

# Introducing 10x10 – a freedom to combine

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We are proud to present to you '10x10'. We have taken the liberty to ask ten leading contemporary social science scholars to present the ten works they find have formed their own academic development the most. The selected works are not the ten works the authors think are the most important for the discipline, nor for any particular sub-field. It is not even ten works that each of them finds that everybody ought to read – we have asked them simply to present here a personal essay on each of the ten works that they think have had the greatest impact on their own thought, whatever these works may be. Each of the contributions starts with a short foreword outlining the reflections that the process of selection spurred in the author, before it moves on to the hows and whys of the influence exerted by each of the ten works in question.

Our invitation have created for each a chance to step out of the anonymous but loud mumbling of the professorial discourse with its proper books to read, its sanctioned reading lists, and its routine reference to an often unspecified canon of political science. The challenge has been taken in widely different ways, as you are about to discover.

We will suggest three strategies for reading 10x10. The first way is to focus on the 100 interesting works reviewed, the second to concentrate on the 10 intellectual autobiographies offered, and the third to pay attention to the 1 thought that propels the whole thing into being - the ever present idea

and reflection on the idea of offering a pluralistic subjectively oriented mapping of the self-perception of the sources of ideas in the social sciences.

## **100**

Flipping through the volume, you will find personal reviews, reflections and recommendations of a 100 works that have shaped the thought of leading scholars. This makes up a list of works primarily from the last hundred years of social science, a list that can function as a more personal and sometimes idiosyncratic alternative to the lists of 'classics' found elsewhere. If you should find yourself in the favourable position that you lack inspirations for readings, 10x10 is a good place to look. Even if you do not feel you have the time, maybe you will find it anyhow after one of the contributors has made an effort to draw your attention to otherwise forgotten literary treasures of the past or offered a reading of a well-known classic that have spurred your curiosity to read or re-read an established work. Anyone with an interest in politics, whatever the sub-field, will be able to find works of relevance and personal reasons for reading them.

## **10**

How does the formation of academic careers take place? What makes a social scientist? The ten contributors have been given an opportunity to tell a situated story of their academic lives through the ten selected books, and through their own introduction and reflection on the selection process. These ten examples show how new ideas are often created by combining older ones, how key inspirations often happen very early in the academic life, and – perhaps most notably – how differently the scholars look at their own histories, how differently they have taken up different books and indeed how differently they perceive the very roles of their ten selections in their life and work.

## 1

When the art publisher Phaidon Press in 1998 was the first to use the 10x10 concept with a book on architecture also entitled *10x10*, the aim was to map the un-mappable. Even though the art world is, if possible, even less unified than that of social science, the exercise that make up the third reading strategy is no less challenging: The most interesting, most demanding, and perhaps the most risky way of reading this book is to read it as a map of the social and political sciences. It is *interesting* because the thought that became 10x10 is a different way to look at and picture intellectual activity and a discipline that we know so well from other, potentially conflicting, perspectives. The contributions gathered here deliver the material for many a rewriting of the consensus on the sources of this or that idea in the social sciences, delivered by the author of the idea itself. This reading is *demanding* because the reader itself has to bring in much of the coherence necessary to fully appreciate the map-like qualities of the volume. Finally, it is *risky* because the thought, the contributions it provoked, and finally the anthology it became are self-consciously incomplete, and a failure to appreciate this incompleteness will make the map misleading.

We have selected the 10 scholars to represent perspectives that are necessary in the understanding of politics in its widest possible sense. Our selection of scholars is not meant to be a balanced view of the social sciences as such. Instead, the selection is a broad view of political science and its immediate sub-disciplines, including important outreaches into surrounding disciplines such as anthropology, economics, and sociology.

All three suggested strategies for reading 10x10 are concerned with *ideas* in social science.

Obviously, we do not claim to have uncovered the secret sources of inspiration that gave birth to the

ideas expounded by these authors. Surely empirical facts from real-world political developments, the rigorous but plural methodological practice of social science, and a long life as part of an academic community have been among the most important sources of inspiration for all of the contributors, together with a whole host of social and psychological factors almost untouched in these pages. Even though each contribution is contextualized by a short introduction to the author's work by a colleague or a former student, the focus remains on ideas – what ideas are in play, how does scholars themselves perceive and narrate what inspired them to develop particular ideas, and is there any connection between the formation of an academic career and the encountering of certain ideas at certain times?

Though the contributions collected here of course reflect the well-known sociological facts of the discipline (mainly male authors are cited, most of them writing in English and working in Anglo-Saxon countries, almost all of them from the northern hemisphere, many of them from the second half of the twentieth century), we have quite consciously not made any attempt at summing up the personal essays and reflections that are presented over the coming pages. The thought that became 10x10 is opposed to all attempts at metering out an 'average', at 'aggregating' the individual contributions, to submit to the self-codification that is indispensable in making a discipline a discipline. Instead, we aim to present to you the freedom of combination that makes a discipline an independent, and thus *scientific*, discipline.

That both James M. Buchanan and Kenneth Waltz have chosen Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* is an example of the combination of what some perceive to be an intellectual affinity with what could therefore be an unsurprising common point of reference. On the other hand, two so different scholars as Chantal Mouffe and Ole Borre both insist on the impact of Max Weber on their

thought, and Kenneth Waltz presents us with a list loaded with as much philosophy as the political theorist (and philosopher by education) Chantal Mouffe. This serves to illustrate that a common canon may not only represent a dominant literature, but also a field characterised by both convergence on certain authors and divergence in the uses they are put to. The map is one of a common disciplinary field that is more open to intellectually fertile struggle and less compartmentalised into self-enclosed disciplinary reservations than one could come to believe. There are classics and a canon in political science, but though it serves as a common frame of reference, the references made work out in very different ways, and are combined with references to many different things (from the canonical list of Ole Borre to the idiosyncrasy of Joseph Weiler).

The freedom to pursue the non-canonical reference and let it impact on research, beyond being an exotic spice or rhetorical rococo on the ordinary, is one element of an *independent* social science. Such research does not allow the weight of tradition, the goals of funding bodies and similar institutional and sociological trappings of a proper discipline crush the freedom expressed through a lightness of reference, a freedom to combine.