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Linking Government to Academic Research: Lessons from the American Progressive Era

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Abstract: This paper intends to explore why and how the U.S. government involved academic scholars in the policy-making process during the Progressive Era, with a focus on President Woodrow Wilson's formation and use of the Inquiry. It further attempts to draw upon the lessons learned from this case study in history in order to stimulate new thinking with regard to the interest of the governmental decision-makers in exploiting academic potential. The paper rests mainly on the research dedicated to Progressivism and Wilsonianism and it consists of an analysis based on the literature review and the case study of The Inquiry. The conclusions highlight the impact that the intellectual potential from within universities and research centres might have in informing policies, revealing alternative tracks and finally supporting the process as a whole. Thus, the paper aims to offer "food for thought" for further debates, raise the awareness on the issue of benefiting from a stronger and deeper government-academia relationship and nurture the mutual interest for partnership and even possible integration.

Keywords: government and academia; Progressivism; Wilsonianism

1 Introduction: Progressives and Progressivism in America

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Progressivism appeared as a reform movement in the United States and evolved for almost four decades to transform the American government and society as a whole. It came in many shapes, as Progressives were equally scholars (John Dewey and Lester Ward) or artists (Woody Guthrie and Upton Sinclair), politicians (Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt) or trade unionists (Samuel Gompers and John Lewis), activists (Jane Addams and W.E.B Du Bois) or journalists (Herbert Croly and Ida Tarbell). They all had in common the belief in the idea of Progress and placed a premium on the role of the Government as the main driver of reform.

Born from an era of political turmoil and social unrest, suggestively entitled "The Gilded Age", when America, under the guise of demographic and economic growth, was being predated by corrupted political machines and rapacious corporate trusts, the Progressives took on the mission of "purifying" both politics and the societal dimension. They shared the idea that the changes brought by the Industrial Revolution and modern capitalism needed to be matched with thorough reforms targeting political, administrative, social, and economic issues. The pursuit of Progress called for a new thinking and revision of the intellectual and cultural principles upon which the American state and society were built. Otherwise, graft and waste would have continued to plague a system lagging behind the

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technological advances and entrepreneurial tradecraft brought in with the development of a capitalist system that engendered the risk of running unchecked.

Education was considered a key catalyst of the envisaged changes, since the "living", rational government that the Progressives were attempting to set up was heavily based on the input of educated and skilled civil servants, on the one hand, and intellectuals, on the other. Thus, the whole system, from schools to universities, was redesigned so that their product – education – would constitute the much needed ingredient for reform. Moreover, researchers and professors from the academia were given a bigger part to play in the societal and governmental transformation process.

This paper attempts to examine the Progressive perspectives on education and review how the American administration and government harnessed the energies emerging from the academia in order to project them in the policy- and decision-making realm. It is thus trying to set an example to be further elaborated on. Understanding the making of the American societal and political system and its successful evolution as a democratic regime with a functional market and acknowledging the vital part played by the government-university "partnership" may provide a useful map for the decision-makers and researchers in Romania and elsewhere. They would be able to apprehend the challenges of the American Progressive Era, to reciprocate the positive lessons and avoid the negative ones, by adapting the model to the specificities of their own countries. The more so as the Progressive ideology continues to be an inspiration for contemporary academic debates and political thinking in the United States, In this respect, the case of the Inquiry is indicative of this governmental practice of filling its knowledge gaps and informing its decisions by taking advantage of academic thought.

