessarily followed. "The prime policy," Burgess concluded "of each of these states should be to attain proper physical boundaries and to render its population ethnically homogenous."¹⁴⁹

Read merely as an observation, this passage appears to describe the process whereby nineteenth-century European nation-states emerged out of the empires that preceded them. Read as a foundational premise of a new science of politics, however, it does considerably more work. Burgess was setting out the conditions under which he believed constitutional government could emerge at all. National unity, territorial consolidation, and cultural homogeneity became scientific criteria by which political development would be measured. Political science, thus, inherited both a lexicon for describing states and a normative framework for evaluating them.

¹⁴⁷ *Id.* at 1-2.

¹⁴⁸ *Id.* at 40.

¹⁴⁹ *Id.*

The theoretical implications of this framework were consequential. If the national state constituted the apex of political development, then political fragmentation represented not merely administrative inconvenience—as the great James C. Scott described the illegibility of certain peoples to the modern state¹⁵⁰—but a stumbling block toward reaching modern representative government. Multiethnic empires, divided sovereignties, overlapping jurisdictions, and culturally plural communities under a single government all appeared, from within Burgess’s framework, as transitional or defective political forms awaiting eventual resolution through national consolidation.¹⁵¹ Where national populations remained divided across multiple jurisdictions, political consolidation appeared both natural and desirable. Consolidation of this kind could require the establishment of stable borders, including maintaining standards by which lands might be annexed and by which the migration of those “others” might be controlled and limited.¹⁵² Conversely, where governments encompassed peoples too culturally distinct to form a single nation, eventual separation likewise appeared justified.¹⁵³ The science of politics therefore embedded within its earliest theoretical assumptions a developmental narrative in which political diversity itself required explanation and, eventually, correction; and it took as its aim not simply analyzing governments as they existed but understanding how political institutions ought to evolve toward their proper national form.

Expansion, within this framework, appeared as the ordinary development of nations toward natural territorial boundaries, not as a decision to govern as an empire.¹⁵⁴ As Burgess explained, nations necessarily “combine states,” absorb neighboring territories, or expand where required to secure their proper physical limits around populations that align culturally and linguistically with

¹⁵⁰ *Id.* at 40-49.

¹⁵¹ *Id.*

¹⁵² *Id.*

¹⁵³ *Id.*

¹⁵⁴ *Id.*

their own national vision.¹⁵⁵ Grounding these claims within the language of scientific development, Burgess converted the historical practices of state-building for empires into the universal laws of political evolution for modern nation-states.

Yet, centering nations as the science's presumed foundational form of government also gave rise to the problem of populations that do not fit comfortably within that framework. The reality was that the nineteenth century was not a world of neatly bounded nation-states. It was a world of empires, settler colonies, protectorates, Native nations, contested borderlands, and multi-national kingdoms.¹⁵⁶ Even those states that scholars frequently celebrated as national, including Germany and the United States, had long extended their borders by force and governed populations that were linguistically, culturally, legally, and politically heterogeneous.¹⁵⁷ If constitutional nation-states arose only from culturally unified nations, what became of the millions of people already governed by those former empires who did not belong to the nation presumed to give rise to that state? If modern constitutional nation-states properly belonged to unified nations, what political status should be assigned to those "others" who lay outside the nation while still subject to the state's jurisdiction? How should modern constitutional nation-states govern those others?

Rather than avoid these thorny questions, Burgess made them one of the central concerns of political science. If the discipline were to take the nation as its primary unit of analysis, it also required answers to the question of how those nations govern others. The science of politics, as Burgess understood, required both a theory of constitutional government for modern nation-states and a theory by which those constitutional governments would administer political difference within

¹⁵⁵ *Id.*

¹⁵⁶ LaFeber, *New Empire*, 62; Hahn, *Nation Without Borders*, 449–500; and Frymer, *Building an American Empire*, 112. Other recent works chart the building of the American nation-state in the latter half of the nineteenth century, while also locating additional causes for nationalization in global nationalization and decolonization movements, as well as the spread of worldwide capitalism. Richard White, *The Republic for Which It Stands: The United States during Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865–1896* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); A. G. Hopkins, *American Empire: A Global History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

¹⁵⁷ Burgess, *Political Science*, 1:40–49 (Book II. The State).

the jurisdictions over which they claimed authority. Burgess thus presented colonial government and administration as a vital concern for nations, and for the discipline, describing one of the responsibilities of nations, and of the United States in particular, as to “carry the political civilization of the modern world into those parts of the world inhabited by unpolitical and barbaric races.”¹⁵⁸ The United States, like all other nations, “must have a colonial policy.”¹⁵⁹

By this, Burgess meant that the United States would need to establish formal processes whereby it would “force organization” upon so-called uncivilized peoples “by any means necessary.”¹⁶⁰ If these peoples “cannot accomplish their own civilization, they must submit to the powers that can do it for them.”¹⁶¹ Further, should those “uncivilized” peoples resist the efforts of the U.S. to govern them toward civilization, the U.S. was then justified to “clear the territory of their presence and make it the abode of civilized man.”¹⁶² More than an ancillary aspect of the new discipline of “political science,” governing others toward forms of so-called “civilization” shaped the central frame of Burgess’s new discipline in subtle ways.

The language of civilization, it is worth noting, operated as a scientific category within Burgess’s political theory.¹⁶³ As civilization had operated for ages as a legal term of art that designated the authority of empires over others,¹⁶⁴ Burgess’s transposed this framework into a science. Populations were arranged along a developmental continuum according to their presumed capacity for constitutional government, with nations occupying the highest stage of political development. Colonial administration became the institutional mechanism through which societies

¹⁵⁸ Burgess, *Political Science*, 1:45 (Book II. The State).

¹⁵⁹ *Id.*

¹⁶⁰ *Id.* at 46.

¹⁶¹ *Id.*

¹⁶² *Id.*

¹⁶³ See, e.g., *Id.* at 87 (describing the stages of liberty affording as “the people of the state advance in civilization”).

¹⁶⁴ Benjamin A. Coates, “The United States and International Law, 1776–1939,” in *A Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations: Colonial Era to the Present*, ed. Christopher R. W. Dietrich (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2020), chap. 19, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119166139.ch19>.

placed lower on the developmental scale progressed toward civilization and, thus, modern constitutional nation-states of their own.

