

Gordon Tullock as a Political Scientist

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I. Introduction

In the *Odyssey*, Phemius the Poet claimed that he was original, and therefore should be spared the sword:

I am self-taught and the god has inspired me with all kinds of songs.
It is fitting for me to sing for you as for a god.
For these reasons, do not be eager to kill me.

Gordon Tullock was also “self-taught” (and openly proud of it), having taken only one class in economics during his education at the University of Chicago. Of course, being self-taught may have been easy, since many believed that Tullock was a “natural economist” (Buchanan, 1987). Charles Rowley put it this way in his “Introduction” to the Tullock’s *Selected Works* (Rowley, 2004; xii):

Gordon Tullock is an economist by nature rather than by training. He attended a one-semester course in economics for law students given by Henry Simons at the University of Chicago, but is otherwise self-taught. For most budding economists, such a background would be a handicap. In Tullock’s case, arguably it has proved to be an enormous advantage, enabling him to deploy his formidable intellect in a truly entrepreneurial manner.

In writing this essay, we have been asked to consider Tullock’s contributions not as an economist, but as a *political scientist*. In political science, Gordon was also self-taught, though it appears that he did take at least the required classes at Chicago (amounting to advanced high school civics) for the B.A. (which he never formally received). He did finish, after returning from the European war in 1946, the requirements for a J.D., the only degree he ever formally received.

But law and political science are different beasts. This is especially true in the way that Gordon elected to “do” political science. Not everyone was impressed, to say the least. As

Herbert Kaufman, the famous Yale public administration scholar, put it in a review of Tullock's 1965 book, *The Politics of Bureaucracy*:

It may be theoretically possible for a man to produce an original, insightful book on a subject whose voluminous literature he gives no indication of having read. And it may be theoretically possible for a man to write a brilliant treatise on a complicated social phenomenon largely by introspecting. But the odds seem discouragingly low.

Nevertheless, this is precisely what Gordon Tullock, whose previous work includes co-authorship of *The Calculus of Consent*, undertook to do in this book [with] no sign that he has looked at all at the substantial body of writing on bureaucracy. And he explicitly commits himself to the doctrine that "we understand how others feel or act because we know how we would act or feel under similar circumstances." Unfortunately, his product is of the kind the odds lead us to expect rather than the rare exhilarating exception. (Kaufman, 1966; p. 488).

While Kaufman is openly disdainful of Tullock's approach – an approach rooted in (admitted) innocence of knowledge of most of the classical literature in public administration and political science, coupled with introspection – it is worth pointing out that this method has a proud lineage in our discipline. As one of the founders of "modern" political science, Thomas Hobbes, observed in the introduction to *Leviathan*:

But there is another saying not of late understood, by which they might learn truly to read one another, if they would take the pains; and that is, *Nosce Teipsum*¹, Read Thy Self: which was not meant, as it is now used, to countenance, either the barbarous state of men in power, towards their inferiors; or to encourage men of low degree, to a sawcie behaviour towards their betters; But to teach us, that for the similitude of the thoughts, and Passions of one man, to the thoughts, and Passions of another, *whosoever looketh into himselfe, and considereth what he doth, when he does Think, Opine, Reason, Hope, Feare, &c, and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know, what are the thoughts, and Passions of all other men, upon the like occasions.* (Hobbes, 1982; p. 3; emphasis added).

If the italicized portion sounds quite a bit like Tullock's "we understand how others feel or act because we know how we would act or feel under similar circumstances," it's not because he was quoting it from memory. Characteristically, there is no reference to *Leviathan* in Tullock's

¹ This phrase is usually "nosce te ipsum," but we quote it the way Hobbes spelled it.

Politics of Bureaucracy. Gordon came up with that idea on his own. But then, he was self-taught.