2 Literature Review

Progressivism

The Progressive movement constitutes an appealing topic for the political scientists and philosophers in the United States due to its long-lasting impact on the American society and politics. Explaining who the Progressives were, what were their central ideas and how their thoughts were put into practice involved the use of secondary sources, primarily, as they have the advantage of hindsight in assessing the main traits and implications of Progressivism. In this respect, the use of such works that document the era provide a valuable contribution and supports process tracing as a tool of qualitative analysis. Hence, Tim McNeese examines the context that led to the emergence of the Progressives in the American society and politics, elaborates on their central tenets and sets forth the effect their perceptions, thoughts and actions had with regard to the system of government and the state-society relationship (McNeese, 2010). Likewise, Karen Pastorello approaches the roots of the movement, its development and lasting impact, but with a focus on Progressive recognition of the social, political, and economic demands of a society and system in the midst of sudden changes brought by the rapidly developing capitalism (Pastorello, 2014). Walter Nugent provides a brief but detailed description and explanation of the American Progressivism, starting with the critical exploration of its origins, then chronologically tackling its representative figures and the endeared principles they shared, and finally assessing their accomplishments (Nugent, 2009). Faith Jaycox elaborates on a step-by-step development of the Progressive movement, chronologically arranged, and distils the main issues situated at the heart of the reformers' thought and action by using eyewitness accounts (Jaycox, 2005).

Primary sources are additionally employed when addressing the Progressive debate in the field of education, either from original texts or from tertiary sources that compile excerpts from major works

of the main Progressive thinkers and actors. John Dewey, as the "father of Progressive education", is a must in this respect. His selected volume is both a landmark exposition of Progressive educational theory and a philosophical study on the role of education in a democratic regime, aiming to discuss the public education reforms and trigger their implementation (Dewey, 1930). Dewey's advocacy of the democracy was a special and interesting endeavour, as in his views democracy was built upon and centred on schools and civil society, two main ingredients that, fused together, would produce an educated citizen able to actively and constructively engage in public affairs, in the very making of the society, the political system and the economical conditions that would ensure his own security and prosperity. Moreover, education would also impact on the citizen's advancement of the self which gives another argument for reflecting on the topic and reconstructing the concrete reality. To complement the understanding of this seminal contribution to Progressivism, Jay Martin's biographical research captures the birth of Dewey's ideas and work in the context of his own life experience, his family and entourage, based on the published papers in the Center for Dewey Studies (Martin, 2002). William and Susannah Link, in their documentary work that collected and interpreted major readings from the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era, expand the horizon with regard to Dewey's thinking, by presenting his views on the integration of schools into a democratic society, on the fusion of civics and politics through education, as a necessary step in order to fulfil the needs of a modernizing America (Dewey, The School and Society, 2012). Widening the context to the whole Progressive movement, David Labaree's article is vital for understanding the differences Progressive views on education, explaining their divergences and similarities, and assessing their reification in the policy-making process (Labaree, 2005).

Wilsonianism

Due to his huge impact upon world politics, in both theory and practice, Woodrow Wilson is a very popular figure among researchers and authors in the field of political science and international relations. In fact, his valuable contribution to both academic research and concrete politics was so highly appreciated that it gained him the addition of the suffix "-ism" to his name. Wilsonianism was thus born and although it is generally associated with the formulation of foreign policies in the international realm, this paper proposes a wider interpretation of the concept, placing Wilson's thought and action in the Progressive and Liberal environment from which Wilson emerged as a man, intellectual and politician. Therefore, Wilsonianism is considered from a dual perspective encompassing both the internal and external dimension of Wilson's influence on American politics and policies. Ronald Pestritto offers a precise account of Wilson's role in rethinking and reshaping American domestic society and international behaviour (Pestritto, 2005). Moreover, Pestritto's work added value consists in determining the connection between the ideas that Wilson nurtured during his academic career, as student and professor, and the actions he undertook as a public leader in office, first Governor of New Jersey and then President of the United States. From a different angle, Paul Gottfried examines the Wilsonian legacy and defines Wilson's policies as revolutionary, aiming to transfer the democratic reforms at home to the world stage: he was thus attempting to bridge what in international relations terms was dubbed as "the Great Divide" between the domestic and foreign political realms (Gottfried, 1990).