By the close of *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law*, the outlines of the new discipline were clear. Political science would study not only the different structures of constitutional governments but also the development of nations, the administration of that political development, and the governance of others who remained outside the constitutional nation-state. Empire, in this sense, formed a central pillar by which the overarching theoretical framework was clarified.

Burgess's Political Science at Columbia & Beyond

From 1880 until 1890, Burgess's effort to build an independent field of political science flourished across the academy. At his own institution, he tripled his faculty, hiring two of his former Amherst seminary students, Munroe Smith and Frank Goodnow.¹⁶⁵ Both were hired to help build up the science of a particular form of government: administration. Smith would teach Roman administrative law and the history of European law, and Goodnow would teach U.S. administrative law.¹⁶⁶ As these hires indicate, political science was not initially conceived as the study of elections, parties, voting behavior, or public opinion—subjects that dominate much of the field today. The field's early center of gravity lay in the comparative study of states, constitutions, law, administration, and political development. Administration occupied a particularly prominent place because it was the form of governance presumed to give rise to modern constitutional nation-states in the first

¹⁶⁵ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, 141, 145.

¹⁶⁶ John D. Millett, "The Department of Public Law and Government," in *A History of the Faculty of Political Science, Columbia University*, ed. R. Gordon Hoxie et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 261; Casey Eilbert, "Architects of the Administrative State: Public Administration in the Twentieth Century," *Modern American History*, published online March 24, 2026, 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.1017/mah.2025.10047>; Louisa K. A. Hotson, "Scholarly Solutions: The Development of American Political Science from the Gilded Age to the Great Society" (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2017), <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:12d8fe69-04e1-413d-ab05-8e12e79a9f15>.

instance.¹⁶⁷ Administration was thus a precondition to constitutional government and the form of governance that held those governments together thereafter.

The discipline's institutional foundations extended beyond the classroom. In 1886, Burgess and Smith co-founded the first U.S. journal of political science, the *Political Science Quarterly*, and crafted essays that began to articulate the nascent field to the broader academy.¹⁶⁸ By 1890, as these efforts at Columbia and beyond reached their culmination, Burgess simultaneously became the first Dean of Columbia's Faculty of Political Science and published his two-volume *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law*.¹⁶⁹

Through his writing and teaching on the science of government, Burgess's theories quickly found their way into the practice of government. Three years before he published his magnum opus, one of Burgess's former students, Lorrin Thurston, joined a coalition of non-Native plantation owners and missionaries to mount an armed revolt against King Kalakaua of the Kingdom of Hawai'i.¹⁷⁰ They forced the King to adopt the 1887 Constitution of the Kingdom of Hawai'i, colloquially known as the "Bayonet Constitution" and, with it, established a government for the islands that consolidated political power among the non-Native elites of the islands and minimized the power of the monarchy.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ See Burgess, *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law*, 2; Mill, *Considerations*, 566 (highlighting the need for "delegated administration" to govern non-subject populations).

¹⁶⁸ *Political Science Quarterly* 1 (1886), the journal's first volume, founded by John W. Burgess and published by the Academy of Political Science.

¹⁶⁹ John W. Burgess, "The Founding of the School of Political Science," *Columbia University Quarterly* 22 (1930): 351–396.

¹⁷⁰ Tom Coffman, *Nation Within: The History of the American Occupation of Hawai'i* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 89–90; Umi Perkins, "Kuleana: A Genealogy of Native Tenant Rights" (PhD diss., University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 2013), 2; and Durga Rajiv Chaloli, "Empire of Notebooks: Lorrin A. Thurston, Columbia Law School's Molding of Racialized 'Professionalism,' and American Settler Colonialism in Hawai'i" (final project, Columbia University and Slavery, HIST UN3518, Columbia University, Fall 2023).

¹⁷¹ Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio, *Dismembering Lahui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002); Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); and Liliuokalani, *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1898).

Six years later, the revolt became a coup, as the same armed group overthrew the Kingdom of Hawai'i and began to draft a constitution for what they termed the "Republic of Hawaii."¹⁷² Sanford B. Dole, a fellow revolutionary to Thurston and later elected the first President for the Republic, promptly wrote to Burgess for advice on the new draft constitution, sharing with him that "your book has been of great help to me."¹⁷³ With respect to advice on the new constitution, Dole solicited general advice on "any other points that may suggest themselves to you," but he also homed in a particular passage of Burgess's book, to inquire for clarification. Would the idealized form of constitutional government described by Burgess—"a republic with centralized legislation and federalized administration"—weaken the executive at the expense of the party leadership in the legislature?¹⁷⁴ Five days later, but before Burgess had a chance to respond, Dole wrote again, this time more transparently about the aims of the new constitutional framework: he needed to know how to convert the government of the Kingdom of Hawaii, which had a version of a bicameral legislature, into a form that would dilute the electoral power of previously enfranchised "natives and Portuguese . . . who are comparatively ignorant of the principles of government."¹⁷⁵ Leveraging the usual mechanisms of federalism and administration wasn't an option, nor was devolving political power to the local level for separate governance, as there existed "no subordinate governments."¹⁷⁶

Burgess's reply, sent only weeks later, aligned his constitutional advice with the broader theoretical framework developed in *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law*. He recognized immediately that Dole's primary aim was to craft a constitution that would place the government in the hands of the non-Native minority population of European descent—i.e., "Americans, English,

¹⁷² *Id.*

¹⁷³ Henry Miller Madden, ed., "Letters of Sanford B. Dole and John W. Burgess," *Pacific Historical Review* 5, no. 1 (March 1936): 71-75.

¹⁷⁴ *Id.* at 71-72 (Letter from Dole to Burgess, Mar. 26, 1894).

¹⁷⁵ *Id.* at 72-73 (Letter from Dole to Burgess, Mar. 31, 1894).

¹⁷⁶ *Id.*

Germans, and Scandinavians.”¹⁷⁷ Rather than object, Burgess proposed the constitutional mechanisms through which it might be accomplished. Burgess recommended, first, that Dole should restrict the general franchise to the lower chamber of the legislature, while imposing a property requirement and raising the vote age for the upper house. He further advised “that you establish a strong presidency” and select the president through an electoral college, rather than by direct vote, thereby insulating that executive from majoritarian pressures.¹⁷⁸

Burgess’s advice captures an important element of his political theory. Throughout his published work, he consistently distinguished between modern constitutional nation-states and unrestricted democracy. Constitutional government, in his view, depended less on universal participation and representation than on institutional arrangements that preserved political order while also cultivating the conditions necessary for national development.¹⁷⁹ Representation was secondary and democratic participation could therefore be restricted according to the perceived capacities of different populations for constitutional government. Nationalism as a match between a uniform polity and a government, not political equality, offered representative government.