Tullock as a Political Scientist

By any standard, Tullock was recognized by the discipline of political science as a member. He had formal appointments in Departments of Political Science at Rice (1967-8) and Arizona (1987-1999). He was elected to the ruling Council of the American Political Science Association in 1970 for a 2-year term.² And he was named as a “member” of the “American Political Science Review Hall of Fame” (Miller, et al., 1996), based on the fact that two of his papers in the *APSR* (Tullock 1966a; Tullock 1975a) had received a total of more than 5,500 citations in the professional literature. So it is tempting to say—and have done with it—that for one who was “self-taught,” with no graduate training and no real training of any kind, Tullock was quite successful at being seen as a political scientist, by political scientists.

We are not going to do that. Instead, we will explore two ways in which we might think about the influence of Gordon Tullock in political science. One relates to Gordon’s intellectual contribution, that is, the traction that his ideas have had, and continue to have, in political science. The second is to think about Gordon’s *indirect* influence through the contributions he made – primarily in launching and editing the journal *Public Choice* – on the careers of other political scientists who have gone on to be highly influential in their own right. To do this, we consider three (admittedly suggestive) data sources that can help us (at least in principle) to gauge Tullock’s impact (or lack thereof) on political science as a discipline. These arenas are: A.

² Yes, let’s savor that. Gordon Tullock held elected office. However, he only served one term. Presumably he voted for himself, as he admonished others to do also (Tullock, 1975).

course syllabi; B. citations in political science journals; and C. careers of (now) famous political scientists launched by Tullock's journal, *Public Choice*.

II. Tullock's intellectual contributions

II.A. Course Syllabi

Perhaps one of the most important avenues for scholarly influence works through socialization – specifically, the extent to which graduate students (and thus the next generation of scholars) are exposed to the work of a particular scholar. One way this often happens is through readings that graduate students complete in course work. Scholars whose work is regularly taught are far more likely to shape the views of a new generation than those whose work rarely makes an appearance on course reading lists. Put differently, we suspect that the set of authors that scholars are exposed to as graduate students has a significant impact on how they view their fields, whose work they are likely to cite, etc. (We realize, of course, that there is a bit of a “chicken and egg” problem here: The work of influential scholars is much more likely to appear on course syllabi than the work of scholars who are not influential, because that's one of the things that "influential" means in the first place.)

We were not optimistic about the penetration of the "public choice" approach generally on political science syllabi, partly because one of the authors (Dow and Munger, 1991) had already done a survey of graduate syllabi in American politics. And a recent paper (Simmons and Yonk, 2015) found that little had changed: there are few textbooks that contain significant page counts devoted to public choice, and undergraduate courses in political science rarely spend many classes on the public choice critique of standard political science.

But, it might still be true that Tullock's work does get some attention, even if public choice generally is given short shrift. To get a sense of the extent to which Tullock is included on syllabi for courses in political science, we used Google to search for syllabi for courses in political science that are available online, and include assigned readings by Tullock. Of course, this procedure has severe limits, and is likely to underestimate the prevalence of his works on assigned reading lists – many faculty do not publicly post their syllabi on the web. But it does provide at least an impression of the extent to which faculty are paying attention to his work. Moreover, there is no reason to expect that the readings by Tullock that are assigned in courses will be systematically tied to whether a syllabus is publicly available. So while our survey is likely to underestimate the number of courses in which Tullock is taught, as well as the faculty members who teach him, we are likely to get a reasonable accurate picture of *which* of Tullock's works are usually assigned in political science.

The finding of this exercise are revealing. Going back to 1999, we found syllabi for 63 courses by 57 faculty members who assign at least one work by Tullock. Among these are some of the most highly regarded political science departments in the country, including Yale, Washington University in St. Louis, Rochester, Michigan, UCLA, UC San Diego, Princeton, Harvard, Columbia, and Duke. Some of the faculty who include Tullock among their readings are highly visible in the discipline: Carles Boix, Christian Davenport, Robert Franzese, William Mishler, Scott Morgenstern, Pippa Norris, Elinor Ostrom, Melissa Schwartzberg, Ian Shapiro, Kaare Strom, and Keith Whittington. Perhaps more interesting is the nature of the courses in which Tullock is assigned. Not surprisingly, quite a few are courses in public choice or formal theory. However, graduate field seminars in comparative politics and American politics feature

prominently, as do seminars in political institutions and legislative politics, and courses on civil conflict and revolution.