Biographical writings bring also depth and scope to the attempt of examining the genesis of Wilson's ideology and its actual implementation. Scott Berg laboriously defines Wilson as a true architect, one that offered a model for higher education when he was leading Princeton, a model for a different type of government, still liberal but more interventionist, when he took his mandates at the White House,

and a model for a new international system, based on a democratic world order, when he rose on the world stage at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 (Berg, 2013). Charles Zorgbibe vividly portraits Wilson as a crusader, always campaigning in the name of democracy for the weak and the poor, be it students at Princeton, ordinary American people, or nations around the world (Zorgbibe, 2003). Less objectively documented but equally important are the half-biographical half-testimonial writings authored by witnesses to Wilson's life and evolution since they are more endowed to make the readers feel and have a grasp of the era. William Allen White, himself a prominent Progressive leader, attempts to uncover the man behind the facade of the political leader, unveiling Wilson's temper and feelings, his ideals and troubles, and placing him as a part of the higher forces which were moulding America at the time (White, 1925). Joseph Tumulty, Wilson's former private secretary, provides a biography, based on his own personal observations, that sketches a decision-maker willing to be counselled, to accept third views, and to inform himself or be informed by different perspectives (Tumulty, 1921).

The Inquiry and the Peace Conference

A great deal of research was dedicated to the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, as one of the most intense, long-lasting, all-encompassing and high-impact diplomatic events in world history. The U.S. delegation to the peace talks presented an interesting feat: prior to the departure to Europe, it was informed by the research of a group of scholars from the academia set up by Wilson – the Inquiry, and their work continued during the conference itself. The aim is to study the role of this group, virtually a think-tank, in the decision-making process that produced the American official position papers and projects. Lawrence Gelfand offers one of the most in-depth studies with regard to the Inquiry, a masterpiece of documentary research, displaying how the group was formed, how it worked and how it was connected to the policy-making process, as well as a critical analysis, anatomizing the lack of expertise and/or professionalism revealed throughout the Inquiry's evolution, from its structural inception to the final delivery of its products (Gelfand, 1963). Peter Grose briefly pictures the context which led to the creation of the group but, more importantly, presents the Peace Conference from a different angle, the backstage of the experts and scholars that were preparing the meetings of the high officials (Grose, 1996). Focusing on this unofficial perspective, on the peace-making rather than the formal texts of the treaties is the main reason for choosing personal accounts from participants to the Conference in 1919 as references. Ray Stannard Baker offers both selective glimpses of the American delegation in action, with the aim of clarifying the understanding of Wilson's work in Paris, together with his experts and scholars (Baker, 1919), and a documentary record of the activity of U.S. representatives, consisting of original letters and minutes, that expose the informative process that led to decisions and actions (Baker, Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement (volume III), 1922). David Hunter Miller collected an impressive number of documents, a great deal of them elaborated by members of the Inquiry, circulated at the Peace Conference among the members of the American delegation, allowing for a potential correlation of what has been proposed by scholars and adopted by decision-makers (Miller, 1924). Edward House, a proponent of the group that actually established its composition, and Charles Seymour, a senior member of the Inquiry that took part in the American Commission to Negotiate Peace in Paris, tell the inside story of the American delegation in Paris by compiling a series of essays from the participants, most of them previously members of the Inquiry, and reveal how their recommendations constituted the foundation upon which the political decisions rested (House & Seymour, 1921).

3 New Views on Education: Government and Academia during the American Progressive Era

Progressivism: a brief outlook

By the end of the 19th century, the United States were in the midst of complex changes. In the decades that followed the Civil War, an urban and multicultural society had emerged, fueled by the industrial growth and immigration. But the phenomenon of technological and economic modernization was also accompanied by less desirable evolutions, in that a handful of politicians and businessmen sought to control most dimensions of the Americans' life and thus enormously prosper. It was at this time when voices from different backgrounds and in different circles started to be heard, asking to reclaim "a decent society from the forces of economic rapaciousness by expanding the role of collective social action" and "a decent politics – and even democracy – from the forces of corruption that had seized it" (Jaycox, 2005, p. iv). They were warning of the dangers presented by the unlimited power wielded by economic trusts and corrupted politicians and felt that, although America was still "a great nation, but one that still had flaws, gaps in opportunity, and where many people lived in poverty" (McNeese, 2010, p. 90). Their perception was that "the individual and even democracy itself appeared to have been swallowed whole by a huge new economy and a new way of life" (Jaycox, 2005, p. viii) and they simply felt "it was unfair and unjust" that "the rich were getting richer – far richer – than most people" (Nugent, 2009, p. 6). And "most people" was the focus of choice for many of these critical voices; obviously, "this emphasis on ordinary Americans meant that previously unrecognized or marginalized groups attracted" (Pastorello, 2014, p. 9) the attention: debates on women, Native and African Americans, immigrants from around the world, even the workers, added to the already discussed WASP (White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant) community.