The example of Hawai’i also highlights how readily Burgess’s framework of the nation-state could accommodate colonial rule. Rather than questioning whether a government established through military overthrow possessed democratic legitimacy or objecting to a constitutional design that preferenced a minority population, Burgess focused upon designing institutions for the populations—or nations—he regarded as most capable of constitutional government. The distinction between civilized and uncivilized peoples that structured *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law* did not remain confined to abstract discussions of empire. It informed practical

¹⁷⁷ *Id.* at 73-74 (Letter from Burgess to Dole, Apr. 13, 1894).

¹⁷⁸ *Id.*

¹⁷⁹ Burgess, *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law*, 1:39.

recommendations concerning who should vote, who should govern, and how political authority ought to be organized within the still expanding United States.

Following ratification of the new constitution, Dole sent Burgess a copy in gratitude, thanking him for his “kind assistance” and acknowledging “the great help your work on the science of government was to me.”¹⁸⁰

The Science of American History

Unlike Burgess, Adams saw no tension between the discipline of history and the science of politics. As the inscription upon his seminary walls declared, history was “past Politics,” and politics “present History.” For Adams, these were not separate fields so much as different temporal perspectives on the same object of inquiry: the historical development of modern nation-states. As Burgess increasingly sought to isolate a distinct science devoted to the modern nation-state, Adams worked to professionalize the broader historical science from which the nation-state emerged.¹⁸¹ Yet both scholars remained united by a set of common problems that they saw as inherent to the United States and which they both approached with the tools they had inherited from German historical scholarship: how diverse peoples became nations, how fragmented jurisdictions became unified governments, and how expanding states governed the territories and populations annexed and incorporated amidst that process.

In October of 1876, Adams took up his post at the Johns Hopkins University, after the letters and personal influence of his mentor, Bluntschli, secured the position for him.¹⁸² Johns Hopkins was an experiment in American education; an institution modeled off of the German

¹⁸⁰ Dole to Burgess, Dec. 18, 1894, in Madden, “Letters,” 74-75.

¹⁸¹ Raymond J. Cunningham, “Is History Past Politics? Herbert Baxter Adams as Precursor of the ‘New History,’” *History Teacher* 9, no. 2 (February 1976): 244-57.

¹⁸² John Martin Vincent, “Masters of Social Science: Herbert B. Adams,” *Social Forces* 4, no. 3 (March 1926): 468.

university system, in general, and the University of Heidelberg, in particular.¹⁸³ The aim was to produce an institution that blended teaching and intensive research toward the production of knowledge. The doors of the University opened for the first time that fall with a lean teaching group of six full professors, twelve associate professors, ten distinguished lecturers, and twenty fellows, of which Adams was one.¹⁸⁴

From its earliest days, Johns Hopkins hosted a “seminary” of American history and political science under the charge of Austin Scott, a part-time associate at Hopkins and a full-time secretary and assistant to George Bancroft, helping him with his multi-volume history of the United States.¹⁸⁵ That first fall, Austin commuted up from Washington, D.C. to lead a Saturday-morning seminar on the genesis of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.¹⁸⁶ In the spirit of the German university, the meetings were held within the Maryland Historical Society, what was then the historical archives of the state of Maryland.

Adams joined the seminar in earnest and began work on an essay that identified the origins of the United States as a nation within the Northwest Ordinance and its predecessor statute, the Ordinance of 1784, which Adams understood as the foundations of a national union between the states.¹⁸⁷ Drawing upon James Madison’s reflection on the Ordinances and western settlement, as well as Bluntschli and other German theorists of government, Adams offered a framework for constitutionalism within the United States and its relationship to the development of the nation.

¹⁸³ Mackenzie Zalin, “From Heidelberg to Baltimore: What Johns Hopkins University Owes the Oldest German University” (lecture, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, October 3, 2025). [obtain lecture once published]

¹⁸⁴ Vincent, “Masters of Social Science,” 468.

¹⁸⁵ L. Ethan Ellis, “Austin Scott and the ‘Seminary in History,’” *Journal of the Rutgers University Library* 16, no. 2 (1953): 39–48.

¹⁸⁶ Patricia Dockman Anderson, “Laying the Foundations: Herbert Baxter Adams, John Thomas Scharf, and Early Maryland Historical Scholarship,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 89, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 170–83; John Martin Vincent, “Masters of Social Science: Herbert B. Adams,” *Social Forces* 4, no. 3 (March 1926): 465–79.

¹⁸⁷ Herbert B. Adams, *Maryland’s Influence in Founding a National Commonwealth; or, The History of the Accession of Public Lands by the Old Confederation: A Paper Read before the Maryland Historical Society, April 9, 1877*, Fund-Publication no. 11 (Baltimore: John Murphy, 1877).

The foundation of a state, according to Adams, was not a “compact or written constitution,” but instead “derived from the living necessities and united interests of a people.”¹⁸⁸

In making this claim, Adams relocated the origins of the American constitutional order. Rather than treating the Constitution itself as the singular act through which the nation came into being, he traced national development to earlier processes of territorial acquisition and territorial government.¹⁸⁹ Drawing upon his mentor Bluntschli, Adams described the historical development of a nation, or a singular people, as one that was necessarily rooted in and shaped by the material conditions of the territory in which those people lived: “Remove a people from a domain and you destroy their State.”¹⁹⁰ Had the spend-thrift Puritans of New England migrated to “tropical Jamaica” as they had been advised, Adams reflected, a “New England” would never have formed on that “fertile island, which pours its wealth so ‘prodigally into the lap of industry.’”¹⁹¹

The territory of the Northwest, ceded by the states to the national government and administered by Congress, had created a commonwealth of the several states and a “truly national sovereignty.”¹⁹² Governance of these western lands, Adams observed, drawing on Daniel Webster and George Washington, were the “leading objects” in U.S. policy during the period and had held the union together.¹⁹³ Here, Adam’s argument reached beyond mere environmental determinism. Territory mattered because governments organized the material conditions in which peoples lived. Roads, land tenure, settlement policy, local institutions, commercial development, and systems of law all mediated the relationship between people and place. The state did not merely govern territory as the territory itself required. The state organized the territorial conditions through which

¹⁸⁸ *Id.* at 60.