**Table 1: Prevalence of Tullock works on political science syllabi
(Alphabetical order by title; publication year in parentheses)**

Title	Number of courses in which assigned
An economic theory of military tactics (1982)	1
Autocracy (1987)	4
Democracy as it really is (1994)	1
Government failure: A primer in public choice (2002)	2
On the trail of homo economicus (1994)	1
On voting: A public choice approach (1997)	1
Political Ignorance (1967)	1
Public decisions as public goods (1971)	1
Social cost and government action (1969)	1
Some further thoughts on voting (2000)	1
The calculus of consent (1962)	41
The costs of special privilege (1990)	5
The edge of the jungle (1972)	1
The origin of the rent-seeking concept (2003)	1
The paradox of revolution (1971)	5
The political economy of rent-seeking (1988)	1
The politics of bureaucracy (1965)	1
The politics of persuasion (1967)	1
The social dilemma (1974)	1
The welfare costs of tariffs, monopoly, and theft (1967)	4
Toward a mathematics of politics (1967)	2
Toward a theory of the rent-seeking society (1980)	1
Trials on trial (1980)	1
Why so much stability (1981)	3

In table 1, we detail *which* of Tullock's works are assigned in these courses. What the table reveals is not – in some sense – surprising: By far the most common work by Tullock that is assigned in political science is *The Calculus of Consent*. But interestingly, his work on autocracy and revolution also gets some attention (including by highly prominent scholars teaching in these areas, including Carles Boix, Christian Davenport, and Kaare Strom). Finally, the last set of papers that appears to have some traction are central papers on rent-seeking. While a few other

contributions make it onto the list, they are typically only assigned in one course. These results are, in some sense, sobering: Judging by these syllabi, the contributions by Tullock that students in political science are typically exposed to appear to be largely confined to three areas: his foundational work with James Buchanan in the *Calculus of Consent*, his work on autocracy and revolution, and his work on rent-seeking. Other contributions – including some that are highly relevant to political scientists are missing, such as his work on the vote motive, or his contributions to law and economics.

II.B. Citations in Political Science Journals

Of course another dimension of a scholar's influence – and arguably the more important one – is the extent to which other scholars pay attention to the work in their own scholarship, and the extent to which the work shapes scholarly debates within its field. Citations are one indication of such influence. By any standards, Tullock counts as a giant in this regard. According to Google Scholar (which has broad coverage, since it also includes unpublished working papers), Tullock's work has garnered more than 36,000 citations to date – including over 9,000 to *The Calculus of Consent* and more than 3,500 to “The Welfare Costs of Tariffs, Monopolies, and Theft.” But of course we are not so much interested in the general influence of Tullock's work, but the extent to which his work has shaped discourse in political science. To explore this aspect, we focused our attention on getting a sense to which Tullock's work is cited in political science. Doing so in a comprehensive fashion isn't straightforward, so we adopted the approach of tracking citations to Tullock's work in the three most prominent journals in the discipline: *The American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, and the *Journal of Politics*. Moreover, we focused attention on some of Tullock's publications

that are most prominent on the syllabi reviewed above, and that should be of most relevance to political scientists.³ The results, displayed in Table 2, are, we would argue, shocking.

Table 2: Citations of selected Tullock works in the *APSR*, *AJPS*, and *JOP*

Title	Number of citations
Autocracy (1987)	35
On voting: A public choice approach (1997)	2
Political Ignorance (1967)	0
The calculus of consent (1962)	148
The costs of special privilege (1990)	0
The paradox of revolution (1971)	14
The vote motive	1
The politics of bureaucracy (1965)	21
The welfare costs of tariffs, monopolies, and theft (1967)	12
Why so much stability (1981)	22

The single most cited work – by a long shot – is (unsurprisingly) *The Calculus of Consent*. Other works, including those that are of direct relevance to central questions in political science have garnered very few citations in the top political science journals. To provide some context for these numbers, in table 3 we provide citations to some other prominent works (including in the public choice tradition) in the same three journals.

³ Conducting such a search is not straightforward. We used Google Scholar’s advanced search feature, searching for “Tullock” as well as the name of the publication, restricting the search to each of the three journals. The results are likely to be overinclusive: For example, searching for Tullock and Autocracy produces some search results to papers that are not actually citing the Autocracy book. Nevertheless, this procedure gives a ball park figure.

Table 3: Citations of selected other works in the *APSR*, *AJPS*, and *JOP*

Title	Number of citations
Mancur Olson, <i>The Logic of Collective Action</i> (1965)	466
William Riker, <i>The Theory of Political Coalitions</i> (1965)	175
Anthony Downs, <i>The Economic Theory of Democracy</i> (1957)	1,000
Campbell, Converse, Miller, Stokes, <i>The American Voter</i> (1960)	737

The message that emerges from the comparison of the two tables could not be clearer: Tullock's work has received short shrift in much of the work published in the most prestigious outlets in political science – especially compared to other work in the same tradition. Given the large number of publications in which Tullock took up core subjects in political science, and offered ideas that were often profound, and *should have* garnered the attention of political scientists, one cannot help wondering why so much of his work was essentially ignored in the discipline.⁴ Surely one aspect are simple disciplinary boundaries: Although Tullock spent some time in political science departments, he was primarily an economist writing for other economists. It probably also did not help that Tullock returned the favor by largely ignoring the work of other scholars as Herbert Kaufman so aptly pointed out with respect to Tullock's work on bureaucracy – many of Tullock's papers are largely devoid of citations.

However, another aspect – perhaps more important – may be a function of the way in which Tullock worked. In addition to a dearth of citations to others work, many of his papers are short in length as well as on details. The kernels of the papers were sparked by an intuition that provided him with a deep insight. But having stated his insight, Tullock often moved on without

⁴ This is perhaps most disappointing in the literature on voter behavior, which appears to have largely missed Tullock's work on the incentives confronting voters with respect to the acquisition of accurate information, as well as the motivations underlying voter participation.

systematically developing his ideas – perhaps a consequence of the extraordinarily broad interests he had. To illustrate, consider his 1972 paper on “The Edge of the Jungle.”

In this paper, Tullock explores how the “discipline of continuous dealings” undergirds the fundamental institutions of social order. In the opening pages, Tullock lays out the problem of competition over scarce resources with the example of a pride of lions. As Tullock observes, in this context, smaller lions often engage in threatening behavior towards larger lions in an attempt to secure food. As Tullock points out, such behavior can only successfully deter larger lions if the smaller lion is prepared to fight (at least on occasion) if the larger lion does not give way. But this is, of course, problematic: If the larger lion “calls the bluff,” engaging in the fight is likely to end badly for the smaller lion. So what leads smaller lions (sometimes) *not* to back down, and to fight? Tullock proposes an interesting solution:

The mechanism which makes this possible, I believe, is “loss of temper.” Individuals make threatening noises about things that they want for rational calculations. The actual serious fighting...however, requires temporarily behaving in what is an irrational way. You threaten your opponent with irrational behavior on your part and the threat is indeed rational. Therefore, a built-in, hereditary reaction pattern such that you will, on occasion, behave irrationally may be quite rational in the long run (p.311)

This passage anticipates, of course, one of the central insights of evolutionary psychology – “hard-wired” emotional responses can allow animals to engage in behavior that is evolutionarily advantageous but difficult to sustain if the behavior had to rely on “rational” decision-making in particular situations.

But after making an appearance in the opening pages in order to provide an explanation for the eruption of conflict among unequals, this insight is not developed further and disappears. Much later, other scholars hit upon the same insight, and developed it systematically – perhaps none more so than Robert Frank in his 1988 book Passions within Reason: The Strategic Role of

the Emotions. Frank's book has been cited close to 4,300 times. Tullock's original paper was cited 38 times (and is absent from Frank's references).