Given their natural propensity to foster hope and to seek progress through changes, these reformers were later labeled Progressives, although they did not constitute a monolithic community but rather a very diverse one. "Progressivism manifested itself in everything from railroad regulation to woman suffrage to immigration control to realist art and literature to the first real mass media and paved roads" (Nugent, 2009, p. 3) and as such included sympathizers and activists from a wide spectrum: "religious leaders, businessmen, professionals, civic leaders, settlement women, suffragists, African Americans, civil right advocates, union members, nativists, immigrants, workers, farmers, and politicians" (Pastorello, 2014, p. 12). In politics they were both from the Republican and Democratic parties and ran as wide as Socialists and Radicals, not to mention that they have even established a short-lived Progressive Party. The bottom line is that "there were many varieties of Progressivism and Progressives" (Nugent, 2009, p. 3) which made it difficult to provide a general, valid definition of the whole ideology. In fact, "the fundamental question of how to define progressivism continues to perplex scholars to this day", realizing that "Progressivism is not a cohesive, unified movement but, instead, the sum of a variety of reform efforts" (Pastorello, 2014, p. 10). In this respect, some may even find adequate the simplistic approach put forth by Justice Potter Stewart: "I know it when I see it" (Murphy, 2013, p. 7).

However, there are some common traits generally tying Progressives together, in terms of motivation or belief. The belief of virtually all Progressives was that there really existed a common good and a public interest (Nugent, 2009, p. 3), specifically that "a society should be fair to its members" (Nugent, 2009, p. 5). They "embraced a religious and secular faith in individual self-determination that infused every area of human behavior" (Murphy, 2013, p. 11), a feature that would become a central theme of Wilsonian action abroad, and strove "to first identify and then to remedy the problems" (Pastorello, 2014, p. 7) emanated from a society that was industrializing, urbanizing and receiving a

growing number of immigrants. The pitfalls of these economic and social changes consisted in the emergence of "unwelcome, un-American imbalances in their society": "a new class of ostentatious millionaires, monopolistic and out-of-control corporations, conflict (often violent) between workers and capitalists and supine responses from governments" (Nugent, 2009, p. 2). Governmental languor to these ills was caused both by the lack of institutional and legal instruments, specific to the de-regulated environment of the late 19th century, and, to a greater extent, to a corrupted system that paralyzed all levels of government: local, state and federal. One source of corruption consisted in "the spoils system of job distribution: few publicly funded jobs were funded competitively on the basis of qualifications, abilities, or merit" (Jaycox, 2005, p. 78). The jobs were instead distributed by political machines, the major urban political organizations, and their bosses on the basis of political loyalty or financial support. Then was graft, an ordinary practice at the time, even normal: "men who were otherwise honorable saw no conflict in accepting financial rewards, gifts, commissions, or retainers from businesses and individuals whom they assisted" (Jaycox, 2005, p. 78). Hush money was the virtual currency from both organized crime and legit businessmen and it was given for "inside knowledge of future business or public projects" or "for petty offices and for utility franchises", be it "transit, paving, street cleaning, police protection and in some places even public schools" (Jaycox, 2005, p. 78). This black, invisible administration controlled the existence of entire communities and even the whole nation and its architecture was resistant to change: the bosses were not elected, but instead they were supporting the actual candidates, sometimes nominated by them, and as a result the election process. Bettering the society, politics and economics through reform was then the key dimension of the Progressive spirit, "the very openness to change, that conviction that something needs to be done" (Nugent, 2009, p. 3).

"Good governance" and scientific administration

Government was not only a part of the problem – it was also a part of the solution and most Progressives shared the belief that it was the tool of choice "to regulate economic problems, ameliorate social ills, and reconcile change with tradition" (Nugent, 2009, p. 3). But a different government was needed, since the older one was ill-qualified and corrupted, a new kind of government that "would rely on experts – well educated, highly trained, social and political scientists" (McNeese, 2010, p. 90) to bring knowledge and expertise in the public affairs. On the other hand, the moral dimension would be preached and overseen by "social gospellers", teachers/priests that "merged the sacred and the secular" to address social problems and promote social change "by following Christian doctrine" (Pastorello, 2014, p. 66), "muckrakers", pioneers of investigative journalism that were revealing social problems to the public opinion, and other philosophers or sociologists.

Governmental regulation was thus considered a vital condition for the quality of life of individuals, communities, and the nation. Progressives demanded "a more streamlined and efficient activist government that involved itself in American life": the state was practically required "to step in to play a more active role in solving social, economic, and political problems" (Pastorello, 2014, p. 8), since it was imagined as the most effective means of "social action on behalf of the people" (Jaycox, 2005, p. viii) that could counterbalance selfish private interests. In this respect, "an active and enlarged government" (Jaycox, 2005, p. viii), an interventionist one in modern terminology, was the best instrument to protect ordinary citizens and democracy itself from "the behavior of trusts and the powerful businessmen who had manipulated the traditional language of individual rights to assume unprecedented control over the economy and even the government itself […] and the political malfeasance" of the corrupted and potent political bosses (Jaycox, 2005, p. viii). Disinterested

activism, private charity and pure research were not enough by themselves; they needed to be supplemented by new legislation and public services in order to provide better standards of living. The main functions of the government were to bring social justice, "through redistribution of resources, anti-trust laws, government control over details of commerce and production", and to ensure the development of its citizens, "through protection of the environment, education, and spiritual uplift" by promoting arts and culture (West & Schambra, 2007).

Government started to appeal to Progressive intellectuals as a topic of research and sometimes even as a profession. Reform activism had a particularly strong intellectual inspiration. James' and Mead's "theory of pragmatism emphasized applied knowledge rather than abstract concepts […] and stressed the importance of using practical action to press for societal reform" (Pastorello, 2014, p. 67). Reforms were assessed in measurable terms of success and the job of the reformers was to push for positive changes "with the assistance of the government to right the wrongs of American life" (Pastorello, 2014, p. 68), and to inform the policy- and law-making processes. In time, these intellectuals, as well as activists from civic groups, turned into "quasi-official and later even official arms of government" (Jaycox, 2005, p. viii), as "investigative bodies and expert advisers", or "brain trusts", intended to help public authorities to alleviate corruption and implement reform (McNeese, 2010, p. 91).

The entire political and administrative system, as a "dynamic, evolving instrument of social change", was built upon "scientific knowledge and the development of bureaucracy" (West & Schambra, 2007). In this context, education was indispensable to government and to the whole reform process of both state and society. It was not just a recruitment pool for professional, competent bureaucrats, but a source of knowledge and expertise for policy. Moreover, it was crucial for the creation of an educated, informed and thus empowered citizen as the actively engaged resource in democratic politics. As such, education as a domain became the focus of Progressive debates and proposed reforms.

Progressive education in a democratic society

The heterogeneous character of Progressivism was also present in the education field. Some historians point at administrative and pedagogical progressives, others divide them into conservative and liberal, while a last category define three schools of thought focusing on social efficiency, child development and social reconstruction (Labaree, 2005, p. 279). Despite similarities such as the dissatisfaction with traditional education or the belief in developmentalism, which meant adapting education to "the capacities of students at particular stages of intellectual and social growth" (Labaree, 2005, p. 283), these strands were fundamentally divergent. While contemporary debates revolve around progressive pedagogy, centered on the nature of learning, needs of the students, and class methodology, the debate in the Progressive Era was won by administrative progressives and their utilitarian vision grounded in scientific curriculum-making and efficient management practices (Labaree, 2005, pp. 281-282). Their success was determined by their better appeal to "people in power, because business and political leaders were attracted to a mode of educational reform that promised to eliminate waste, to organize and manage schools more efficiently, to tailor instruction to the needs of employers, to Americanize the children of immigrants and to provide students with the skills and attitudes they would need to perform and to accept their future roles in society" (Labaree, 2005, pp. 284-285). Utility also had the upper hand over the romantic vision that held in high regard the will and needs of the child (Labaree, 2005, p. 285). Another powerful argument was the authority of science preached by the administrative progressives, eager "to prove the value of their reforms" as well as their "focus on the management of schools and the structure of the curriculum" (Labaree, 2005, p. 285). Last but not least, the fact that

Dewey, a major figure in the camp of the pedagogical progressives, moved early to the higher education system (Labaree, 2005, p. 285), was a decisive blow. However, his ideas on learning and schooling were to become a legacy of the era and in the same time penetrated in the upper spheres of the education realm: universities.

Impelled by the state and societal support, American institutions of higher education encouraged "a scientific approach to agriculture, science and engineering", while in the liberal arts "concentrated on research and developing new disciplines" (Pastorello, 2014, p. 89). In their quest for recognition and capital, universities "professionalized" the social sciences field, providing graduates with skills and ideas for policy-making and public affairs. In the same time, "professors sought public recognition and influence as policy experts in their chosen fields of government and public administration" (Pastorello, 2014, p. 90). The result was that in the Progressive Era, more children and students attended schools and universities than ever in the educational history of the United States (Pastorello, 2014, p. 135) in order to satisfy the rapidly growing needs for "better-educated and trained public, as the society became more urbanized and, at least in certain sectors, more technological" (Nugent, 2009, p. 56). The new research establishments held a different view on societies, economies and policies, in that they were treated as a whole organism. Previously adherent to a rationalist dogma, they now considered that reforms and policies "should be based on empirical evidence, evaluated and sifted by experts in sociology, political economy and allied sciences, who would then devise programs and policies that governments would effectuate for the benefit of the social organism" (Nugent, 2009, p. 59).

John Dewey stood tall among the Progressives. He emphasized the role of schools as social settlements and the need to discuss educational reforms "in a broader, social view" (Dewey, The School and Society, 2012, p. 244). Viewing "public schools as potential agents for social change" (Pastorello, 2014, p. 68), he proposed "radical reforms in public schools curricula" (Pastorello, 2014, p. 133). He had a wider vision than most, projecting schools as "a vital tool to encourage students to become active, responsible citizens who could and would engage as members of a social group in their neighborhood and wider communities" (Pastorello, 2014, p. 134). Thus, educational institutions were a vibrant part of the democratic society, and constituted in themselves "a miniature community, an embryonic society" that needed to be "freed from all economic stress" in order to "open all the possibilities of the human spirit" (Dewey, The School and Society, 2012, p. 244). Education was imagined in its multidimensionality, as "a necessity of life", "a social function" securing "direction and growth in the immature" individual or nation, but in order to fulfill its true purpose it needed to democratize itself in terms of both management and pedagogy (Dewey, Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education, 1930). His principles never became dominant in educational philosophy in terms of class practice oriented toward the student, but they have contributed to the proliferation of the view that schools and universities are the means for the development of critical, applied, socially engaged intelligence that increases the awareness of the citizens with regard to public affairs, their understanding of the matter and the competences to effectively participate in decision-making.

4 Wilson and the Inquiry at the Paris Peace Conference (1919)

True to the Progressive spirit, Woodrow Wilson, himself a highly reputable scholar, infused the politics and policies he pursued with the beliefs and ideas of the time. "Exposed to the historical, progressive thinking" of the age, Wilson's most eloquent stance as a Progressive was visible in his opposition to the more libertarian conception of the constitutional system, as proposed by the

Founding Fathers (Pestritto, 2005, p. 10). He wanted a stronger interventionist state, capable of fighting private interests, surging from politics or economics, as the only representative of the common will. In the foreign realm, two capital legacies of Wilsonianism – self-determination and the League of Nations – were based on the historicist and humanist view of the Progressives that believed democracy was the next logical step in the evolution of humanity towards greater civilization and progress.

