THE STATE OF POLITICAL THEORY

SUDIPTA KAVIRAJ
PARTHA CHATTERJEE
SHIBANI KINKAR CHAUBE
SOBHANLAL DATTA GUPTA

SUDIPTA KAVIRAJ, b. 1948, completed his M. A. from the University of Calcutta in 1968. He is now an Associate Fellow at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, where he is engaged in completing a dissertation on "The Split in Communist Movement". He has written on political theory, on problems of method, and on the problems of Marxist theory and practice in the Indian context, and is currently Editor of *Marxist Miscellany*.

PARTHA CHATTERJEE, b. 1947, graduated from the University of Calcutta in 1967 and took his doctoral degree from the University of Rochester in 1971. He has published *Arms, Alliances and Stability : The Development of the Structure of International Politics* (1975) and has just completed a monograph on *Land Relations and Politics in Pre-Partition Bengal*. He has also written on contemporary Indian politics. He is currently a Fellow of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta.

SHIBANI KINKAR CHAUBE, b. 1935, M. A. 1957 and Ph. D. 1970 from the University of Calcutta. He has taught in West Bengal, Assam and Meghalaya and is now a Fellow of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta. He has written extensively on contemporary constitutional and political problems in India, and has published *Constituent Assembly of India* (1973), *Hill Politics in North-East India* (1973) and *New Constitution of the USSR* (1978).

SOBHANLAL DATTA GUPTA, b. 1948, obtained his M.A. in 1968 and his Ph. D. in 1975 from the University of Calcutta. His book *Justice and the Political Order in India : An Enquiry into the Institutions and Ideologies, 1950-1972* is to appear soon. A Fellow of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, and a member of the teaching staff of the Department of Political Science, University of Burdwan, West Bengal, he is currently engaged in completing a monograph on *Comintern, India and the Colonial Question : 1920-1937*. He has also written on political theory and Indian politics.

The State of Political Theory

Some Marxist Essays

Sudipta Kaviraj Partha Chatterjee Shibani Kinkar Chaube
Sobhanlal Datta Gupta

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Preface

These are essays in critique. In a sense, criticism is easy, especially in as blurry and contentious an area as the theory of society, where verbal imprecision, logical inconsistency and discordance with observed facts are commonplaces. The critique is also rather fashionable these days, for in times when received notions are fast losing their sanctity, it is naturally the 'done' thing to announce one's displeasure with the state of human knowledge and join the glamorous ranks of the nonconformist intellectuals. It is not without reason, therefore, that the whole genre of the critique is looked upon with some suspicion and displeasure by the bulk of the academic profession which, having to plod through the more humdrum business of daily teaching and routine research, has trouble enough making sense of current theoretical orthodoxies without the additional disturbance caused by such periodic salvoes into methodological foundations and first principles.

The objection gains further weight when it is asked, "Fair enough, we have succeeded in showing that our present theories are weak, riddled with unacceptable assumptions, inadequate for the problems we feel we should solve. Where do we go from here?" It is a fair question, to which there are two possible answers. One is to assert that there already exist alternative theories, which we only need to adopt, or perhaps with some modifications adapt, and we will have gone a long way in solving our problems. This may not seem a very convincing answer, and we will presently argue that there are reasons to think so, but it is not wholly false either. A few

million pages have now been written in various languages on the Marxist theory of society, and it is truly surprising how small a part of this is really known in Indian academies of learning, enchanted as we still are by the cold-war knight-errantry of Sir Karl and Sir Isaiah. Compared to the time and effort we devote in grappling with the manifold intricacies of British constitutional law or the most satisfactory recruitment procedure for the civil service, it is regrettable how little of this vast literature we seriously study.

There is a common argument in the essays included in this book. At this stage it is only an assertion, which says that the basic principles of the Marxist theory of society offers us a viable starting-point for constructing the theories we need. Along with this assertion goes a plea that these principles be seriously examined, used and tested for their logical strength and explanatory power. But this would still not obviate the relevance of the second possible answer to the objection mentioned above. And that is that we need to construct new theories, fashion new concepts, use new assumptions, adequate for the problems we wish to tackle. The Marxist theory of society as it exists today has many unresolved issues, both logical and historical. Besides, there are large gaps in theory, particularly in areas which are of more immediate relevance to post-colonial societies such as India, because many of these problems have either never been adequately formulated in classical Marxism, or else formulated wrongly. There is thus a crying need to attempt a resolution of these problematic issues and to close the gaps in theory. If we still assert that we must start building upon the existing body of knowledge known as the Marxist theory of society, it is because no new break-throughs can occur by starting altogether from scratch; in fact, it would be foolish to try to do so. Nothing, indeed, comes of nothing.

There are, however, two other dangers we must guard against. The dissatisfaction with "Western" theories of politics and society often leads us to argue that we must therefore have theories of society all our own—an "Indian" political science, an "Indian" sociology. This delusion is fast catching on

among our intellectuals. It is attractive in many ways—it gives our society a kind of uniqueness among all other societies, and thereby, no matter how perversely, salves our much injured egoes. It also protects our formulations from outside examination and criticism : our theories are derived uniquely from premises internal to our society and culture, and cannot be properly judged by any standards other than those derived from within those premises. That the whole business of science is thereby reduced to absurdity does not seem to bother many of us. But that is precisely what happens when we try to have an "Indian" political science.[1]

The other danger can result either from a superficial infatuation with "socialism" or from a grudging acceptance of it. This is an old disease, and we only need to quote what the founders of the new science of society had to say about it : "Instead of thoroughly studying the new science themselves to begin with, each of them [the great majority of the German bourgeois converts] preferred to trim it to fit the point of view he had brought along, made himself forthwith a private science of his own and at once came forward with the pretension of wanting to teach it. Hence, there are about as many points of view among these gentry as there are heads: instead of producing clarity in a single case they have only produced desperate confusion—fortunately almost exclusively among themselves. Educative elements whose first principle is to teach what they have not learnt can very well be dispensed with by the Party."[2] And for the practical political dangers which go hand in hand with "socialist" slogan-mongering and ill-conceived attempts at social engineering, our recent memories are still too fresh to need further restatement.

1 Three of the present authors have argued this point at greater length in Partha Chatterjee, Shibani Kinkar Chaube and Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, "Teaching Political Science : The Debate on New Orientations', *Journal of Higher Education* (Monsoon 1976), pp. 5-12.

2 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels to A. Bebel, W. Liebknecht, W. Bracke and others ("The Circular Letter"), September 18, 1879, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow : FLPH, 1953), at p. 394.

The essays in this book attempt to review and assess existing non-Marxist theories of politics in their methodological foundations, their relationships with other social sciences, their status as a general theory of society, and in some of their specific formulations in the field of "political development". This is done to clear the deadwood, take stock and proceed on a new path. It would be unfair to charge us with Coleridge's comment on critics : "Reviewers are usually people who would have been poets, historians, biographers, etc., if they could; they have tried their talents at one or the other, and have failed; therefore they turn critics." All of us are practising political scientists working and writing on specific areas of substantive social research; we cannot afford to be irresponsible in our criticism of the work of others. We have, however, not explored our proposed alternatives with the same degree of critical thoroughness and rigour. As one perceptive reader of one of the essays in this book has pointed out, it consists of "28 pages of detailed and exhaustive critique and $2\frac{1}{2}$ pages of exhortation". This is not an abdication of responsibility. The task of constructing a new and adequate theory of society is not one that can be accoplished by a few individuals; it requires the active and serious attention of the entire profession of social researchers. If the proof of the pudding is in the eating, let us at least agree to wash our hands (unlike many of our other rituals, this one certainly has a sound underlying logic), pull up our chairs and sit at the table.

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Sudipta Kaviraj

How Not To Study Method :

A critical note on positivist teaching of methodology[1]

There was once a man who aspired to be the author of the general theory of holes. When asked 'What kind of holes—holes dug by children in the sand for amusement, holes dug by gardeners to plant lettuce seedlings, tank traps, holes made by roadmakers ?' he would reply indignantly that he wished for a *general* theory which will explain all of these. He rejected *ab initio* the — as he saw it — pathetically common sense view that of the digging of different kinds of holes there are quite different kinds of explanations to be given ; why then he would ask do we have the concept of a hole ? Lacking the explanation to which he originally aspired, he then fell to discovering statistically significant correlations ; he found for example that there is a correlation between the aggregate hole-digging achievement of a society as measured, or at least one day to be measured, by econometric techniques,

1 An earlier version of this paper appeared in *Teaching Politics*, 3 (1977), 3 & 4. This paper uses, for comic purposes, the officious distinction between the terms 'method' and 'methodology'. However, I do not want to be misunderstood. Not that this terminological difference matters. Etymologically, 'methodology' simply means a systematic study of methods — something to which no one should have any objection. Still, positivism makes such a fetish of making a science out of everything, without quite making it in the end. That is why I have persisted with the stilted ceremonious distinction. I think these two words are perfectly interchangeable. In fact, switches to the word method, among other things, improves English prose.

