

# **GERMAN POLITICAL SCIENCE: ITS TRADITIONS AND GENEALOGICAL STEPS**

**Hans J. Lietzmann**

German political science is characterised by a paradoxical unity of tradition and renewal. It is rooted (on the one hand) in a rich Aristotelian tradition being an inheritance of the mediaeval and early modern so-called “older teachings of politics”. With the rise of the German Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century this teaching was (on the other hand) displaced by the dominance of the technocratic models of power and was partially forced into emigration. After 1945 this inheritance was largely buried, but it resurfaced in the capacity of American “political science” and her re-import to Germany.

During the post-war era and in the course of the Cold War political science in Germany expanded into an institutional orientated, political doctrine of education. It was not until the seventies that it was sociologised and professionalised, emancipating itself from the “pathos of indoctrination.” In the course of the German reunification West German political science was propagated into Eastern Germany, thus experiencing an important quantitative amplification while relying content-wise and structurally on its old paths. Political science is currently held in high esteem in the Federal Republic of Germany, being the leading discipline concerning the interpretation of political processes, having replaced the sciences of history and sociology in this regard.

Political science is nevertheless only going to succeed in maintaining this reputation if it is able to give a theoretical and hermeneutically exigent interpretation of the genealogy and disruptions of Europeanisation and globalisation. As a result, the theoretical traditions, the political communicative capacities as well as the political and sociological competence of political science have to be newly combined in order to live up to new challenges.