Having opened with a pride of lions, Tullock then proceeds to a thought experiment built around a simple model of a society divided into a ruling group and a ruled group. Almost in passing, he observes that the fact that the ruling group exploits the labor of the ruled generates reasons for the ruling group to restrain its behavior towards the ruled – not because they are altruistically motivated, but because the discipline of continuous dealings implies that they can extract *more* over time if they regularize theft:

If the ruling group proposes the use of an efficient system of drawing funds from the ruled group, then it must set up some way of administering these transfers and of controlling individual members of the ruling group who might wish to exceed the standard...Note that the reasons that the ruling group has motives for preventing this individual depredation, or depredation at a level or according to a structure which is not optimal, is the discipline of continuous dealings. They are compelled, in motivating behavior on the part of the subjects which will eventually produce a maximum income to the rulers, to give themselves a pattern of behavior on which the subjects can depend (p. 318).

This insight – that even autocratic rulers have interests in the productivity of their citizens, and that this provides an endogenous (though limited) reason for restraining the abuse of power – passes by quickly, and is not the central point of the paper.⁵ Once again, the intuition was eventually picked up by other scholars – for example, it became a central idea in Mancur Olson's theory of the stationary bandit, which aims to explain the emergence of the state out of the transformation of roving bandits into stationary bandits. Olson systematically developed the idea already contained in Tullock's essay – and in so doing, his argument became far more influential. Olson's paper – published nearly 25 years later – has been cited more than 2,800 times to date.

⁵ Of course, this is also an argument that Tullock makes in *The Social Dilemma* (1974).

In other words, by bucking academic conventions regarding *how* to make a contribution, Tullock probably limited his influence. Because Gordon often did not systematically expand upon and develop his insights, he made it more difficult for others to find them, and to identify his work with them – which ultimately limited his impact. To be clear, we are not suggesting that Frank or Olson intentionally, or even negligently, failed to cite Tullock; we are quite confident that they would have been eager to do so. Rather, the point is that they were unaware of Tullock’s contribution. We should also note that we are not saying that there aren’t consistent themes in Gordon’s work – he obviously returned to particular issues and ideas throughout his career (most notably rent-seeking and the vote motive); rather, what we mean to highlight is that Gordon’s style of work – offering key insights in what we might call “hit and run” pieces on a breathtaking array of subjects – has, to some extent, limited the direct impact of the ideas.

II. C. Careers Launched

Public Choice was launched modestly, but also uniquely. The notion of self-publishing a journal would likely not occur to most people – especially in the days before personal computers and electronic publishing. But Tullock, being self-taught, had no idea how difficult it might prove, or what problems success would present.

The "Preface" to the first volume of *Papers in Non-Market Decision-Making* provides insight into some of the reasons that founding a new journal seemed worthwhile. It was not because Tullock, or the other members of the nascent movement, had found it impossible to publish in mainstream journals. Looking at the publication record of the 1960s in fact shows that they had been both active and successful. And a number of books had been published, and had been influential in economics and political science. Tullock's reasons seemed to have had more

to do with a sense that there were at least some barriers to entry that were particular to work in this vein, and that disciplinary constraints would soon--though they had perhaps not to date--begin to bind progress. It is worth quoting at length from the beginning of the *Preface* (Tullock, 1966b):

In recent years a number of people, mainly but not exclusively economists, have applied intellectual tools drawn from economics to noneconomic social phenomena. This movement has led to the publication of a number of books. It has also led to the production of articles and monographs. Unfortunately, it has been hard to get these shorter items published. The economic journals normally think that articles of political subjects are outside their field, and the editors of the political science journals tend to be opposed to the invasion of their discipline by outsiders with an exotic methodology. There have, of course, been exceptions. Articles applying essentially economic techniques to political problems have appeared in both political science and economic journals, but it is clear that they are much harder to get published than more traditional articles.

It is to remedy this situation that *Papers on Non-Market Decision Making* is being published. It would be hard to find a journal which would consider any of the articles printed here as directly in its field of concern. Editors do, of course, occasionally publish articles which are peripheral to the main interests of their journal, but the number of such articles they select is necessarily small. Further, the appearance of articles scattered through a large number of journals has meant that scholars interested in this new approach to politics frequently find it hard to keep abreast of new work, not because it is so voluminous, but because it is difficult to locate. It is hoped that *Papers on Non-Market Decision Making* will both provide an outlet for articles in this field of research and make scholarship in the field easier by bringing articles on the subject together.