> and its degree of technological development. The United States surpasses both Paraguay and Upper Volta in hole-digging. He also discovered that war accelerates hole-digging ; there are more holes in Vietnam than there were. These observations, he would always insist, were neutral and value-free. This man's achievements have passed unnoticed except by me. Had he however turned his talents to political science, had he concerned himself not with holes, but with modernization, urbanisation or violence, I find it difficult to believe that he might not have achieved high office in the APSA [American Political Science Association].
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> —Alasdair MacIntyre[2]

'The two main requirements for philosophising are : firstly, not to keep any question back, and secondly, to attain a clear consciousness of anything that goes without saying so as to comprehend it as a problem.'[3] Schopenhauer's remark appears surprisingly relevant to methodological theories of contemporary political science. It is useful occasionally to reconvert our certainties into problems and see how they stand up to new levels of questioning. This is not a fanciful thing to do. Recent discussions on the history of science[4] has shown that this is exactly how the sciences have advanced, though scientists have not always done it consciously. For them often it was the result of a process that

2 Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Is a science of comparative politics possible ?' in his *Against the Self Images of the Age* (London : Duckworth, 1971).

3 Schopenhauer, *Essays and Aphorisms* (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1970), p. 117.

4 From very divergent orientations, the ideas of Thomas Kuhn and Gaston Bachelard point in this direction. The idea of a scientific revolution, or epistemological rupture as they prefer to call it, has been extensively used by the French structuralist school (Althusser, Foucault, Canguillhem)—as in Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London : Allen Lane, 1969) ; Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (London : NLB, 1972). For the main theories of science, Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1970) ; Dominique Lecourt, *Marxism and Epistemology* (London : NLB, 1975).

was not entirely deliberate. But there ought to be some lessons of reading history. And the minimal lesson seems to be to build into the conscious programme of a discipline what scientists have had to do anyway. The point in reading history is that if men encounter the same situation (or, since that, strictly speaking, is not possible, a similar situation), they should do the thing better. On this logic, methodological criticism should form a part of any scientific discipline. That is exactly, this paper argues, what we must do now, if we are to renew the study of politics as a discipline.[5]

Political scientists often complain about their subject of a feeling that it is not going anywhere.[6] Such complaints have suddenly come in vogue. One suspects sometimes that these are imitated complaints; just as our unshakable behavioural certainties of the last two decades were imitated certainties. A behavioural consensus did not grow out of the work we did ; it was taken second hand from others' works. It reflected the logic of the intellectual experience of scholars in other societies. They appeared particularly burlesque in India because they answered the needs of others' situations.[7] Imitation continues. After two decades of domi-

5 My argument is based on the premise that our discipline is in a crisis. That some, even many, do not see it that way seems to make the crisis still more serious. The deepest intellectual crisis is one that is taken for the discipline's normal state.

6 These complaints have tended to multiply over the years, set off, no doubt, by David Easton's trendsetting presidential address to the APSA in its 65th annual meeting. See the *American Political Science Review* (1969). Since then a mild dissatisfaction with one's own previous work, or of one's own school, has become quite common. But these criticisms suffer from the common defect of all autocritiques ; they are not drastic enough. For both these things — that is, the expression of dissatisfaction, and the noted quality of gentleness — see S. N. Eisenstadt and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Building States and Nations* (London : Sage Publications, 1973).

7 Applicability-problems of categories that were distilled out of the historical experience of western societies are discussed in Gunnar

nation, the behavioural ideology is being questioned even in its ancestral homeland. Some feel that we must do this too.

Probably, this paper argues, we could do it better. Usually, when a discipline crosses over from one crystallised form to another, it goes through a period of methodological civil war. Issues of method suddenly come alive.[8] It is rarely that altogether new social facts are discovered. Revolutions in social science centre less on discovery of new facts, more on new ways of looking at what is known.[9] Most claimed revolutions in social science have been reco-ordinations of this sort. Marx, for instance, did not discover that there were economic factors in social life. He did not discover that classes existed.[10] He proposed a different

Myrdal, *The Challenge of World Poverty* (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1970), chapters 1, 2.

8 This is one of the major conclusions of Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn's theory is based on the experience of natural science disciplines. In this regard, it can be applied to social sciences. However, one must be cautious in applying Kuhn's formulations to social sciences. Of late, one finds a rather disconcerting tendency to transpose Kuhn's propositions indiscriminately to the terrain of political science and sociology. Along with the tendency to positivise social science methodology goes a concurrent one of positivising the history of social science.

9 This is a convenient simplification. Although new facts are not discovered, new frameworks often affix new epistemological values to the old ones that are already 'known'.

10 Marx himself handsomely pointed this out to a correspondent. "As to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering either the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to demonstrate 1) that the existence of classes is merely linked to particular historical phases in the development of production, 2) that class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society." Marx to J. Weydemeyer, March 5, 1852. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow : Progress Publishers, 1965), p.69.

arrangement in the architecture of social explanation, shifting the relative importance given to particular factors through a new conceptual structure.[11] This argument applies to all important shifts in social science method, not to Marx alone. A paradigm shift in social science occurs primarily through the process of looking again at the material through alternative structures of explanation and conceptualisation. In course of this, new material is often discovered. On occasions, it may lead to a new ordering of material in a field.[12] If you think through the theory that ordinary people's attitudes are significant in understanding an epoch,

11 Althusser pursues the theme of marxism representing an 'epistemological break' in the history of social analysis. But his exposition is needlessly complicated by the deployment of this concept at two levels : (a) marxism emerging after an epistemological rupture with earlier theories, and (b) locating an epistemological break in Marx's own work—between the younger and the mature Marx. This is valuable insight. But Althusser was probably a little blinded by the physical associations of the idea of a break, and dogmatised the epistemological rupture in the *German Ideology*. He was obliged to qualify his position afterwards. See Althusser, *Essays in Self-Criticism* (London : NLB, 1975). I believe that Althusser was himself to blame for his troubles. Stated differently, the major thesis of the break can be saved.

12 Such reorderings occur most typically in history. Take a simple example. Events that used to be derisively called 'civil disturbances' are being seen increasingly as popular dissent. Acts that were set aside as forms of criminal behaviour are taking on a new significance in the context of research on popular history. One can quote a number of excellent works by British historians : Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1972); Eric Hobsbawm and George Rude, *Captain Swing* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973); George Rude, *The Crowd in History* (New York: Wiley, 1964); E.P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters* (London : Allen Lane, 1975) ; and Stephen Hay, ed., *Albion's Fatal Tree* (London : Allen Lane, 1975), are all examples of this trend. Hay's work is a particularly good example of what happens when historians defy the conventional definition of "crime", open up the criminal records and look for essentially political activity masked by crime definitions of the age. The same is true of the work of Indian historians on peasant movements.

you would consider material dealing with crowds important. If you do not, you will tend to treat them as part of the landscape, or treat them as a persistent nuisance. Revolutions in social sciences happen in the field of explanation in this sense, more than in information-gathering. It is not that we discover utterly new facts, as natural scientists often do; rather, we achieve more satisfying realignments of aspects of what we already know. This illustrates incidentally how much explaining enters into knowing. Consequently, when a subject enters a state of creative unrest before taking on a new form, the focus inevitably shifts back on to method.

Inevitably is perhaps a tall word. On occasions, it may not happen that way. It did not happen in India twenty years ago. In India at least, the original paradigm shift from legal formalism to behaviouralism took place without any spilling of blood.[13] It was a 'glorious revolution' in political

13 This does not mean that people did not go through agonies of adaptation. Political scientists of the earlier generation had been trained in the unrealistic field of *constitutional* law and had been encouraged to mistake that for *political* analysis. Within the colonial framework, inside the debased dispensation of the British rule of law, minus of course its democratic properties, political scientists could still make do with this competence. After all, their main occupation was to celebrate the 'democratic system', which, ironically, did not obtain in Britain's colonies. They did this because their principals in England and America were doing this, and had taught them to do it. In any case, the historical reasons for the constitutionalist consensus in Anglo-American political theory are not far to seek. In a political system that was perfectly stable, and in which political initiatives had to look for legitimation through legal hermeneutics, this was understandable. It is not accidental that the glory of legalism in political analysis coincided with the pleasant period of stability of capitalism. For the same reasons, it was utterly misplaced in the post-colonial situation. In most post-colonial societies the political system was brittle; political forms fluctuated wildly between a messianic populism and deformed versions of fascist dictatorship; and the constitutions represented how the process of politics did not go on (for a sample, the 'democratic' constitutions of South Vietnam, South Korea,

analysis. The earlier type of political theory was displaced with surprising ease. Few took up positions for old liberal theory as some did in Europe and America.[14] It was a walkover. Indian political scientists were converted to behaviouralism almost overnight with, of course, variations in the adjustment lag. It is a pity that all this happened so smoothly. Otherwise, the turn probably would have still come, but some basics of political theory would have been discussed in the process. Implicit assumptions could have been dug up and debated. Nothing of that sort happened. One suspects that there was a subtler continuity between the two phases. A guess, somewhat uncharitable to our profession, will be that the transition took place so smoothly because it did not need much thinking on our part. It was mainly an absorption of whatever came from the west. It was of secondary importance that the west formerly exported

Philippines, and a number of Latin American countries). Legalism had little explanatory value under such conditions. In the post-colonial societies the focus of political analysis was not just changed. It was inverted. Political instability, rapid political change, or what behaviouralists would call lack of institutionalisation, became the main problem areas, in which the traditional form of legalism was precisely the most unsuited. Perhaps it will not be entirely unfair to suggest that those whose 'theoretical crisis' this was had very inadequate awareness about its nature or causes. They simply submitted to the logic of academic colonialism. In the event, the adaptations were in most cases less than perfect. Academics who had been brought up to work as ordinary constitutionalists evolved into imperfect specimens of the behavioural scientist.

14 Isaiah Berlin, 'Does Political Theory Still Exist ?' in Peter Laslett and W. C. Runciman, eds., *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, Second Series (Oxford : Blackwell, 1969) ; and H. Storing, ed., *Essays in the Scientific Study of Politics* (New York : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962). There was nothing comparable to this in India. Randhir Singh's forceful polemic, *Reason, Revolution and Political Theory* (Delhi : PPH, 1968), was, in retrospect, aimed at a theory that had a very transient vogue in Indian universities — Michael Oakshott's refitted rationalist theory of politics.

liberal legalist analytical paradigms, and now behavioural ones. We, in any case, did not have to do the thinking leading to the change. The underlying colonial method of imitation was not altered. It was hardly surprising under the circumtances that we never debated methodology. For these were actually others' debates. Whatever the result, we accepted them. This silent transition should never happen again if Indian political science aspires to adulthood. Since old-style behaviouralism has been shaken out of its inertness by a new wave of questioning, we could use this interval for real methodological controversy.

But can one accuse behaviouralism of being indifferent to questions of method ? Is not that unfair ? Is not behaviouralism always lavishing ceremonial attention to methodology ? Some will argue that methodological awareness is precisely the gift behaviouralism has brought to political theory. This is true in a sense, but on a superficial level. For one thing, it is not factually true that behavioural political theory alone is aware of problems of method. Traditional theory was so too, though classical theorists handled these questions differently. Their way of dealing with method was not equally overt. As a compensation, it was also remarkably less dogmatic. The actual result of this ceremonially overt concern with methodology has not always led to increased sensitivity in the method of political analysis. It has, paradoxically, often led to the reverse effect.

What we call methodology after the behaviouralists is not what the classics meant by method. They are not exactly the same set of questions. They are, in one sense, a subset of that complex of questions, or a subset that is implied by it, but they by no means include the most significant or the most sensitive questions about approaching political phenomena. Political analysis is suffering today from a serious methodological crisis, though some may not feel it. We

should, I shall argue, recognise this crisis, and try to analyse its aspects and causes.

It is not simply that the official method of looking at political reality was wrong. The flaw was much more fundamental. In many ways, political scientists tried to work with a wrong definition of the concept of method itself. Much of the so-called methodological controversy was beside the point, because they had an altogether erroneous idea about what method was. To put it simply, the discussions were sometimes competent, but on a wrong subject. This paper suggests that we go back from the consuming concern with what are really secondary questions of techniques to the more fundamental ones of method and epistemology. One need not dogmatise either side of this division. One can be sensitive to basic epistemic concerns and still be an excellent user of normal techniques. They are not to be bought at the expense of each other. They can be usefully worked as complements.

Paradoxically, this will take us back to the classics.[15] In the first place, it will make us realise that some of the easy dichotomies we had got used to are misleading. Take the one between 'political philosophy' (previous political theorists) and 'political science' (a collective name for ourselves, of course, minus those who dissented from the behavioural faith).[16] Such dichotomies are always dangerous.

15 Dissatisfaction with the behavioural theory of political science should not, however, drive us into the opposite extremism—to defend all of traditional theory. Traditional theorists had interesting and relevant concerns, but they did not solve all problems of political analysis. They made instructive mistakes. I am not in favour of the indiscriminate nostalgia that some have for the classics. This essentially backward-looking reaction actually reinforced the behaviouralist claim to be the only modern theory of politics.

16 These distinctions are too well-known and too widely shared to be ascribed to individual authors. Behavioural attempts at rethinking its relation to classical modes of political theory gave rise to a series of interconnected illusions.

We are not the first generation to congratulate ourselves this way. There were others before us who had done so. Thomas Hobbes, one of our most conceited ancestors, remarked that before him political theory was more a dream than a science.[17] Bentham felt that with him political theory and governmental practice had a better chance of becoming a science than ever before. Saint-Simon[18] and Comte[19] had thought along similar lines. Behaviouralism too made a somewhat similar claim. It was a collective claim for a change, not a personal one, since there were no outstanding individuals of the cut of a Hobbes or a Comte.[20] It differed from the earlier claims in that those were made with greater justice. The Hobbesian 'revolution', or the Hegelian, certainly represented a more authentic break in the methodology of political theory. Of course, no such claim could be true in an absolute sense. Even Hobbes's revolution, which in many ways resembled Descartes's, fell short of it. Behaviouralism was no different in this respect. In terms of ideological content, behavioural theory had very little to say that was new.[21]

17 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, part IV, chapter 46.

18 Emile Durkheim, *Socialism and Saint-Simon* (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959).

19 Comte is quite explicit about his philosophical aims. For a concise statement of his position, Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy* (New York : AMS Press, reprint of 1855 ed).

20 However, for rather laboured comparisons between unequals, see William T. Bluhm, *Theories of the Political System* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. : Prentice-Hall, 1965). Comparisons are between : Thucydides and Weber, Plato and Strauss, Hobbes, Downs and Riker, Aristotle, Lipset and Almond, etc.

21 The ideological continuities between constitutionalist and behavioural political theory are obvious. Both systems of thought defended the bourgeois democratic state on the basis of liberal premises about social behaviour. One must qualify this general statement in one field. In their treatment of democracy, these two theoretical systems took up very different attitudes. Behaviouralism represented a stage in which democratic theory had lost its innocence. It

There were some marginal novelties. It absorbed some elements of the elitist objections to the unrealistic simplicity of earlier democratic theory. Consequently, it handled the problem of democracy with greater cynicism. It had, undoubtedly, some novelty about the way it said what it did. Cynics often called it more a revolution in terms than in the way of looking at political things.[22] Since the late fifties, political scientists started talking to each other in a more incomprehensible language. Less hostile critics would probably value the mountains of data behavioural research has piled up, though conceding that these have to go through several processes of refining before they can be used as useful indicators.[23] But in its social roots, its orientations, its opinions and prejudices (though a behavioural scientist is disqualified from having prejudices except in his nonscientific, strictly private capacity), it was remarkably similar to the methodologically individualist and conatively liberal political theory that had preceded it. Behaviouralism certainly introduced innovations in matters of technique. It was more officious and self-conscious in methodological discussion. But certainly it is absurd to say that the classics neglected method. Methodological structures may be open or implicit. Classical theorists sometimes liked to keep their propositions on method discreetly in the background, or

incorporated, within the general democratic theoretical framework, a strong dose of the elitist cynicism about the basic possibility of a democratic government. The works of Mannheim and Aron contributed to it in their very disparate ways. See T. B. Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1966).

22 For an example : Heinz Eulau, *The Behavioral Persuation in Politics* (New York : Random House, 1963).

23 For different ways of criticising the behavioural revolution, Bernard Crick, *The American Science of Politics* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1959); Herbert J. Storing, ed., *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics ;* Thomas Spragens, *Dilemma of Contemporary Political Theory : Towards a Post-behavioral Science of Politics* (New York : Dunellen, 1973).

mixed into the detailed movement of the argument. This is true, say, of Machiavelli, Rousseau or Mandeville. But it is certainly not true of some others, like Hobbes, Mill or Hegel.[24] They thought carefully about the architecture of their theories, their strategies of presentation and, one might say, about its ground plan. They made it impossible for anyone entering their theories to walk past their method. They put it squarely in the foreground, in fact, at the entrance. But why does one have such a different taste from reading them ? The reason is simple. They did not mean by method what behaviouralists mean today. Their definitions were more open and more complex.[25] Ours come in neater packets, more pedestrian, a long series of commonplace questions. Schlick said that the most important task of philosophy is to give things their right names.[26] Conversely, it ought to be the task of philosophy to see if names are attached to the right things. Do we attach the name 'method' to the right things in political enquiry ?