A case in point is the work a group of scholars and experts – the Inquiry – that Wilson accepted, greeted and used as a basis for policy and action. Moreover, he encouraged their participation to the Paris Conference as members of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace. "It all started as an inquiry, indeed, […] of a working fellowship of distinguished scholars tasked to brief Woodrow Wilson about options for the postwar world" (Grose, 1996, p. 1). Although there is some debate with regard to the actual proponent of creating this "academic band", Colonel House, Wilson's "proto-national security advisor", is credited with this idea aimed at arranging "the U.S. presence at the Peace Conference" and establishing "reliable sources of information about conditions in Europe" (Grose, 1996, p. 3). It is also worth mentioning that the Department of State, led by Bryan, also had the intention to create such a group but (Gelfand, 1963, pp. 14-15), due to "turf-battles", the move was patronized by the White House. In other words, the administration lacked the knowledge and expertise on a number of issues it was expecting and anticipating to discuss in Paris. In fact, even Wilson "had received little formal training in international affairs, nor had he previously manifested any serious involvement in questions of foreign policy" (Gelfand, 1963, p. 1). Anyhow, the President clearly welcomed their recommendations. In fact, six of his famous "Fourteen Points" are based on a report produced by the Inquiry in January 1918 (Baker, Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement (volume III), 1922, pp. 23-41). Since the pursuit of American war and peace aims "might have easily hinged on the very preparations placed by President Wilson in the charge of Colonel House" (Gelfand, 1963, p. 32), the composition of the group was critical. The decision was then to recruit and select mainly professors, since the work of preparing the Conference was intended "to fall within the province of academic scholarship" (Gelfand, 1963, p. 33). Indeed, this "doctrine of government planning making use of expert counselors had emerged as a salient feature of progressive thought" (Gelfand, 1963, p. 33). The result is obvious from the anatomy of the Inquiry (Gelfand, 1963, pp. 53-68): 65% of the members studied in four top universities – Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Chicago – and approximately half of them were researchers and professors in five academic centers of excellence: Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Chicago, Stanford and the American Geographic Society. The human resources "recruiters", most of them renowned intellectuals (Sidney Mezes, Walter Lippmann, Newton Baker, Archibald Coolidge, James Shotwell), who also played the role of leaders and moderators in the group, complained about the difficulty of identifying "qualified talent", "genius" on specific issues. Even though some of the enrolled experts might have been the result of compromise, it may still be concluded that the Inquiry was trying to select "the cream of the crop" from the American academia. It is also worth mentioning that openness and interest were not displayed only by the government, the same response came from the academia: academic societies and universities offered donations and provided logistics, while political scientists, law and economics professors, sociologists, historians and philosophers rushed to provide their CVs in order to "serve the country" (Gelfand, 1963).

In Paris, the former members of the Inquiry left their study groups and libraries in order to work on multinational committees not for research but for pragmatic solutions: "they found themselves down from the ivory tower, testing something with their feet that might be either rock or quicksand" (Grose, 1996, p. 5). Although the story of the Peace Conference is generally told from the political and diplomatic perspective, different talks were held in parallel, "in congenial and civilized encounters"

where ideas were shared and expertise was forged. These scholars redrew frontiers, arranged for economic treaties, formulated principles and designed institutions (Grose, 1996, p. 5). Although their work was eventually altered due to national interests and political action, their contribution was nevertheless valuable. “The final decisions rested with others, but these decisions were largely based upon facts and opinions” provided by scholars and it may be said that “the voice of the United States during the memorable Conference at Paris […] found its first comprehensive and authoritative expression” (House & Seymour, 1921, pp. vii-viii) in the collaborative work and reflection of the “academic band”. In fact, House’s and Seymour’s volume stands proof for the input of the academic laboratory into the political decision-making process.

Learning the lessons from the American Progressive Era leads to an obvious conclusion: good governance is depending on an increasing flow of talented scholars and knowledgeable expertise from the academia. Leaving common interest and openness aside, public authorities simply do not possess a better alternative to academic study as a guide and framework for statecraft.

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