¹⁸⁹ *Id.* at 64.

¹⁹⁰ *Id.* at 65 (citing Winkler, *Das Staatagebiet. Eine cultur-geographische Studie*, p. 3, Leipzig, 1877).

¹⁹¹ *Id.* (citing George Bancroft, *History of the United States*, I., p.253).

¹⁹² *Id.* at 63-64.

¹⁹³ *Id.* at 67 (citing Webster’s Works, III., p. 251).

a people gradually acquired common interests and, eventually, a common linguistic, cultural, and political identity.¹⁹⁴

It was these shared material conditions, as organized by government, that fortified the union. Without “*permanent territorial interests*” the United States would have been “one nation to-day and thirteen to-morrow,” in the words of George Washington.¹⁹⁵ The “acquisition of a territorial commonwealth” by the original states, Adams argued, provided a foundation for the national Constitution that followed—“it was the first solid arch upon which the framers of our Constitution could build.”¹⁹⁶ The Constitution may have arisen from the people of the United States, but the acquisition of western territory and its governance by the national government under the Northwest Ordinance set the conditions for the Constitution in the first instance. With the Ordinance, it established the institutions through which expansion itself became administrable—institutions capable of regulating settlement, organizing local government, and preparing territories for eventual statehood.¹⁹⁷ Adams therefore located the foundations of American nationhood not simply in constitutional design but in the administration of territories whose inhabitants stood outside the Union. It was the governing of others, to Adams, that gave birth to the United States. Long before colonial administration emerged as a recognized academic specialty, Adams had already identified territorial government as one of the principal engines of national development and, in particular, a mechanism through which fragmented political communities became nations.

What began as a seminar essay on the centrality of land and its relationship to national sovereignty, a paper Adams presented a few months later in the spring of 1877 to the Massachusetts Historical Society, formed the basis of Adam’s first monograph and shaped his vision of the field of

¹⁹⁴ *Id.* at 58-59.

¹⁹⁵ *Id.* at 63 (emphasis in original).

¹⁹⁶ *Id.* at 67.

¹⁹⁷ *Id.* at 61-62.

history and historical methods thereafter.¹⁹⁸ Six years later, in September of 1883, Adams outlined his vision for American history in his essay *New Methods of Study in History*, presented at the premiere association of academics at the time, the American Social Science Association (ASSA).¹⁹⁹ According to that vision, American history was primarily political history, and to capture the political history of the United States required study of the development of U.S. institutions over time, particularly those institutions that developed the nation's relationship to acquisition and management of lands.

The implication of Adams' vision for the field was as much methodological as it was historical. If the central inquiry of American history concerned the gradual incorporation of an expanding continent, then the central archive of American history necessarily became the documentary record of territorial administration.²⁰⁰ Congressional ordinances, land offices, territorial legislatures, governors, surveys, administrative institutions, and enabling acts that negotiated the admission of former territories into the union assumed new significance because they documented the mechanisms through which expansion became governance and governance became nationhood.

Although the archival record is unclear as to whether Adams himself made the suggestion, the American Historical Association (AHA) formed the fall following Adams' impassioned plea for

¹⁹⁸ Herbert B. Adams, *Maryland's Influence upon Land Cessions to the United States*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, 3rd ser., no. 1 (Baltimore: N. Murray, 1885).

¹⁹⁹ Herbert B. Adams, "New Methods of Study in History," *Journal of Social Science, Containing the Transactions of the American Social Science Association* 18 (May 1884): 227.

²⁰⁰ Once the centrality of administrative government toward expansion and "development" of an area is grasped, the doctoral focus of many of Baxter Adam's students on institutions of territorial government and the specifics of administration and administrative government takes on new light. See, e.g., Turner, Frederick J. *The Character and Influence of the Fur Trade in Wisconsin: An Address before the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, at Its Annual Meeting, January 3, 1889*. Madison, WI, 1889 (studying the fort system in the administration of Indian affairs and territorial governance); Wilson, Woodrow. "The Study of Administration." *Political Science Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1887): 197–222 (publishing an essay that arose out of his doctoral work on the fundamentals of administrative government); Charles M. Andrews, "The Beginnings of the Connecticut Towns," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 1, no. 2 (July 1890): 165–91 (presenting his doctoral work that would position him as the father of the "imperial school" of early American history and exploring the connections between American self-government and British colonial administration in North America).

the discipline of history and as an outgrowth of the same ASSA to which Adams had presented it.²⁰¹ The AHA formed in response to a call in June of 1884, put forward by a small provisional committee on which Adams served.²⁰² From the AHA's founding, Adams served as the organization's secretary, and his biographers describe the congressional chartering of the AHA in 1889 as Adam's "proudest moment."²⁰³ As Secretary, Adams largely controlled the preparation of the programs for the annual AHA meetings, which would serve as a ballast for the discipline well into the twentieth century. Despite grumblings about Adams dominating the direction of the association through its administration, the AHA grew immeasurably in size and importance through his near obsessive oversight.²⁰⁴

Control over the Association's meetings, publications, and professional standards also allowed Adams to shape what counted as legitimate historical inquiry in the decades that followed. Constitutional development, settlement, municipal institutions, territorial government, and particularly administration increasingly occupied the center of professional history. The discipline matured around many of the same central questions that occupied Burgess's political science, even as each branched off into separate institutional identities within the academy.

By the closing of the nineteenth century, political science and history had acquired distinct academic homes, but the disciplines continued to share a remarkably similar conception of political development. Both disciplines treated territorial expansion as inseparable from territorial administration. And both understood the modern nation-state as emerging through government efforts to organize newly acquired lands and to manage populations incorporated under different constitutional terms than those that governed in the several states. Thus, as American universities

²⁰¹ Arthur S. Link, "The American Historical Association, 1884–1984: Retrospect and Prospect," *American Historical Review* 90, no. 1 (February 1985): 1–17.

²⁰² Vincent, "Masters of Social Science," 472.