Misunderstandings as to what method is led to several serious effects on the inner arrangement in the academic regime of politics. It separated the study of political analysis from the study of the history of political theory, obviously on the pretentious supposition that we have hardly anything to learn from the classics. Its effects were miraculous. At one stroke, it totally dehistoricised the study of

24 To be specific, the first part of *Leviathan*, Hegel's *Science of Logic* and the first sections of *Phenomenology*, and Mill's *Logic*.

25 As examples, one could refer to some studies of classical thinkers by commentators who were sensitive to the methodological sophistication of their subjects, like Macpherson's explication of Hobbes's method or Kojeve's commentary on Hegel's. C. B. Macpherson, *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (London : Oxford University Press, 1962), and Alexandre Kojeve, *An Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (New York : Basic Books, 1969).

26 Moritz Schlick, *General Theory of Knowledge* (New York : Springer Verlag, 1974), pp. 8, 11.

method. Superficially, this disjunction with tradition may appear like the logical empiricists' treatment of conventional philosophy. But it is not a rigorous parallel. Behavioural political theory was only superficially analytic, achieving none of the rigour and the relentless demystifying energy that go with logical positivism of a superior variety. Subsequently, a new type of orthodoxy has emerged as theorists like Winch tried to work out a whole theoretical system of social science from the work of the later Wittgenstein.[27] Practically, its only consequence was to bifurcate the study of political analysis — on the one hand, methodology was abstracted from its historical precedents ; on the other, history of political theory deteriorated for lack of methodological understanding. Now students rarely tried to interrogate the methodological core of classical systems. With a new view of this relation, both these alienated streams might improve.

Methodological enquiry is 'thinking about thinking'.[28] In discussing method we ought to discuss how we think, what are the ways of collective thinking about social reality, and whether we think of the right questions in the right way. German idealists, in their usual heavy jargon, used to call this 'philosophical self-consciousness' or 'criticism'. The purpose of methodology is to make a discipline 'critical' in this sense, to make the discipline think *critically* about itself, about its favourite roads to reality. Making a discipline 'critical' in this sense does not halt its forward movement. It provides it with a built-in mechanism of self-correction, mobility and what some romantically call 'creative tension'.

The effect of behaviouralism on political science was paradoxical. Purely in quantitative terms, it threw a lot of

27 Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science* (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958). For a critique, Martin Hollis, 'Witchcraft and Winchcraft', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (1972).

28 A phrase widely used by German idealists.

attention on what it called methodology. This was apparent in its literature. But it was more so if you consider its academic system as a whole — the written work, the institutional system of their interpretation and teaching. Every degree programme would have its first course on methodology. Every book would have its first chapter on it. In interviews for college jobs, there were obligatory questions on its many wonders, particularly the mysteries of sampling theory. Every doctoral thesis was made to do compulsory speculations on it. Particularly disturbing was the collapse of the concept of method into a few relatively simple statistical techniques. Never was there such an enormous quantity of thinking(?), writing, reading, cramming, lecturing, question-setting and answering (during exams, that is, when the students are safely at the receiving end) done about the rather abstruse area of method. Method nearly became an industry. Teaching led to manuals to seminars, seminars to summer institutes, along the historically inevitable academic sequence. Fashions spread from the metropolises to the periphery of the academic world.

I am not criticising all of it. Certainly, debating method in the open is better than being only half-conscious of its implicit contours. Writing explicitly about it is better than mixing it into a substantive argument and having your readers perpetually guess at it. All this is true, provided what is being discussed is the complex of fundamental questions by solving which an enquirer knows about how he knows and how possibly he can detect subtle errors of vision. Whether this was really happening through the whirl of courses, seminars, summer institutes and, now in the absurd proletarian terminology, the very comfortable conversations called 'workshops', was doubtful. More often, what came out was not critical thinking in a remotely Kantian sense — turning the faculty of reason 'inward' first, as some old-fashioned philosophers would have put it, turning it on itself, before turning it on the world outside. Serious methodo-

logical study is subversive in principle, because its function is to detect errors in established knowledge-systems that are considered error-free. It tries to isolate error-zones in political analysis, to retrace its steps (much the way a man who has dropped a key goes back looking for it along the way he had come, or the way one detects an error in a sum a child has done wrong), and detect where exactly errors come in. That is what methodological training is all about. Behaviouralism, unfortunately, does not look at it this way.

What it does is in some ways its exact opposite. And one must make allowances for other types of dangers as well. Since certain points are not stressed in the manuals themselves, or not stressed enough, they leave the way open for infinite regression. Slides occur at several points. The manuals themselves often turn away from intelligent positivist or logical empiricist theories to simplified ones. Manuals are simplified in the course of teaching, and debased. Teaching is bound to be further deformed, in the Indian case at least, by the inadequate theoretical preparation of students. But these students are supposed to swing into action shortly—armed with these tools, the modern weapons to extract meaning from the heart of facts. It is, of course, not the student's fault. They are not equipped for this at any stage. An average political science student would know nothing about scientific controversies since Galileo's time. He would not know how the experience of scientific practice is distilled into theories of knowledge. He would not know of the classical epistemological doctrines. It is unlikely that he would have studied Descartes, or Hume, Kant or Comte.[29] Rationalism, empiricism, nominalism are just long words to

29 The fact that theorists like Descartes, Hume, Kant or Comte do not figure in political science syllabi is not accidental. It arises from the inability of our academic culture to see the essential unity of the European intellectual tradition, and from an absurdly narrow definition of 'the political'.

him. He is never told that science too has a history. What men considered 'scientific' method has changed from one age to another, often in a dramatic revolutionary way. A student undergoing this training is, therefore, not in a position to criticise a given methodology. He can only uncritically accept it. Besides, his ignorance of the theories of science will prevent him from using intelligently even the limited and restricted models that he has learnt. The image of 'method' that the student would go into research with would be a gross caricature of not only what is meant by method in the wider sense, but also of positivist methodology of the original manuals.

There is an 'official' method of teaching methodology. It is remarkable for its dogmatism. It sets out by telling the learner what 'the scientific method' is. 'Scientific method' can apparently exist in the abstract, without embarrassing encounters with specific problems. It tells him how this scientific method can be applied to the intractable and, at times, baffling material of the social sciences ; how such intractability can be overcome : that is, the tricks that the quantitatively minded social scientist must play on the tricks that the social material may play on him. After this diet of somewhat fragile certainties, he is encouraged to dive into the real stuff scientific research is made of—the exciting world of survey research and its intricacies.[30] Methodological questions are just preliminaries. What is crucial in the making of a social scientist is this plunge into the 'facts'.[31]

30 This is in no way a rejection of survey research in general. There are important areas which are amenable to it. This is a criticism of the *cult* of survey research, and the illusory confidence that all problems of political behaviour can be satisfactorily solved once they are put into this format.

31 An uncritical theory of facts is distressingly widespread, again because of the endemic influence of positivist method. Facts, one is told, would solve all controversies. The obvious flaw in this approach is that it overlooks the theoretical context of fact-gathering,

This, of course, has a touch of caricature. But in purely statistical terms, this would be a fairly objective picture of what goes on in methodology courses. There are innumerable objections one could put forward against this procedure. I shall mention just a few. First, it may give rise to misconceptions about method itself— what it means, what it is supposed to do, what questions or types of questions are subsumed under it. It is confusing in the purely analytic sense. Social scientists debate methodology because men follow and work out for themselves different strategies of knowing. A methodological theory has to weigh these different ways of seeing against one another. Methodological knowledge comes only when one is aware of the plurality of possible methods in the field, and when one can choose, and therefore can think, and be critical. And also when, while choosing, one can give reasons why one is choosing one out of a range of alternative methods. "You can be a good empiricist only if you are prepared to work with many alternative theories rather than with a single point of view and 'experience'....Theoretical pluralism is assumed to be an essential feature of all knowledge that claims to be objective."[32] Methodological knowledge cannot come by way of preemptive dissemination of one single point of view. It simply cannot come if we shut off all hints of alternatives, and pretend that there is one definable, obvious scientific method, that there is obviously something wrong with those who do not agree, and that the said method is a chain of unshakable truths. Experimentation is futile. All other styles of enquiry are classed, implicitly, as methodological 'deviance'. All that the student has to do is to learn it, and then apply it— dogmatically, as it turns out in most cases. The way it is prescribed to the learner, it looks like a long string of

and does not look at the theoretical problems of the constitution of social facts. For a discussion on facts and their use, Malenbaum, 'Social Facts', in Alan Ryan, *Philosophy of Social Explanation* (London : Oxford University Press, 1973).

32 Paul Feyerabend, 'How to be a good empiricist', in P. H. Nidditch, ed., *Philosophy of Science* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 14.

answers. Actually, methodology must be a training in how to pose problems best, and should look more like a long line of questions. Training in method should follow the classical Cartesian maxim, and help people to doubt intelligently. It should make them aware that there are problems even about how to pose your problems.

In India, the exclusive dominance of this syndrome of utilitarianism and positivism can be ascribed to our colonial academic inheritance, though there was once a brief interval of interest in idealist theory in the work of Brajendra Nath Seal and his school. Since the time of the British idealists, and after the conclusive philosophical criticism of Moore[33] and the analytics, the main trend of idealist-phenomenological philosophy never returned to the Anglo-American theoretical culture. In the continent, interesting off-shoots of German idealism continued to develop— existentialism[34], hermeneutics[35], phenomenology[36], the Frankfurt school of 'critical theory'[37].

33 G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, 1903 (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1973).

34 Though it was not initially an academic philosophy as Soren Kierkegaard developed it, it was renewed in the works of Sartre and Heidegger and Jaspers, and came to have a deep influence on the posing of social questions. In the English-speaking world, it was introduced more, I suspect, by Sartre's literary work, less by the massive discourses on philosophy, *Being and Nothingness* (New York : Washington Square Press, 1966) or the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (London : NLB, 1976).

35 Dilthey's work is not easily available in English, though his works are regularly discussed in the textbooks on German sociology. However, the influence of the hermeneutic school failed to percolate into the general methodological consciousness of political science. Paul Connerton, ed., *Critical Sociology* (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1976) gives a useful collection of essays on the main themes. Particularly useful are the articles by Charles Taylor, 'Hermeneutics and Politics', and by Paul Ricoeur, 'Hermeneutics : Restoration of Meaning or Reduction of Illusion.'

36 For a recent statement of the sociological positions of phenomenology and ethnomethodology, Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method* (London : Hutchinson, 1976).

37 Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination* (London : Heinemann, 1973) is an intellectual history of the Frankfurt school.

None of these tendencies troubled the dominance of a shallow positivism in political analysis. Fortunately, the Anglo-American academic culture is showing some absorption of such trends. It may, one hopes, affect the methods of political analysis. Still, it is entirely enveloped by the behavioural variety of the positivist theory of knowledge.

The official approach to methodology subverts the essential significance of methodological debate. Two things may come out of it. Either the student goes away with a false sense of intellectual security, a feeling of having a pocketful of truths. If he has a thinking mind, all these certainties will betray him cruelly when he comes in touch with the puzzling complexities of social interaction. He would find it authentically complex—a hard order of complexity that will not obligingly break down into neat rows of simple elements and simple relations between them.[38]

If he lacks the capacity to wonder, which is the second possibility, he will simply go for the line of least resistance. He will either choose his methodology first, and his problem afterwards; that is, he would choose a problem to fit his method, instead of doing it the other way about. Or, which is much worse, he would systematically reduce the intractably complex structure of reality to simple rows of elements and relations, wondering secretly at the primordial unreasonableness of social phenomena. In professional terms, he might not do badly. He might, like MacIntyre's general theorist of holes[39], achieve high office in one of our social research institutes. His simple formulas may even cross over into 'policy science'. Some harried administrator may buy his simple solutions. Cognitively, however, that is not going to help. There are no happy endings. The way behaviouralists think about a methodology is nearer to a mental drill which makes men experts in solving simple questions. Unfortunately, simple questions in that sense do not exist.

38 Edgar Morin, 'Complexity', *International Social Science Journal* (Paris), no. 4 (1974).

39 Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Is a Science of Comparative Politics Possible ?', op. cit.

Such approaches in effect dull methodological sensitivity by stereotyping responses to real-life problems. The moment you face a problem, you go into an instant platonist action of finding out which archetype of problem it resembles. It makes you think of 'ideas' of problems, instead of the concrete one at hand. It makes you, in other words, incapable of operating beyond the frontiers of your methodological manual. This type of training clouds over the important fact that one should not look for readymade methods while approaching a concrete problem of research. They appear as substitutes for thinking on one's own. In fact, they produce a kind of trained incapacity to think out anything beyond the most routine and obvious answers. By closing off all options, it makes one think that there can be alternatives only *inside* positivism (or to be fair to positivists, this lower-order positivism), no alternative *to* it.

One must be fair to the positivists. One may not agree with them, but one should recognise that they contributed immensely to the growth of modern theories of knowledge. Ordinary manuals should not be clubbed together with, let us say, the work of the Vienna Circle on epistemology and the language of science[40]; for instance, the work of Rudolf Carnap, Moritz Schlick or Karl Popper; and if students are to be trained in a positivist tradition anyway, it is better to do it through the 'originals', through works which offer sophisticated positivist ideas, than through their hacks. Similarly, though many behaviouralists swear by Max Weber, their sins should not be visited on him. After all, thinkers are helpless in face of an enthusiastic posterity, even though it reads them wrong. No theorist can be blamed for what his subsequent admirers make of him.

It is, therefore, extremely important that we do not discuss method the way we have done during the last decade. It is at best myopic. If one considers the perverted training to generations of students, it is almost criminal. One should start out assuming a plurality of methods, making one's audience,

40 A standard statement of the Vienna Circle position can be had in Schlick, *General Theory of Knowledge*, op. cit.

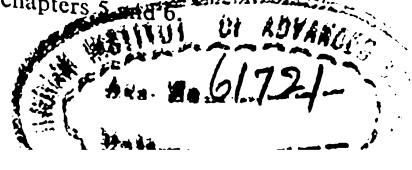
learners or readers aware that "what being scientific means" is, ironically, still an open question. Actual experience of scientific practice has given it a fluid answer, an answer that is constantly changing, an answer that has to be fashioned according to specific questions. There is nothing like a universal, infallible 'scientific method' that can save us the agony of thinking about the specific coordinates of a concrete problem. Of course, men have often believed that such a miraculous thing existed. They may even form a 'social contract' around it, as behaviouralists have done, by setting up a scientific version of totems and taboos (the do's and dont's). Science is also, after all, a real society. It has its social controls and pressurising mechanisms.[41] Still it cannot escape the dilemma of all tribalism. There will always be other tribes. It is simpler and also more rational, to treat the definition of 'the scientific' itself as a problem. Not believing in a dogma, besides being an excellent principle, is also a sound practical strategy. Even Einstein once said that "the way the practicising scientist looks about his method he must appear to the systematic epistemologist as a sort of 'unscrupulous opportunist'."[42]

We should, therefore, try to create an 'open universe' of methodological discourse.[43] This could start with an assumption of methodological plurality, and it could move through a discussion, preferably historical, of the growth of theories and practical models of science. This, however, does not at all

41 Unfortunately, this aspect of the problem— taking the scientific community as a real society in miniature— has received inadequate attention in social science literature. Kuhn has made a beginning in this direction. Cf. his discussion of the institutional arrangement of 'normal science'. A dazzling, but all too short, piece is : Martin Nicolaus, 'Sociology Liberation Movement' in T. Patman, ed., *Counter-Course* (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1972), pp. 38-41.

42 Einstein, quoted in Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London : NLB, 1975), p. 41. However, I am using this as a negative argument. It is difficult to agree with the extreme methodological anarchism of Feyerabend.

43 On closing of the universe of discourse as a result of positivist influence, Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), chapters 5 and 6.



mean faithful transcriptions of Thomas Kuhn into the language and lore of social science. We should not drum into our students the cult of a 'scientific method'. It is too medieval.[44] Finding an adequate methodological answer to a concrete social problem is an art of craftsmanship. For even the most detailed manuals can offer nothing more than abstract advice that has to be concretised. One of the major points of modern discussions on epistemology of social science is precisely this. Method does not meet the material the way two people meet on the street. It is a more complex form of connection. There is constant relativity and co-determination between the method and the material. The orthodox truths of the behavioural school are too simple to penetrate this dialectic. In any piece of work that is closely argued, these two elements will be interdependent and holding each other up. The method too is shaped by the material. It is a misunderstanding of the cognitive process to think of either the method or the material as entirely receptive, or to think of a strict invariant sequence between them. Method and material in that formless sense are pure abstractions. In reality they always work through an inner reciprocity. One cannot really think of pure data untouched by method, or pure method untouched by material. That is why it is often difficult to shift a block of data from one frame of generalisation to a qualitatively different one. Some qualities of the generalisation-frame will filter into the data even in the form of a reference-code. If one wants to work with a new generalisation, one has to generate a different set of data, or at least rework what one has got.

