

years as a time of comity. Viguierie himself charged in 1987 that Reagan had “changed sides” and was allied with liberals and the Soviets.

McClay believes that the current attention focused on conservatism’s “demise” is the best evidence that it is, “intellectually speaking, where the principal action remains.” The Democratic Party has so far found “clarity only in discrediting George W. Bush and regaining office.” But he cautions that “conservatism in American politics is less an ideology than a coalition.” As in any coalition, “not all of the pieces fit together coherently.” Conservatives would do well, McClay concludes, to “remember Ronald Reagan as a leader who not only embodied the distinctive characteristics of American conservatism but who finessed its antinomies and persevered against the contempt and condescension of his own era.” A more realistic view of the past, in other words, may help conservatives “regain their bearings and prevail.”

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Why Political Science Doesn't Matter

THE SOURCE: “Wilson’s Failure: Roots of Contention About the Meaning of a Science of Politics” by Peter N. Ubertaccio and Brian J. Cook, in *The American Political Science Review*, Nov. 2006.

AT LEAST 10 CANDIDATES ARE campaigning for president in the 2008 election, staffed up with pollsters, consultants, managers, and communications specialists. Where are the political scientists? For the

most part, they’re writing papers with titles such as “Enhancing the Validity and Cross-Cultural Comparability of Measurement in Survey Research.” Or “Bargaining in Legislatures Over Particularistic and Collective Goods.” In other words, they’re far from the real world of politics.

Modern political science is heavy on exotic statistical analysis and narrow specialization, short on practical insights into democratic governance. These are tendencies that Woodrow Wilson squared off against in 1903 when he founded the American Political Science Association, before he went on to become governor of New Jersey and president of the United States, and which others in the discipline continue to resist, with little success.

Wilson was wary of theory that was not grounded in experience, and believed that “a purely academic orientation, with its embrace of logic and reason, was inadequate as an approach” to the study of the political world, where passions and other forces reign, write Peter N. Ubertaccio and Brian J. Cook, political scientists at Stonehill College and Clark University, located, respectively, in Easton and Worcester, Massachusetts. “Shakespearean range and vision” are needed to understand politics, along with street-level experience of politics, Wilson declared. Modern government requires better leadership, and it should be the mission of political science to develop statesmen and help democracy solve its problems.

Yet political scientists were moving away from Wilson’s principles

almost as soon as he enunciated them. In part, this was a response to the centralization of political power in Washington that increased during Wilson’s own presidency and escalated dramatically under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. With one big power center, the fundamental dilemma of political scientists became acute: How could they counsel political leaders while retaining their scholarly detachment and their ability to speak truth to power? So they retreated from the path Wilson favored.

Today, there are now two main branches of political science. A warts-and-all group examines the behavior of public officials and government institutions down to the minutest detail—for example, why do members of Congress vote the way they do?—but has little to say about how their discoveries might guide either political leaders or citizens. Theory-minded political scientists work with the kind of a priori assumptions Wilson detested, busily constructing sophisticated statistical tests of their hypotheses—“with the results rarely contradicting the theory,” the authors remark. Such prescriptions as they offer carry little weight. Both groups have thrown out history, literature, and law as sources of political understanding in favor of the scientific model and methodologies borrowed from economics.

Yet there are dissidents in the discipline’s ranks, most prominently Theodore Lowi of Cornell University, a former president of the American Political Science Association. “Political science is a harder science than the so-called

hard sciences because we confront an unnatural universe that requires judgment and evaluation,” he told his colleagues in 1992. “The modern state has

made us a dismal science, and we have made it worse by the scientific practice of removing ourselves two or three levels away from sensory experience.” Lowi

calls for a return to Wilsonian principles and to greater engagement with the real world of politics, but his is at least as lonely a voice as Wilson’s was in 1903.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

300,000 Miles and Proud of It

THE SOURCE: “Extreme Jobs: The Dangerous Allure of the 70-Hour Workweek” by Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Carolyn Buck Luce, in *Harvard Business Review*, Dec. 2006.

THE WORLD OF WORK DOESN’T just appear to be more time consuming and demanding than it did only five years ago. It is. At the top of the nation’s job hierarchy, the “extreme job” is becoming ever more so. Nearly half of people with extreme jobs say they are working an average of 17 more hours per week than they did as recently as 2001, write Sylvia Ann Hewlett, president of the Center for Work-Life Policy, a New York nonprofit, and Carolyn Buck Luce, chair of the Hidden Brain Drain Task Force.

Extreme jobs are those that are highly paid—salaries are in the top six percent of all wage earners—and require more than 60 hours of work a week. Tending toward unpredictability, they often require 24/7 availability and extensive travel. About 21 percent of the nation’s most highly paid

professionals describe their positions as extreme, according to a 2006 survey by the Center for Work-Life Policy. Workers with extreme jobs are frequently expected to handle mentoring and recruiting, to attend after-hours



“I just want to go home, crawl into bed, and do some more work.”

events, and to juggle an inordinate scope of responsibility that amounts to more than one position. Think of the creative director of a large entertainment company, juggling new technologies, new products, and new markets on new continents.

The rise in the demands of top professional jobs grows out of “sweeping changes in the global eco-

nomie environment,” the authors write. Mergers and flattened hierarchies have shrunk the pool of such positions in some areas—more than three percent of all corporate officer positions in the *Fortune* 500 have disappeared within the past 10 years—even as new female and minority candidates contend for the remaining slots. As competitive pressures throughout the economy make extreme jobs seem more necessary, other changes in society are making them more attractive. As in the world of extreme sports,

where the winners perform the most daring, demanding, and gratuitous feats, so professionals wear their over-the-top work commitments on their sleeves, bragging about flying 300,000 miles a year.

Technology facilitates extreme work. Cell phones, PDAs, and the Web make staying in constant touch possible, hence mandatory.

As more hours are spent at the office, households and families are starved of time, and they become progressively less appealing. Home becomes the source of stress and guilt, while work becomes the place where successful professionals go to get strokes, admiration, and respect, the authors say.

Even so, “long workweeks cannot