²⁰³ *Id.*

²⁰⁴ Vincent, "Masters of Social Science," 472; Link, "American Historical Association," 3.

began to establish specialized fields of research at the turn of the twentieth century, one of the earliest areas to emerge across both history and political science was the systematic study of colonial administration. Governing others was not a peripheral concern inconveniently inherited from a British colonial past. It was instead embedded within the theoretical and methodological frameworks of the historical and political sciences from their beginnings within North America.

A Science for Governing Others: Colonial Administration

Collectively, over their professional careers, Burgess and Adams trained dozens of students who would go on to prominent positions of leadership within the disciplines of American political science and history, including more than a dozen who ascended to the presidency of their respective professional associations, the American Historical Association and the American Political Science Association.²⁰⁵ Their influence reverberated far beyond the academy as well, as their former pupils filled the highest positions in U.S. government, from the Supreme Court to the U.S. presidency. Each separately trained two of the rivals in the contentious 1912 presidential election, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, for example.²⁰⁶ All told, nearly seventy prominent academics and government leaders would learn from these two luminaries first- or second-hand.

²⁰⁵ The following figure draws upon an original data set of over 400 scholars and practitioners of colonial administration from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Individuals were selected for the database as a “practitioner or scholar of colonial administration” based on their publication of at least one scholarly article, monograph, or substantive report on the science or practice of colonial administration. Human coders then compiled biographical information for each individual, including education and employment, as well as the names of each individual’s educational mentors.

²⁰⁶ For explorations between the close relationship between Burgess and Theodore Roosevelt. James Bradley, *The Imperial Cruise: A Secret History of Empire and War* (New York: Little, Brown, 2009), 47; Carleton Putnam, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Biography*, vol. 1, *The Formative Years, 1858–1886* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958), 219; Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963), 114; and Oscar M. Alfonso, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Philippines, 1897–1909* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1970). For explorations of the often-complex, but formative relationship between Baxter Adams and Wilson as advisor-advisee. Henry A. Turner, “Woodrow Wilson as Administrator,” *Public Administration Review* 16, no. 4 (Autumn 1956): 249–57; Burl Noggle, “Predilections to Politics and the Lures of Love: The Further Education of Young Woodrow Wilson,” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 9, no. 4 (Autumn 1968): 373–87; and Mark Benbow, “Wilson the Man,” in *A Companion to Woodrow Wilson*, ed. Ross A. Kennedy (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 21.

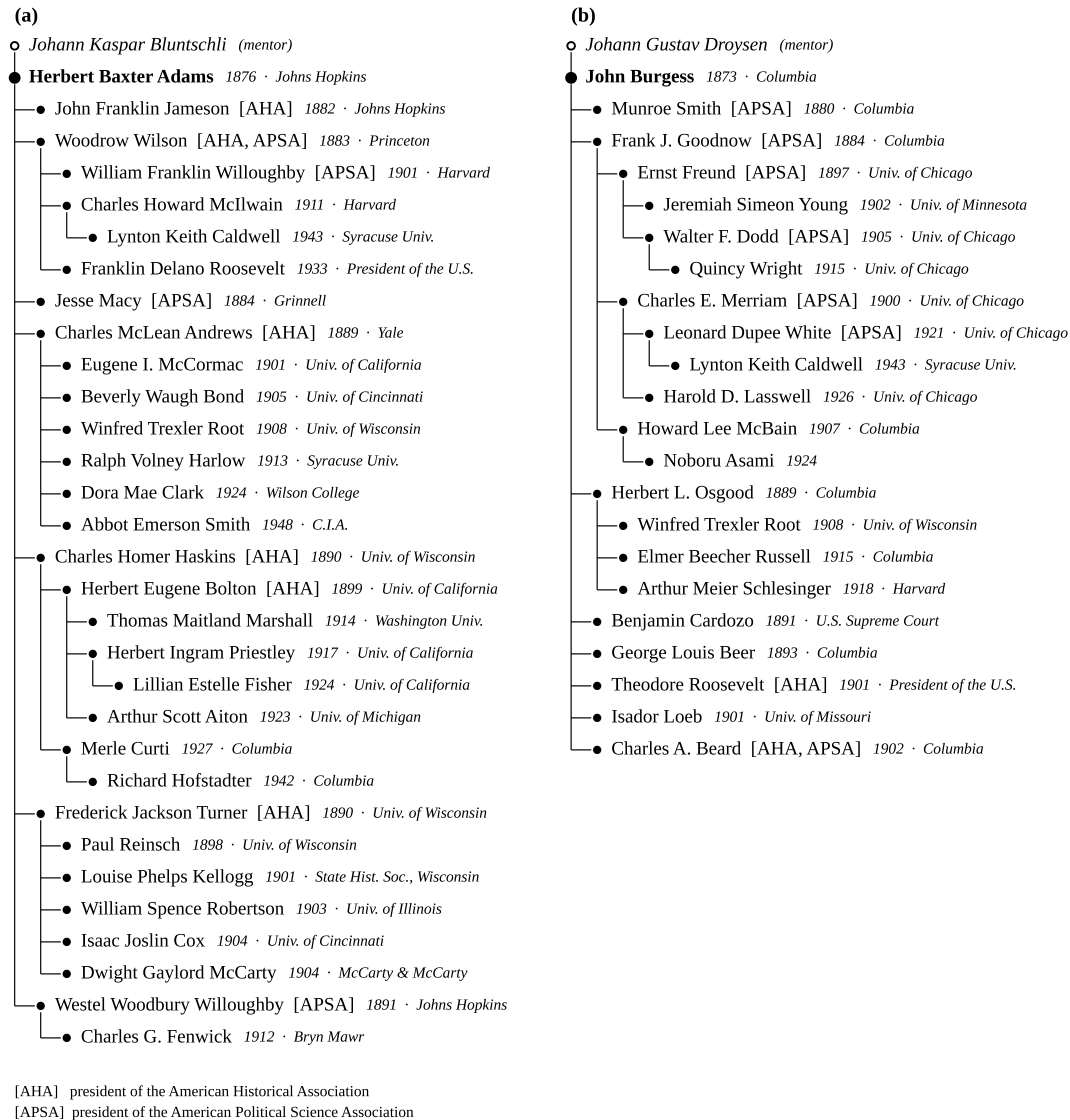


fig. _

The study of colonial administration spread quickly throughout the American academy, outpacing Burgess's efforts to establish the field of political science as a distinctive area of study. At Harvard, for instance, the faculty of arts and sciences continued to subsume the study of government and politics under the single header of "History" until 1892, when they established the

more inclusive but far less celebratory department of “History & Political Science.”²⁰⁷ Under this combined department, the university began offering graduate courses, and even areas of emphasis for graduate study, specific to colonial administration, years before it established an independent Department of Government in 1912.