The more important political theorists worked precisely on these assumptions until the behaviouralists arrived. These are not new formulations; these have been overlaid by the behaviouralist fashion material of the last twenty years. These have to be rediscovered. Compare, for instance (to take an instance favourable to behaviouralists), the table of contents of the

44 It can be an exciting problem for sociologists of education to find out how a predominantly industrial-bourgeois-rationalist theory like positivism is conditioned by the accumulated habits of a feudal intellectual culture.

collection of Weber's work on method[45] with any ordinary manual. The difference would be immense. And it is not a difference in the technical language or in formalisation, but one of the fundamental concerns. Weber's position has come to be particularly ironical. Much of modern methodology is legitimised in his name. But when Weber talked of objectivity[46], he did not urge any of the shortcuts to scientificity practised by behaviouralists today. One can, I think, make out a very strong case that the collection of subjectivisms (as in questionnaires) that political behaviouralists specialise in, does not exactly answer Weber's idea of scientific truth.[47] Much of it is susceptible, ironically, to a purely Weberian critique.

One must have extraordinary naivete to believe that what men think about themselves, or what they want others to think of them— their indulgent self-images— can be processed statistically into objective knowledge about roots of political behaviour. Do not blame the statistician. He is no magician, after all. He can only show the possible inner relations in the material that the political scientist has presented to him. Most of the time, the trouble with bad 'statistical' studies is not that they are bad statistics, but simply bad politics.

Let us take a second example. With behaviouralism, collection of data about political processes has proceeded very fast. 'Accumulate ! Accumulate !' is also the slogan of political science in the period of late capitalism ; only it refers to data, not to capital. What led to this blind accumulation of abstracted empiricism was the absorption of the data-hoarders in their own micro-areas. Certainly, the more eminent theorists underscored the need for a macro-theory.[48] They also

45 Max Weber, *Methodology of the Social Sciences*, ed. Shils and Finch (New York : Free Press, 1949).

46 Ibid.

47 Weber also used the *verstehen* method. Cf. Schultz, *A Phenomenology of the Social World* (London : Heinemann, 1972) ; Theodore Abel, 'The operation called *verstehen*', *American Journal of Sociology*, 54 (1958).

48 Easton, Deutsch and Riker did this in their different ways and on behalf of their favourite models. Cf. David Easton, *A Systems*

called for its weaving in with micro-level generalisations. Easton and Deutsch tried this. Riker did this in a smaller way. Curiously, though Easton was a universal source of terminological inspiration, this particular advice of his went unheeded. Efforts at integration of micro-level data into a general political theory were rare. At times, there were token attempts to invoke the modernization or the general systems model. But these were far too general. They said by way of theory little more than that all systems try to continue indefinitely and look for means of doing so[49]; and that even old societies were changing under the impact of industrialisation. The pattern of theory-construction became unbalanced.

Both these theories shared a common weakness. They moved on only two levels— the most abstract and the most micro, with few fully spelt-out intermediate steps. Here, too, the behaviouralists' implicit theory of science, cognitive empiricism, showed through. For any science, collection of facts is important. But it must be followed by attempts at coherent arrangement. 'Science', as Schlick said, 'is a system of truths. not a mere collection'.[50]

There are some fairly simple problems that should occur to any social scientist. But curiously they did not. On the contrary, such belief in making a bureaucratic file-system out of cognitive method seems to have spread. It has caught up with some institutions administering research. They distribute incredible questionnaires on cognition, irrespective of the kind

Analysis of Political Life (New York : Wiley, 1965); Karl W. Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government* (New York : Free Press, 1969); William H. Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1962), and W. H. Riker and P. C. Ordeshook, *An Introduction to Positive Political Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, 1972).

49 It must be pointed out that the 'systems' framework of political analysis came nowhere near the sophistication of cybernetic models and systems—the ideals they were supposed to take after. This, despite Easton's subsequent attempts at building a complex structure out of the original simple allegory. Even in the apparently complex forms the theory cannot escape the triteness of its initial stage.

50 Schlick, *General Theory of Knowledge*, p. 102.

of research a candidate intends to do—consisting of five questions about 'purpose', 'hypothesis', 'methodology', 'conceptual framework', 'data processing'. It is a typical case of going after a vulgar positivistic respectability of the social sciences[51]. Words lose their meaning by indiscriminate use. At this rate some of our basic concepts—'concept', 'data', 'method'—would be misused out of commission, degenerating into cliche which only filing clerks in bureaucratic organisations will have faith in. Such use simply subverts these words. A man who wields a form and insists on having a blank on 'conceptual framework' filled in much the same way as he would insist on the date of birth does not know what he is doing. He is a respectable citizen of the academic-bureaucratic world. He does his work innocently and mindlessly as a machine. He goes on asking 'what is your conceptual framework?' of students who probably have not even heard of the major theories of social science. Because he does not know what he is doing, he can do it better. The best torturer is one who does it out of a sense of duty. All this leads to a simple result. The whole world, of politics at least, becomes strictly ordered and hierarchical. The highest order of research is the one that lends itself to exactitude in this sense, in this simulated natural science way. You can hardly be so exact about the processes of change in an entire society, about revolutions, about the functioning of coercive structures, about the silent effectivity of the legitimation process. But you can about how many times a leader has used a certain word in his last three years' speeches, or about the quantifiable wonders of electoral behaviour.[52]

This is not to say that there is no exactness involved in the actual business of politics or in its study. An effective politician must have what we call a 'sense of timing'. This implies 'being exact'. Everybody knows about Lenin's comment in the

51 *Vulgar* positivism, because, though I have generally maintained that positivism is an inadequate theory of knowledge, behaviouralism is a vulgar form of positivism, and ICSSR forms betray a vulgar form of behavioural consciousness.

52 The impact of behaviouralism in India has been mostly in one field. It has led to an explosion of electoral studies.

Bol'-shevik party committee before the revolution in Russia : 'Sixth would be too early, eighth would be too late'. Politicians always make such calculations. Consequently, political scientists have to explain them. But surely these calculations are not on natural science lines, or necessarily measurable by techniques borrowed from them. Here too there are problems of 'being exact', but 'being exact' does not mean quite the same thing.

Thus, subjects of research tend to get strictly ordered, not overtly though, but through winks and nudges, through insinuations and subtle ways of saying no. All research strives for its apex—survey research, the relatively small and often indifferent layer of a society's politics that is ideally susceptible to this type of handling.[53] I do not wish to be misunderstood. No one can oppose necessary and intelligent quantification in social research. And certain types of behaviour lend themselves quite naturally to such handling. But not all.

Secondly, there are some relatively more sophisticated theoretical aspects of quantified analysis and formalisation of social problems. Those can be at least intellectually exciting, though quite often of uncertain analytical value.[54] Political

53 This, however naive, is an epistemological argument of sorts. Unfortunately, there can be less charitable explanations of the stampede for survey research. No other genre of research has been financially more profitable (treating each individual researcher as a small entrepreneur), and cognitively more suspect. Grants from the often indiscriminately generous funding agencies also provide an avenue for the flowering of suppressed entrepreneurial talent in academics.

54 Interesting formal analyses occasionally end on a disappointing note. For instance : "A general review of the different aspects of the problem leads one to the conclusion that no clear-cut solution has been found for Arrow's paradox. In any case, the problem of social decisions cannot be disposed of once and for all. For the problem is essentially one of ethical exploration into the criteria for aggregating individual preferences. The values involved are numerous and changing. All that we can do is to work out implications of different values, to asses their acceptability by making clearer their consequences." Prasanta K. Pattanaik, *Voting and Collective Choice* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 171, and chapter 10 *passim*.

science in India has, however, stood firm against all such seductions. Note the relative silence about coalition theories[55], games[56], theories of voting and collective choice.[57] There is impressive proliferation of only one specie—electoral behaviour study. One would think that the only safe home for science is in the municipalities of small towns, particularly at the time of elections.

All this is due to one fundamental error—a failure to differentiate between two distinct levels—one of which would be more happily called techniques, the other of method proper. It follows that political scientists should rethink the problem of method. This should start at the level of definitions. It will require a recordination of our concepts, and a new arrangement of things we already know. Two things must be kept in mind. I shall turn to them briefly.

I am not arguing for a simple linguistic shift to the word method. What I am arguing for is a shift in the way we look at the complex of methodological problems. The word method is after all a shorthand. It denotes a structured complex of questions about modes of scientific enquiry and the grounds of choice among them. It also refers to problems of organising the experience of scientific practice in the field. That structure includes, to put it schematically, problems at different levels—of epistemology, of conceptual coherence, of logic, and finally, of techniques. Methodology, if it is treated as interchangeable with mere techniques, is part of this structure, but a small part. If one thinks of an ideal sequence, technical questions can be answered only *after* the others have been answered. Logically,

55 Notably, Riker's *Theory of Political Coalitions.*

56 Martin Shubik, ed., *Game Theory and Related Approaches to Social Behaviour* (London : Wiley, 1964) ; R. D. Luce and H. Raiffa, *Games and Decisions* (New York : Wiley, 1957). Recently, Arun Bose has tried to set a number of political problems in the format of game theory. Arun Bose, *Political Paradoxes and Puzzles* (Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1977).