There are several remarkable aspects to this statement. First, there is a breathtaking arrogance and yet simultaneously a childlike naïveté in having the idea that enough people, and prominent people, will be willing to forego the kind of traditional publications that "count" in academia to send articles to a new journal that for all practical purposes is being edited out of a garage in Blacksburg, VA. The enterprise was clearly doomed.

Fortunately, Gordon was too arrogant, or naive, to recognize that the idea was doomed, and so of course it worked better than anyone could possibly have anticipated.⁶ Public choice, which "started as a revolutionary science...with time became a normal science" (Tullock, 1993, p. 9), in large measure because it had a journal of record, a forum where ideas could be exposed to criticism and disputes aired before an increasingly well-informed intellectual community.

The original name, if Tullock (1991) can be believed at face value, was largely due to his desire to publish a paper called "Information without profit," which was not economics but which (according to Tullock, 1991; p. 121) was also "not what we now call 'public choice.'" Tullock was frustrated that he could not get the paper accepted at a journal, even though he judged it to be "quite a superior" piece of work (Tullock, 1991; p. 122). He had coffee at the Colonnade Club (at UVA) with the university printer, who quoted a price so low that Tullock resolved to pay it "out of my own pocket" (p. 122). A number of titles were apparently considered, including "Synergistics" and "Polenomics," but were (thank goodness) rejected. As Tullock puts it, "The obvious title, 'Political Economy,' was barred partly by the fact that it was the old name of economics and partly by the fact that the Marxists were already beginning to claim that title as their own" (p. 122).

It turned out that the UVA economics department was able to foot the bill for the journal, but only because R.H. Coase, who had been lobbying hard for the entire support budget of the department to be given to him (Coase) was turned down by Buchanan. The details of this disagreement (described by Tullock, 1991, as a consequence of Tullock's own suggestion economists seek grants from each other) are amusing, but would take us too far afield. Suffice it

⁶ The story of the origins and early days of the journal are told in a way that is amusing and self-deprecating in Tullock (1991).

to say that the departmental research money was distributed in an (uncharacteristic) egalitarian fashion, and Tullock was able to start the journal.

It was clearly difficult to manage the technical aspects of the journal, given the increasingly complex requirements of academic work and typesetting equations.⁷ A transition to Martinus Nijhoff was engineered in 1978, after "a man walked into my office" and said that they would like to take over the journal. Tullock said (p. 126), "I naturally agreed," though in retrospect he should have asked for considerably more money, or perhaps entertained a relationship with the Society rather than simply transferring the journal. Still, it was his journal, not the Society's, and he had every right to play the hand as he saw fit.

In 1974 the journal had gone to four annual issues, and the editorial office (Tullock's desk) was receiving a steady stream of papers. Tullock said, "I think I was getting more people promoted, but once again I do not think that there was any decline in the average quality of the journal even though there were more articles being printed. It was, however, becoming somewhat more routine as the field itself became more routine" (Tullock, 1991; p. 128). More routine, perhaps, but also rather more prominent. We sought to identify some of the scholars, in political science, economics, and elsewhere, who may have been benefitted in getting their careers starts, at the same time that these scholars were also starting public choice. We did a qualitative survey of some of the important researchers who were published in the journal between the first issue in 1966 and (as an arbitrary cutoff) 1985.

The results are presented in Table 4. The list is impressive indeed – and contains virtually *all* the prominent names associated in political science with the public choice/rational choice

⁷ Tullock tells this story on himself (Tullock, 1991, p. 124): "an equation-rich article by James Coleman got printed without any of the pluses or minuses that were supposed to be there. Since Coleman was a former professional heavyweight boxer, I was, needless to say, disturbed by this but I'm happy to say that I was able to keep out of his way until his temper cooled. In any event, as those of you who know him are aware he is an equitable man and he did not get terribly angry. I, of course, distributed lengthy corrigenda immediately."

tradition. Of course, many of these scholars were at the *outset* of their careers in the 1960's and 70's, and their papers in Public Choice were among their first publications. Put differently, Tullock had a keen sense for talent – a sense also displayed in the first editorial board. The board included seven names: William Riker, Mancur Olson, Anthony Downs, John Harsanyi, Duncan Black, James Coleman, and James Buchanan. No fluff there.

