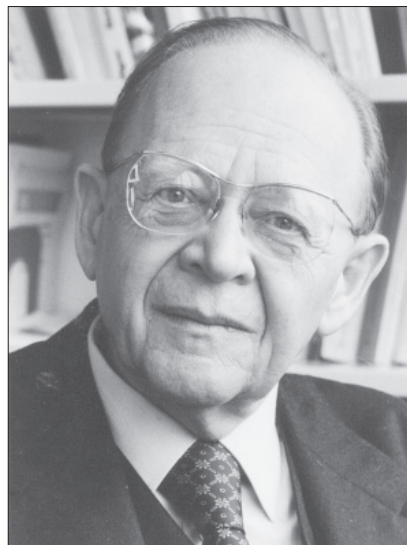


## Karl Wolfgang Deutsch (1912–1992)

Karl Wolfgang Deutsch was born on 21 July 1912 in Prague, Austro-Hungary, to German-speaking parents. His father Martin was an optician and his mother Maria Scharf was one of the first female parliamentarians in the newly established Czechoslovakia following the First World War. Deutsch graduated from the German Staatsrealgymnasium in Prague with high honours in 1931. He received his first university degree from the Deutsche Universität, also in Prague, in 1934. Deutsch's outspoken leadership of anti-Nazi groups forced him to interrupt his studies and seek refuge in England where he studied optics and mathematics. Though he never pursued a career in optics, his expertise in and affection for this profession helped him later in his academic career to develop an interest in quantitative political science both as a fundamentally new epistemology as well as an innovative methodology.



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Karl Wolfgang Deutsch

Deutsch returned to Prague to obtain his JD law degree from the Czech national Charles University in 1938, graduating with high honours in seven fields. This was a signal honour for a German-ethnic Czech in this time of bitter antagonism between ethnic Czechs and Germans. In 1939 Deutsch was awarded a fellowship to study at Harvard University, from which he received his PhD in political science in 1951. America's entry into the Second World War led Deutsch to offer his services to the United States government as an analyst of authoritarian and totalitarian political systems. It was through this involvement that Deutsch became one of the main contributors to the famous 'Blue Book' on Juan Domingo Peron's efforts to extinguish democracy in Argentina. Deutsch also participated in the International Secretariat of the San Francisco Conference of 1945 which created the United Nations.

Deutsch taught political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1945 to 1956 and then at Yale University until 1967, when he moved to Harvard University as professor of government. He was named Stanfield Professor of International Peace at Harvard in 1971, a post he held until he retired in 1983. He was President of the New England Political Science Association in 1964–1965,

the American Political Science Association in 1969–1970, and the International Political Science Association during 1976–1979. Deutsch was also a member of the National Academy of Science and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Deutsch died on 1 November 1992 in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Deutsch was part of the trans-Atlantic migration of European intellectuals who sought refuge in America from the Nazi regime. Though he never returned to live in his homeland, Deutsch frequently toured the United States to speak on behalf of the Free Czechoslovak movement. In his adopted country, Deutsch dedicated himself to work on behalf of a general improvement of the human condition. He made it his life's purpose to study politics in order to help people overcome the dangers of large wars, hunger, poverty, and population growth. Deutsch never surrendered his immense talents to the sole pursuit of an academic career and always perceived his scholarship as part of a larger commitment to improve the human condition. Ever the optimist until his dying day, he was convinced that more knowledge, better education, and improved channels of communication will inevitably lead to better understanding among peoples and thus to a much-improved world of reduced conflict, if not everlasting peace.

Even before he finished his dissertation, Deutsch began publishing articles on the complex interactions among intolerance, religion, territoriality, freedom, and economic development. His early work showed both the promise of his mature scholarship and, more significantly, discernment in his view of society and politics. His dissertation, 'Nationalism and Social Communication', was a path-breaking study of modern nationalism's dual characteristics of possessing cohesiveness and integration on the one hand while also harbouring destructive and alienating dimensions on the other. Deutsch's dissertation also broke new methodological grounds by using sophisticated quantitative analyses to illustrate the relationship between politics and society both in a diachronic as well as synchronic dimension. Deutsch's dissertation was published as a book with the same title in 1953 [Deutsch 1953]; it has remained a classic in the literature of political science and the study of nationalism to this day.

While teaching at MIT, Deutsch became interested in the ideas of Norbert Wiener, one of the inventors of cybernetics. Deutsch perceived Wiener's insights to have many useful applications for the social sciences. While he was at the Center for Research on World Political Institutions at Princeton University in 1953–1954, Deutsch and his colleagues applied these ideas into a theoretical analysis of large-scale political integration, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* [Deutsch 1957]. In 1956–1957, while a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, California, he laid the basis for another book that used an innovative application of cybernetics to the study of politics. This book, *The Nerves of Government* [Deutsch 1963], revolutionised the discipline of political science. Once again using concepts derived from cybernetics, Deutsch made a nuanced analysis of essential political mechanisms such as power, authority, governance, cohesion, conflict, guidance, and breakdown. It was also at

this time that Deutsch held a visiting professorship at the University of Chicago in 1954 and received his first Guggenheim Fellowship in 1955.