57 Cf. Kenneth Arrow, *Social Choice and Individual Values* (New York : Wiley, 1951) ; Amartya K. Sen, *Collective Choice and Social Welfare* (San Francisco : Holden Day, 1970); Prasanta K. Pattanaik, *Voting and Collective Choice*, op. cit.

one must solve other questions before one comes to them. And how one handles techniques, or chooses one set of techniques against other possible sets, depends on how one has decided on the other questions that are logically prior to it. These structures are very wide in scope, and have deep sociological connections—forming specific mediations between social existence and identifiable structures of ideology. A network of concepts and a set of specific rules about their use will form a grid, as it were, for men to think through.[58] These structures combine operations at varying levels. A highly articulated and refined intellectual system will express it in one way— through its own specific jargon; so would ordinary common sense. Enquiry into theoretical systems, if done with sensitivity, often turns in the direction of sociology of knowledge.[59] The link between the two levels of articulation of cognitive attitude—of self-conscious theory, and of immediate common sense—exists through shared methodological procedures, though operating, admittedly, on very different levels of logical refinement.[60] Quite often they are differently worked out versions of the same basic methodological principles, the same way of making sense of the world. Social scientists, particularly those who are concerned with the understanding of cultures, ought to investigate the precise nature of the mediations between these two levels of thinking about society— one absurdly naive, the other often absurdly rarefied. In analyses of thought processes, it is dangerous to miss their subtle symbiottc relation.[61] Cognitive attitudes play a critical role in the adhesion of various

58 An outstanding example of such analysis will be Lukacs's study of the methodological structures of idealist philosophy and late capitalist development in Germany. Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness* (London : Merlin Press, 1971) ; essay on 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat', section 2.

59 The most obvious example from the mainstream of sociology will be the work of Karl Mannheim ; and from the marxist tradition, the work of Gramsci.

60 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London : Lawrence and Wishart, 1971) ; section on the 'Study of Philosophy'.

61 ibid, pp. 325 ff.

sides and levels of an intellectual culture. Usually, these are not manifest, but latent. This does not prevent them from acting as a subtle connective mesh.

Through a series of mediations, epistemic structures perform significant social functions. Some of these functions are mystificatory, or what Marx would have called 'ideological'. They give rise to false but plausible images of structures of social reality, and of the quality of the relations in which individuals are "caught". There are excellent studies on the play of ideology and interest in social science methods. An interesting example would be Habermas's study on *Knowledge and Human Interest*.[62] Not unnaturally, these do not form a part of our cloistered bibliographies.

Engels's definition of ideology is sometimes turned into a onesided cliche.[63] Ideology, Engels explained, is not just a consciousness that is false. To be ideology, and particularly to be an ideology of any cognitive significance, it must be false in a special way. It is that very special falsehood that has the appearance of reasonableness, that very special error that looks exactly like the truth. The quality of 'seeming to be true' is a critical element in the definition. Even theories of science may be ideologies in this sense—collating appearance relations in the social system, never cutting down to the essential structures beneath— the most stable, regular, recurrent and irreducible social relations.[64] Sometimes we must start this discussion on the social roots of methodological attitudes, the historical reasons why a particular mode of looking at society arises precisely at the time it does, and what it does to the working of the system. A certain way of seeing reality is also part of a society's structure.

62 Jurgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interest* (London : Heinemann, 1972).

63 Despite attempts at discrediting the concept of ideology, scholars who do not belong to the marxian tradition also find it analytically useful, e. g., W. C. Runciman, *Sociology in Its Place* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1970).

64 'Essence' need not always be a hegelian category ; for a simple non-hegelian rendering of the notion of essence, Oskar Lange, *Political Economy*, Vol. I (Oxford : Pergamon Press, 1974), p. 51.

In that case our thinking on methodology will have to be retooled. And it is essential to do a few things as part of this retooling. First, to revive the questions of what once used to be called 'architectonics'. Another would be to break down the myopic way of thinking about techniques abstracted from all complications of their determinate epistemic context. It would not do, secondly, to pretend that that there is one single unquestionable scientific method. Science flourishes only when men try to think of alternatives. Paradigm shifts occur through shifts in method, though often a method that is latent in a new individual discovery is itself discovered afterwards. Occasionally, what initially appears as an individual suggestion relevent for a narrow field, turns out to be a methodological principle for rearrangement of explanations of an entire discipline. Instead of bothering for a semester about how best to prepare a questionnaire (and we must admit, among professionals, that our lay respondents often show a humorous contempt for them), and how best to administer them, and thinking of complicated questions to fire at politicians which they are going to evade anyway, we would then ask more difficult questions, with less obvious solutions : what is knowledge in social science ? how is such knowledge possible ? are there some special built-in obstacles to social knowledge, as Marx alleged ? what are the problems of intersubjectivity ? how does one get round them ? are there 'problems' lurking inside things or concepts that appear transparent at first sight, like observation, verification, etc. ? would all social scientists agree about what observation or verification implies ? what do we do if they don't ? and finally, what do we do with social knowledge, in case we get it after so much trouble ? Current methodological training does not equip a social scientist to deal with these questions. No one can have his methodological problems sorted out by others. For there are problems of method all the time, at the most unexpected corners.

It is here that the classics of political theory could come in. If we look at those texts closely, we find that these were also the classical theorists' questions, the ones that they considered important : problems of "seeing" society. That is why they

are the classics after all. They have a strange way of coming back to relevance. Despite the obituaries that behaviouralists wrote for them throughout the 'fifties and 'sixties, they are not quite obsolete. After the outbreak of the behavioural revolution, political scientists started looking at them rather patronizingly, the way a man would look, in museums, at his somewhat ridiculous predecessors. They were 'philosophers'; we are 'scientists'. As it turned out, the advantages were not all on our side. No one would, of course, defend them wholly. Just as no one would claim that the behavioural revolution has been entirely futile, though its critics would claim that it has been, in the main, negatively useful. What political scientists have done over the last twenty years clearly outlines how not to study politics. The classics, by contrast, clearly thought of the central questions of political processes— relations between economic and political power structures, the role of prejudice, of ideology, problems of establishing causality, totalisation, temporality and their implications. They thought, in other words, of politics in the large sense, not of its infinitesimal particles after grinding the total political process into a fine dust of strictly individual and strictly political events. Behavioural concerns sometimes look trivial in comparison. This is an old story now. Even the most enthusiastic former behaviouralists admit this. It has become quite fashionable to show a mild dissatisfaction with one's own earlier work. Unfortunately, these waves of fashion have not reached India. There is always a time lag. We have still not entered the repentant-behaviouralist phase. Even if we do there is the danger of there being lags in the discipline, and the profession behaving remarkably like the dog in the limerick :

one so long
it didn't have any notion
of how long it took to notify
its tail of its emotion.
so it happened, though his eyes
were filled with tears and sadness
its little tail went wagging on
because of previous gladness.

In academic conferences one comes across much 'previous gladness' about behaviouralism.[65]

Still, this moment of hesitation among behaviouralists can be turned into a creative interval, if we do not go in for *ad hoc* solutions. And if political scientists do not repeat their collective mistake of thinking that high methodology, like high technological skill, is exclusively produced in the advanced countries : let us not have our own methodological debates ; let us await the results of theirs.

This is a good time to begin a methodological debate of our own, about posing and choosing our problems. This debate should include the most fundamental categories of arranging social phenomena— causality and determinism, time and its handling, totalities, the always interesting relationship between the logical and the historical. Of course, this will not be comfortable for intellectual conservatives. It might make too many of our certainties suspect all of a sudden. Archaism is comfortable. Probably, if one takes a vote, a majority might be against such a shake-up. Unfortunately, in questions of this kind, majority is a weak principle. Even the natural sciences have advanced through the subversion of earlier paradigms ; not in a linear fashion, through a repressive consensus in which one does not have to think about fundamentals because others are thinking about them anyway. Or, in some cases, because these questions have been finally settled.

Let us take a casual example of how apparently simple things might conceal underlying problems.[66] Take 'observation',

65 Still one of the best critiques in the field is C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (London : Oxford University Press, 1972).