Table 4: Prominent Authors Published in Public Choice, 1966-1985

Alphabetical Order

Political Scientists marked with *

Neither Economics/Political Science marked with **

Nobelists marked with ***

John Aldrich*	Stuart Nagel*
James Alt*	Richard Niemi*
Ken Arrow***	William Niskanen
Nathaniel Beck*	Joseph Oppenheimer*
Peter Bernholz	Peter Ordeshook*
Duncan Black	Elinor Ostrom*,***
Mark Blaug	Vincent Ostrom*
Steven Brams*	Charles Plott
Randall Calvert*	Adam Przeworski*
Donald Campbell	Anatol Rapoport
James Coleman**	William Riker*
Robert Cooter**	Thomas Romer
Louis DeAlessi	Howard Rosenthal*
Allan Feldman	Daniel Rubinfeld
John Ferejohn*	Ariel Rubinstein
Bruno Frey	Paul Samuelson***
Bernard Grofman*	Mark Satterthwaite
Russell Hardin*	Norman Schofield*
Jack Hirshliefer	Thomas Schwartz*
Michael Intrilligator	Amartya Sen***
Gary Jacobson*	Kenneth Shepsle*
William Keech*	Martin Shubik
Finn Kydland***	George Stigler***
Mathew McCubbins*	Michael Taylor*
Daniel McFadden	David Weimer
Richard McKelvey*	Barry Weingast*
Gary Miller*	Herbert Weissberg*
Nicholas Miller*	W.P. Welch
James Mirlees	Aaron Wildavsky*
Herve Moulin	Oliver Williamson***
Dennis Mueller	

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III. Conclusion

Gordon Tullock was one of the intellectual giants of the social sciences in the twentieth century. His flaw as a political scientist was also his virtue: He mostly “read himself.” This was often frustrating to “real” political scientists, who looked for signposts and markers in literature they recognized, answering questions that had been asked before. But that was not Tullock’s approach, as this passage from one of his earlier books demonstrates:

Leaving aside the problem of the correctness of my answers, the fact remains that I have been unable to find any indications that scientists have asked the questions to which I address myself. The unwary might take this as proof that the problems are unimportant, but scientists, fully conscious of the importance of asking new questions, will not make this mistake.” (Tullock, 1966c; p.3; cited in Congleton, 2003)

It is tempting to read this passage as something like Rousseau’s (1754; Part I) famously dismissive, “Let us begin then by laying facts aside, as they do not affect the question,” but that would be a mistake. Rousseau is proposing a theory of a world that does not exist, based on claims about ideal theory; Tullock proposed an approach that asked fresh questions of the world *as it actually appeared*, taking self-interest and imperfection as givens.

Moreover, Tullock’s impact extends beyond the direct influence of his ideas (which were formidable) to his legacy as an academic entrepreneur. His energy and vision in building institutions like the journal *Public Choice* as well as the Public Choice Society enabled and advanced the careers of a host of scholars whose joint impact in economics, political science, and law has been transformative.

That said, explicit recognition of Tullock in political science’s mainstream beyond the more narrow set of scholars who directly identify with the public choice tradition has been more limited than one might expect or hope, especially given the fact that some of Tullock’s central

insights speak directly to the heart of core concerns in political science. The good news is that because Tullock's work was concerned with these overarching, fundamental issues – like the behavior of voters in democratic regimes, and the nature of constitutional systems – it continues to be of relevance. And because it is so wide-ranging, and contains so many nuggets that Tullock himself never fully explored and worked out, much remains to be discovered and mined by others. Perhaps then there is still hope that Tullock will – though belatedly – receive more explicit recognition in a discipline that ought to be eager to claim him as part of its pantheon.

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