Harvard University generally ran a few years behind the younger and more nimble Columbia and Johns Hopkins, and this was no more true than with respect to American history and political science. It wasn’t until 1883, upon the return from Germany of their star undergraduate Albert Bushnell Hart that Harvard began offering courses specific to the history of the United States and its government. Before this time, history at Harvard was a strictly European affair. Like Burgess and Baxter Adams, Bushnell Hart brought back to the State an advanced graduate training in research methods for historical and political science within the German Empire. Bushnell Hart largely traced their steps across Germany, even training under Droysen in Berlin, before he completed his doctoral training under the internationally recognized historian of U.S. constitutional history, Herman Eduard von Holst at Freiburg.

Von Holst offered Bushnell Hart a model for crafting American history as the development of U.S. government, which he termed “constitutional history.”²⁰⁸ Unlike Droysen and Bluntschli, von Holst focused his historical and political science research predominantly on the United States. He emigrated to Manhattan in 1867 before returning to Germany in 1872, and he drew upon his period of residency within the United States in crafting his five-volume *Constitutional History of the United States*.²⁰⁹ Published in Germany in 1873, the work was quickly translated into English and

²⁰⁷ Harvard University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, *Announcement of Courses of Instruction Provided by the Faculty of Harvard College for the Academic Year 1892–93* (Cambridge, MA: Published by the University, June 1892), 27, Harvard University Archives, <https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.ARCH:100390706:VIEW>.

²⁰⁸ Von Holst chose the German word “Verfassung” or constitution (a term that captures the fundamental laws and values in both the legal and characteristics sense) to describe his project.

²⁰⁹ Albert Bushnell Hart, “Hermann von Holst,” *Political Science Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (December 1890): 677-87; Hermann Eduard von Holst, *Verfassung und Demokratie der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika*, I, *Staatsverfassung und Sklaverei* (Dusseldorf, 1873); II, *Von der Administration Jackson bis zur Annexion von Texas* (Berlin, 1878); III, *Von*

published by a Chicago publishing house in 1876.²¹⁰ Dedicated to the widely respected constitutional theorist of the period, Judge Thomas M. Cooley, the multi-volume work quickly became a sensation across North American universities.²¹¹

Bushnell Hart, too, approached his own research on U.S. history as the study of the development of government—a process that he also termed constitutional history, drawing upon von Holst. Like Burgess, Bushnell Hart theorized American government through the imperative of unification. But his focus of analysis varied in important ways. Rather than focus on the national state or nation-state, as Burgess had, Bushnell Hart published his first monograph on the “federation,” offering a comparative and historical study of federations worldwide.²¹² Yet, “national interests” remained as central to Bushnell Hart as they had to Burgess. More important than uniform language or religion, to Bushnell Hart, was uniformity of government. A successful confederation of the “aggregations of small units” of government required common national interests, interests that could be “promoted by union” through the requirement of “similarity of political institutions,” including the “same system of law and the same general political institutions.”²¹³

Also like Burgess, Bushnell Hart’s framework of government in federation held colonial government as central. A federation could include “dependent states” or groups of states which would be “partially subject to a superior state,” and without “complete sovereignty.”²¹⁴ The

der Annexion von Texas bis zum Kompromisz von 1850 (Berlin, 1881); IV, Vom Kompromisz von 1850 bis zur Wahl Buchanans (Berlin, 1884); V, Von der Inauguration Buchanans bis zur Zerrissung der Union (Berlin, 1891).

²¹⁰ Hermann Eduard von Holst, *The Constitutional and Political History of the United States*, trans. John J. Lalor et al., 8 vols. (Chicago: Callaghan, 1876–92).

²¹¹ See, e.g., “Von Holst’s Constitutional History of the United States,” *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1882, 277–81; Eric F. Goldman, “Hermann Eduard von Holst: Plumed Knight of American Historiography,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 23, no. 4 (March 1937): 511–32.

²¹² Albert Bushnell Hart, *Introduction to the Study of Federal Government*, Harvard Historical Monographs, no. 2 (Boston: Ginn, 1891).

²¹³ *Id.* at 22–23.

²¹⁴ *Id.* at 13.

dependent states, at times called “protectorates,” would most frequently have a separate government from the superior states within the federation. But a superior state also sometimes governed directly or “administer[ed]’ the weaker one.”²¹⁵ The United States contains dependent states, Bushnell Hart recognized, in its “dependent savage tribes,” and this relation “has been most important in the United States, and is considered in most of the constitutional treatises.”²¹⁶ But the relation had also given rise to “embarrassing results” that other countries had avoided “by dealing with the savages as organized communities of occupants, subject in government to the general authority.”²¹⁷

From his earliest days at Harvard, Bushnell Hart centered constitutional development toward unification into federation and, with it, colonial government. He taught the first two courses offered in American history at Harvard: *The History of the North American Colonies and their Growth into a Federal Union* and *Constitutional and Political History of the United States, 1789-1861*.²¹⁸ Like Burgess, Bushnell Hart moved without friction between the disciplines of history and political science, and just a handful of years after he began teaching American history at Harvard he introduced also classes specific to the study of government generally like *Constitutional Government* and *Federal Government: historical and comparative*.²¹⁹ In 1891, he added a graduate level focus on *Government and Administration in the United States* in which their students pursued projects studying the political and legal histories of territorial government and expansion, like George Alden’s *New Governments West of the Alleghanies Before 1780*.²²⁰ These classes would later begin the slow division between history and

²¹⁵ *Id.*

²¹⁶ *Id.* at 14.

²¹⁷ *Id.*

²¹⁸ Harvard University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, *Announcement of Courses of Instruction Provided by the Faculty of Harvard College for the Academic Year 1885–86*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Published by the University, June 1885), 19, Harvard University Archives, <https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.ARCH:100390176:VIEW>. Hart’s courses supplied the only courses on American history out of nineteen courses in history offered that academic year at Harvard College.

²¹⁹ Harvard University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, *Announcement of Courses of Instruction Provided by the Faculty of Harvard College for the Academic Year 1890–91* (Cambridge, MA: Published by the University, June 1890), 27, Harvard University Archives, <https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.ARCH:100390411:VIEW>.

²²⁰ Harvard University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, *Announcement of Courses of Instruction Provided by the Faculty of Harvard College for the Academic Year 1891–92* (Cambridge, MA: Published by the University, June 1891), 28, Harvard University Archives, <https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.ARCH:100390555:VIEW>; George Henry Alden, *New Governments West*

political science at the University. Yet, throughout all of his lectures on U.S. history, periods he often termed eras of “constitutional development,” and his courses studying American political science, Bushnell Hart centered expansion, Indian affairs, and the territorial government and development of the United States.

In the last few years of the nineteenth century and the earliest days of the twentieth saw the proliferation of classes on American history and government, and the rise of specialization within them. Harvard, particularly, began to offer courses specific to administrative government and law in the late 1890s.²²¹ The famed father of the “frontier thesis” Frederick Jackson Turner, who argued that the experience of settlers colonizing the frontier and in descending from British colonial civilization to savagery and back again had given birth to the true character of America, visited Harvard in 1903 to teach classes in history on The Development of the West and on the Monroe Administration and its diplomatic doctrines.²²² He also joined Hart that year in teaching his graduate seminar on American History and Institutions. Following the permanent hire of Jackson Turner onto the Harvard faculty in 1910, history and political science divided into separate departments with Bushnell Hart heading political science and Jackson Turner leading history.²²³ Yet Harvard University began offering graduate courses, and even areas of emphasis for graduate study, specific to colonial administration through their combined History and Government department years before they established an independent Department of Government in 1912.²²⁴

of the Alleghenies before 1780: Introductory to a Study of the Organization and Admission of New States (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1897; Madison, WI: Published by the University, 1897).

²²¹ Harvard University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, *Announcement of the Courses of Instruction Provided by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for the Academic Year 1899–1900* (Cambridge, MA: Published by the University, 1900), 367, Harvard University Archives, <https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.ARCH:39992043:VIEW>.

²²² Harvard University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, *Announcement of the Courses of Instruction Provided by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for the Academic Year 1903–04*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Published by Harvard University, 1903), 40–42, Harvard University Archives, <https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.ARCH:40042082:VIEW>.

²²³ Ray Allen Billington, “Frederick Jackson Turner Comes to Harvard,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 74 (1962): 51–83.

²²⁴ Harvard was a few years behind other universities in establishing specialized courses: Yale’s courses on “Colonization” and “Modern Colonial Systems” began in 1900; the University of Minnesota offered courses on “Colonial Expansion and System of Administration” and “Colonial Administration” in 1900 also; Brown University

The year 1905 witnessed the beginning of a specialized program at Harvard on colonial administration specifically, rather than studying it as an aspect of an American history and political science survey.²²⁵ Courses on colonial administration continued in earnest well into the 1950s, where they began to change in form from the study of the practice of governing non-subject populations to its critique.²²⁶ Colonial administration transformed into the study of government elsewhere, Britain particularly, and not an attribute of government or history within the United States.

offered a course on “Administration: Local and Colonial” in 1901. Franklin Chew Lun Ng, “Governance of American Empire: American Colonial Administration and Attitudes, 1898–1917” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1975), ProQuest (302823975).

²²⁵ Harvard President Charles E. Eliot suggested in 1899 to establish a specialized training school for diplomacy and government. A. Lawrence Lowell to Charles W. Eliot, December 7, 1899, Charles W. Eliot Papers, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA. But Professor Lawrence Lowell, who had himself suggested a specialized school in colonial administration, preferred to focus the general curriculum further on colonial administration. Franklin Chew Lun Ng, “Governance of American Empire: American Colonial Administration and Attitudes, 1898–1917” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1975), ProQuest (302823975). Eliot eschewed Lowell’s advice and continued to develop a specialized program, which Lowell protested. *Id.* at 224. After the curriculum began to grow after 1904, Harvard administrators tried again to establish a specialized school in colonial administration, unsuccessfully, and then again in 1907. *Id.* Yale University President Hadley began a similar campaign for a school in colonial administration in 1900. “President Hadley’s Report,” *New Haven Register*, June 27, 1900, 1–2.

²²⁶ The following figure draws upon an original data set of all courses offered on colonial administration from all institutions listed as members of the American Association of Universities at their founding. Human coders reviewed the course catalogs available for each institution for names of courses and course descriptions, where available.

Harvard Courses in Colonial Administration, 1905–1960

1905–06	1918–19	1933–34	1947–48
Colonial Governments	British Colonial Policy	Modern Imperialism	Economic Imperialism and Allied Problems
Selected Topics in Colonial Government	1920–21	1934–35	Imperialism
1906–07	Colonial Problems, Political and Diplomatic	American Imperial and Colonial Policies	Modern Imperialism
Colonial Governments	Combined Governments and Systems: Composite, Colonial, Federal, and International	1935–36	1948–49
1907–08	1923–24	American Imperial and Colonial Policies	Government of the British Commonwealth of Nations
Colonial Governments	Colonial Government	1936–37	Imperialism
1908–09	1924–25	American Imperial and Colonial Policies	Modern Imperialism
Colonial Governments	Colonial Administration	1937–38	1949–50
Tropical Colonization	Modern Colonial Government	1938–39	Imperialism
1909–10	Topics in Colonial Government	American Imperial and Colonial Policies	1950–51
Colonial Administration	1925–26	1939–40	Imperialism
Colonial Governments	Colonial Administration	American Imperial and Colonial Policies	1951–52
Selected Topics in Colonization	Imperial, Composite, and Federal Government in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century	1940–41	Imperialism
1910–11	Modern Colonial Government	Imperialism	1952–53
American Institutions—National, State, Municipal, and Insular	Topics in Colonial Government	Modern Imperialism	Imperialism
Colonial Administration	1926–27	American Imperial and Colonial Policies	1953–54
Colonial Governments	Modern Colonial Government	Imperialism	Imperialism
1911–12	The Government of Colonies and Dependencies	Modern Imperialism	1954–55
Colonial Administration	1927–28	1941–42	Concepts and Theories of Empire
Colonial Governments	Government of the British Empire	American Imperial and Colonial Policies	Foreign and Imperial Policy of Great Britain
1912–13	The Government of Dependencies	Imperialism	Imperialism
American Institutions—National, State, Municipal, and Insular	1928–29	Modern Imperialism	1955–56
Colonial Administration	The Government of Dependencies	1942–43	Foreign and Imperial Policy of Great Britain
Colonial Governments	1929–30	American Imperial and Colonial Policies	Imperialism
1913–14	Colonial Policy	Imperialism	Seminar on Problems of Colonialism
American Institutions—National, State, Municipal, and Insular	Government of the British Empire	Modern Imperialism	1956–57
Colonial Administration	The Government of Dependencies	1943–44	Imperialism
Colonial Governments	1930–31	American Imperial and Colonial Policies	1957–58
1914–15	The Government of Dependencies	Imperialism	Imperialism
American Institutions—National, State, Municipal, and Insular	1931–32	Seminar on European Imperialism, 1870–1919	Seminar on Problems of Colonialism
Colonial Administration	The Government of Dependencies		1958–59
Colonial Governments	1932–33		Imperialism
1915–16	The Government of Dependencies		Seminar: Problems of Colonialism
Colonial Governments			1959–60
1916–17			Imperialism
Colonial Governments			Seminar: Problems of Colonialism