In *Germany Rejoins the Powers*, with Lewis J. Edinger [Deutsch and Edinger 1959], Deutsch used data on public opinion, the background of elites, and economics to analyse West Germany's post-war progress. Another highly original study of politics and society is his seminal article 'Social Mobilization and Political Development' [Deutsch 1961]. While at Yale during the 1960s, Deutsch established the Yale Political Data Program, to develop quantitative indicators for testing significant theories and propositions in social science. He organised a multi-university research team, sometimes called the Yale Arms Control Project, to investigate the prospects for arms control, disarmament, and steps toward unification in Western and Central Europe. This project also assumed an increasingly prominent role in the development of an international social science network. During his Yale years, Deutsch also held visiting professorships at Heidelberg University in Germany and at Nuffield College of Oxford University.

Deutsch was also a great teacher, supervising the doctoral work of an unusually large number of students, all of whom became major political scientists in their own right and assumed prestigious posts at the world's leading research universities where they continued to uphold Karl Deutsch's intellectual legacy. It was at Yale that an informal but certainly palpable 'Deutsch school of political science' emerged. Moreover, it was during this period that Deutsch became far and away the most frequently cited scholar of international relations in the leading academic journals of this field. On the undergraduate level, Deutsch attained legendary status on campus by giving countless lectures on the most varied topics, always to packed venues. Virtually without exception, each lecture was followed by an ovation, rewarding Deutsch's unique style of combining a breathtaking array of empirical examples culled from all over the world, from antiquity to the present, with a breezy delivery full of wit and humour. The Yale Political Union awarded Deutsch with the prestigious William Benton Prize in 1965 for having done the most among the Yale faculty to stimulate and maintain political interest on campus.

Deutsch was also invested with the directorship of the International Institute for Comparative Social Research of the Science Centre in Berlin where he and his team of international scholars pioneered and refined the study of global modelling in political science.

Deutsch's scholarly legacy to the various subfields comprising the discipline of political science, as well as to the social sciences in general, includes the introduction of quantitative methodology requiring rigorous statistical analyses and measurements. He also conceptualised empirically grounded theories of such crucial issues as nation-building, state-building, social mobilisation, national and international integration, centre-periphery relations, and the distribution of power between, within, and among states. Deutsch contributed to communication theory, to which he introduced aspects of John von Neumann's influential

breakthroughs in game theory that by the late 1980s had become a mainstay of political science.

Deutsch's work was profoundly interdisciplinary and he freely used concepts borrowed from anthropology, sociology, economics, statistics, mathematics, biology, and physics. His work always had a strong empirical dimension, remaining firmly anchored in history and geography. He feared that political science, like any social science, ran the risk of becoming vacuous if it drifted too far away from studying empirical reality in favour of abstract theoretical models. Throughout his life, Deutsch remained an avid reader of history and his work reflects his deep commitment to historical knowledge.

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## **Practising Politics with Alert Senses<sup>1</sup>**

### **Remembering Karl W. Deutsch (1912–1992)**

Anyone who had a chance to meet Karl Deutsch, however fleeting or profound the encounter, must have had the experience that the conversation quickly turned towards two questions: What is the fundamental problem on the person's mind at the time of the conversation? And: What methods may be employed in order to mobilise an appropriate gathering of evidence in order to scientifically study the identified problem by means of a methodically implemented research project? The focus on fundamental problems—herein lay the political Eros of Karl Deutsch: the methodologically disciplined scientific identification of problem areas.

We should add that Karl Deutsch was driven by a pedagogical Eros as well. He took it for granted that the findings mobilised within the unfettered world of academia should be shared with the public. In practice, this meant a diverse range of publics: academics, the political elite, the so-called attentive public, but also the broad masses, and this always requires particular skills of communication. These three impulses combine to form a picture of Karl Deutsch as a scholar shaped by humanism, the Enlightenment, and social engagement, whose works reflect a critical examination of the fundamental problems of the 20th century.

Karl W. Deutsch was born in Prague and grew up amidst Czechoslovakia's nationally, culturally, and politically determined ethnic conflicts, the bitter conflicts between the Catholic and socialist political camps in Austria, and finally the rise of National Socialism and its subsequent tyranny. These immediate, personal early experiences left their mark on his later life's work. In his autobiographical sketch, 'A Voyage of the Mind, 1930–1980' [Deutsch 1980], he writes that his interest in politics was awakened when he was just six years old—not in the library, but at his mother's political rallies in the 1930s; a Social Democrat, she was one of the first female members of the Czechoslovak parliament.

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<sup>1</sup> Originally published in German as Dieter Senghaas. 2003. 'Politik mit wachen Sinnen betreiben! Eine Erinnerung an Karl W. Deutsch (1912–1992).' Pp. 11–25 in 'Politik mit wachen Sinnen betreiben.' *Zur Erinnerung an Karl W. Deutsch*. WZB-Vorlesungen 4. Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB).