

# The Profession

## Reply to the Letter Professor Lowi Kindly Wrote Me

Dear Professor Lowi:

I might have replied privately to your letter in *PS*, but as readers may wonder whether I accept your revised interpretations, I am sending this last missive to *PS*. I will be brief.

1. You have read my every word? Does that include *Public Administration*, one of whose three main themes is “reevaluating the role of the administrator in the formation of policy” and analyzing “administration in its broader political and governmental setting”? We said as much about policy as did Fritz Morstein-Marx and Wally Sayre in their books.

2. Your argument has nothing to do with a direct relation between behavioralism and economics? If so, why the long disquisition on page 5 of your presidential address on the seduction of political science by economics.

3. Why was your new distinction

between the “good” holistic behaviorism of the Chicago School and the reductionist behavioralism of Michigan, absent from your address—except for a vague reference to “the hegemony of . . . behavioral science or public opinion,” which I cannot distinguish from the “golden age” products you find so admirable.

4. Political scientists have shown a “lack of attention to the political game”? Nonsense. Many (including me) were active and consciously political in getting social science budgets into NSF (and the Foundations), and getting social scientists into the National Academy of Sciences, NRC and PSAC. The aim (rather successful) was to increase the body of social science relevant to the policy process, legislative, judicial and executive, and to broaden the channels for making it available. The state (i.e., the Reagan administration) tried unsuccessfully to prune

social science research from the federal budget, but social scientists prevented this with active help from sympathetic liberal congressmen. Who was shaping whom?

5. That I am a product of *society* is a truism. But how have my politics or actions changed from New Deal days to the grim ones of Republican rule? The new “product of the state” seems to be a spitting image of the old one. Read the preface to the reissue of *Public Administration* (Transaction Publishers, 1991), written while Mr. Bush was President.

Mr. Lowi, I have no reluctance to tell you this: you are guilty of multiple inaccuracies of which these are just a sample. I value history based on supportable facts more than I do your “interesting hypotheses,” for which you yourself claim only shock value, not truth.

Sincerely Yours,  
Herbert A. Simon

## Response to Critiques of Presidential Address

Theodore J. Lowi, *Cornell University*

I celebrate the dialogue my presidential address has provoked. The published responses—by Herbert Simon, by Randall Calvert, and my rejoinder to Simon’s original critique—are a small proportion of the total. I have directly received many intelligent comments, and have responded to each of them in whatever way I thought would maintain the discourse.

However, I think the time has come to back away a bit. Since

Calvert’s has already been published, my response perforce would appear in another issue, at least three months later. There is no reason to assume that a person reading my response would have available and would wish to read the earlier piece. And since Simon’s own rejoinder will have appeared six months after our published exchange and 18 months after the original *APSR* piece, a brief comment by me in response to his brief response to my response seems

*de trop*. It is more than appropriate that Herbert Simon have the last word, for now.

I leave the field for now, in hopes that the politics of political science will become an important and continuing part of political science. Political science already has a place in history, but it can only be improved if we make more of an effort to appreciate what that place is.