fig. —

By the early twentieth century, nearly every prominent university within the United States, including all fourteen original founding members of the American Association of Universities, had hired a specialist in colonial administration and offered curriculum on the field.²²⁷ This included Columbia, Cornell, Yale, Princeton, Johns Hopkins, the Universities of California, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Chicago, and Michigan. Some, like Harvard, hired a range of specialists across the

²²⁷ The following figure draws upon the original data set of scholars and practitioners of colonial administration from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and highlights those individuals who were employed full-time as lecturers or tenure-track teachers at any point during the ten-year period from 1900 to 1910.

disciplines of history, political science, and law, and developed programs to train students to specialize in the study of colonial administration.

AAU Faculty between 1900 and 1910

California (4)	Cornell (3)	Pennsylvania (2)
Bernard Moses	Jeremiah Whipple Jenks	Leo Stanton Rowe
H. Morse Stephens	E.W. Huffcut	James Thomas Young
David Prescott Barrows	H. Morse Stephens	Princeton (2)
Eugene I. McCormac	Harvard (10)	Woodrow Wilson
Catholic Univ. of America (1)	Edward Channing	Charles Howard McIlwain
Placide Louis Chapelle	James Bradley Thayer	Stanford (1)
Chicago (6)	Albert Bushnell Hart	Payson J. Treat
Harry Pratt Judson	Abbott Lawrence Lowell	Wisconsin (5)
Hermann Eduard von Holst	William Franklin Willoughby	Frederick Jackson Turner
Ernst Freund	Charles Homer Haskins	Charles Homer Haskins
Alleyne Ireland	Bruce Wyman	Paul Reinsch
Charles E. Merriam	William Bennett Munro	Winfred Trexler Root
Andrew C. McLaughlin	Frederick Jackson Turner	Frederic L. Paxson
Clark (1)	Roscoe Pound	Yale (11)
G. Stanley Hall	Johns Hopkins (4)	Simeon Eben Baldwin
Columbia (8)	Herbert Baxter Adams	William Graham Sumner
John Burgess	Westel Woodbury Willoughby	Theodore S. Woolsey
Munroe Smith	Charles McLean Andrews	George Burton Adams
Frank J. Goodnow	Walter F. Dodd	Edward Gaylord Bourne
Harry A. Cushing	Michigan (3)	Albert Galloway Keller
Herbert L. Osgood	Andrew C. McLaughlin	Isaiah Bowman
William R. Shepherd	Claude Halstead van Tyne	William D. Guthrie
Charles A. Beard	Jesse S. Reeves	Maxwell Farrand
James T. Shotwell		Allen Johnson
		Charles McLean Andrews

fig. —

As the discipline of political science, like other academic disciplines within the American academy, began to separate and establish independent fields of inquiry in the first years of the twentieth century, colonial administration remained at the center of the discipline. For instance, at the International Congress of Arts and Science, held at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis (officially known as the Louisiana Purchase Exposition), Chancellor E. Benjamin Andrews of the University of Nebraska and Professor William A. Dunning of Columbia University introduced the "five pillars" of the burgeoning discipline of political science: political theory, diplomacy, national administration, municipal administration, and "colonial administration," or the science of governing others toward

civilization.²²⁸ Presenting on the pillar of colonial administration was Professor Harry P. Judson, professor of political science at the University of Chicago, soon to serve as the president of the university, and Professor Bernard Moses of the University of California,²²⁹ where he founded the department of history and political science in 1883 and the standalone department of political science in 1903.²³⁰

The formal recognition of colonial administration as one of the five pillars of political science and as a formal subfield of American history completed a process that had been unfolding for over three decades. During the 1870s and 1880s colonial government existed as a central and recurring subject within American history, political science, and the study of government. By 1904, the subfield had developed to such a degree that it demanded its own focused inquiry. It possessed its own lexicon, methods, and curriculum. As a distinctive subfield, colonial administration came to define explicitly the disciplines of political science and history through their scientific study of governing non-subject populations.²³¹

Even beyond forming a central subfield, specialists within each discipline who focused on colonial administration took leading and founding roles in American history and political science as the disciplines professionalized. In 1903 Frank Goodnow, Burgess' former Amherst pupil and a scholar of colonial administration, became a principal founder of the of the American Political Science Association and served as its first President.²³² The Association's first Vice President, Paul Reinsch, also specialized in the science of colonialism.²³³ Reinsch, a professor of political science at

²²⁸ "International Congresses," *World's Fair Bulletin* (St. Louis: World's Fair Publishing Co., 1899–1904) (Feb. 1904), 16–17.

²²⁹ *Id.*

²³⁰ *Id.*

²³¹ Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 43; Roberts, "Bearing the White Man's Burden," 190.

²³² "Officers of the Association for 1904," *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association* 1 (1904): 18. One of the first organizing themes of that first meeting focused on colonial government. Programme of the First Annual Meeting," *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association* 1 (1904): 25–26.

²³³ *Id.*

the University of Wisconsin, was a colleague and former student of Frederick Jackson Turner.

Reinsch published his second and third books, titled *Colonial Government* and *Colonial Administration*, in 1902 and 1912 respectively, in an effort to author textbooks for the burgeoning subfield.²³⁴

²³⁴ Reinsch, *Colonial Government*, 44, and *Colonial Administration*, 112.