66 Several schools of idealistic-phenomenological inspiration have attempted to lay bare the complexities involved in social interaction and observation. For example, Ethnomethodology : Aaron V. Cicourel, *Cognitive Sociology* (New York : Free Press, 1973) ; Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1967) ; Phenomenology : A. Schutz, *Phenomenology of the Social World* ; A. Schutz and Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life World* (London : Heinemann, 1974) ; Hermeneutics : it can be sampled in the pieces by Dilthey and Gadamer in Connerton, ed., *Critical Sociology*, op. cit. A brief critique is to be found in

an essential step according to the manuals. Observation is one of the few wonderfully simple operations which together make up the process of 'theory-building'. Theory is built out of a number of bricks, like hypothesisation, conceptualisation, observation, verification, and of course experiments (if possible). Method would have been a dream if its constituent moments had really been so simple. Unfortunately, all these stages contain possibilities of dispute. How are hypotheses constructed ? how are concepts generated ? why does one choose one set of concepts rather than another ? how do concepts fit into a larger theory ? what does observation mean in the social sciences ? does the observer 'enter' into the observed, as some philosophical schools claim ? how do you verify laws ?

Let us also take Sartre's famous illustration of the problem of observation. Think of two people inside a room—a couple in the middle of a quarrel. They would say things about each other that they would rather hold back at quieter moments, and what they probably do not believe in. Their gestures would be less placid than usual. Consider the effect on this situation if they suddenly realise that they are being looked at through a keyhole. Obviously their behaviour would change. There is, first, a difference between observed and unobserved behaviour, because the observer is 'part' of the situation. The fact of observation conditions the behaviour that is being observed. The observer 'enters' the situation in this sense. He becomes a factor in it. The categories of 'observer' and 'observed' wobble and turn fluid disconcertingly. Would you then drop these categories, and turn to others ? Would you refit them, and make them more complex ? Would you try to use them still, not in the simple sense, but with the qualifiers built into them somehow ? Whatever you do, you would not be able to go back to the innocent simplicity of 'simple' observation.

To continue with this example, think of a more complex case on the same lines. Suppose that this couple, unfortunately, have a rather inquisitive neighbour. Their previous experience

Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method* (London : Hutchinson, 1976).

suggests that he is quite capable of looking through the keyhole. In this case, at the time of this particular quarrel, they may *think* he is out there, when, in fact, he is not. Behaviour becomes more interesting. Their behaviour had changed in the first case because of the problem of presentation of self to others, or, less charitably, because they want to appear different from what they actually are. The whole ritual of self-presentation would come into play. In the second case too, there is no actual observer. What is being integrated in the behaviour, then, is simply the *possibility* of being observed. Like the first, this is also a triangular social interaction. Only, in the first case a third point really existed, in the second it is imagined. It is not an actual factor, but the 'real' factor of their illusion, or expectation. Social sciences have to deal with many 'illusions' of this sort. 'Seeing' can contain many surprises. Anyway, the real world of social facts is more complex than the ideal world of the handbooks. One can even formulate a paradox. If the problems are really that simple you do not need a textbook to solve them. If they are more complex, the simple solutions of textbooks will not take you very far.

Finally, in politics there is the constant play of ideology. Knowledge here does not lend itself to simple orders of causality, and rarely to universally accepted standards of truth. Hobbes saw this. He did not talk of 'positivism' or of the concept of 'ideology'. But he had sensed the underlying problem. He emphasised that in this field the question of knowledge is always complicated by the play of interests. As a prudent cynic he put his formulation in a negative form. "For such Truth as opposeth no man's Profit nor Pleasure is to all men welcome."[67] Turned into its positive form, this is an explosive idea. If it hurts men's interest, they would simply deny the truth even though it may have axiomatic self-evidence. There are few areas in social science where 'the truth' can be demonstrated 'incontrovertibly' as in natural science. This is why 'social knowledge' poses peculiar problems. Subtler

67 The closing sentence of Hobbes's *Leviathan*.

questions of this kind can hardly be tackled by drills in technique. They require methodological sensitivity of a different order.

Contrary to the impression the manuals give us, method is not a realm of certainties. It is one of surprises.

Partha Chatterjee

On the Scientific Study of Politics: A Review of the Positivist Method

I

A mild flurry of excitement has been created in academic circles in India on the question of the proper methodology for the social sciences. This excitement is largely in response to the various innovations in methods and techniques which the social sciences have recently produced in the West. In certain disciplines, a consensus of sorts seems to have been established. For the more empirically-minded researchers, whether in economics, sociology, psychology or anthropology, this consensus represents a total devotion of attention to problems of *technique*—observation, classification or measurement—and a tacit avoidance of all fundamental issues concerning *method*. Among those who claim to be concerned with "theory", many economists are completely lost in the labyrinth of increasingly complex, increasingly abstract and increasingly unreal mathematical analysis. How the social status of academicians plus the international structure of an academic discipline can confound completely the objectives and rationale of scientific inquiry is shown vividly by the recent development of economic theory, but that is a story that cannot be told here. Of the other disciplines, political scientists in India are only now beginning to feel the shock waves of a debate that rocked American

academia two decades ago. The diehard traditionalists seem at last to have been left by the wayside. The dominant cry now is for "a synthesis between the old and the new", "a bridge between the traditional and the modern". In the haste to escape from the horns of the dilemma, none has asked himself whether such a synthesis is even logically possible, let alone how it is to be achieved. And the historians, still bedevilled by the ruinous influence of British historiography, are largely not even aware of the possibility of "theory" in history : even E. H. Carr's *What Is History ?* is regarded in most Indian universities as a piece of intriguing novelty to be inspected with some curiosity and then kept back on the shelf.

Most curious of all has been the response to all this of many practitioners of social science who are professedly, in varying degrees, of a "leftist" or "socialist" persuasion. Some of them have contended that the methods of the natural sciences are in principle not applicable to social phenomena, and that, therefore, any efforts to make the study of society scientific in this sense are misleading and, in any case, doomed to failure. Others have been horrified by the ignominy of being counted and coded and registered on a computer tape, and have condemned this "dehumanising" method of carrying on scientific inquiry. The more sophisticated have taken refuge behind what they construe to be the "dialectical method" and, on the basis of a "necessary", though unexamined and unelucidated, contradiction between this and the methods of "bourgeois social science", have peremptorily rejected the latter. The more naive have been ensnared by diabolical "imperialist plots" to delude the truth-seekers of the third world and keep them in perpetual ignorance. There has been little serious effort to confront the issues raised by recent methodological discussions in the West and to attempt a thorough critique of the methodological assumptions of the Western social sciences.

It seems to me important that the issues raised by recent discussions on the methodological foundations of liberal (i.e., bourgeois) political theory be studied seriously by all political

scientists who are confronted by the intellectual task of understanding the problems of change and development in post-colonial societies such as ours, and seeking, even if only in theoretical terms, a direction towards their solution. It will, in fact, be the argument of this review that a renewed discussion on method is vitally necessary if political science in India is to grow out of the state of complete confusion in which it has found itself ever since the "behavioral revolution" (minus the 'u') was imported into our universities.

For the purposes of this discussion, I propose to examine the basic premises of the positivist method which, explicitly or otherwise, comprise the methodological foundations of liberal political theory currently used in the West. Since much of teaching and research in political science in India is influenced by what is being written in the West on the theory of democracy and electoral competition, political participation and electoral behaviour, on leadership, organisations and the entire theory of political development, it is important to consider critically the methodological principles which underlie these writings. Let me add that this review does not deal with all aspects of the voluminous, and exceedingly complex and sophisticated, literature on the positivist method; it attempts to discuss only the central propositions of this philosophical position as reflected in contemporary political science in the West.

II

What perhaps emerges as the most striking assertion in the classical Marxist discussion on epistemological questions is the essential unity of scientific knowledge, and hence, of the scientific method. This is established, for instance, in Engels's discussion of the testability of scientific propositions in the natural and human sciences, his consideration of the role of hypotheses in the generation of theoretical laws, and above all, the historical nature of all scientific thought, whether physical or social.[1] Interestingly enough, this very fact has been the

1 Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature* (Moscow : Progress Publishers, 1972), pp. 40-49 and 222-42. Also, Engels, *Anti-Duhring*

chief bone of contention in most of the debate in the West regarding scientific method and the social sciences : the positivists have maintained that there is only one kind of knowledge—the scientific—and therefore, only one necessary method for obtaining it, while others have disputed this. Realising, however, that the classical Marxists had engaged in bitter polemics with many positivists (such as Mach or, in sociology, Comte), and keeping in mind the recent criticisms by many Marxists of neo-positivism and empiricism, we must be very careful to examine the precise implications of this apparent similarity in the positivist and Marxist positions.

The discussion will be facilitated if we take a representative expression of the current methodological position in the Western social sciences. I will take as an example perhaps the most sophisticated, and at the same time the clearest, explication of the positivist methodological premises of political science to appear recently in the West, James Gregor's *Introduction to Metapolitics*.[2]

What, according to Gregor, is the scientific method ? It refers to "those procedures, which, as a matter of historic fact,

(Moscow : Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), pp. 118-32 ; Marx, *Grundrisse*, tr. Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1973), pp. 100-8 ; Marx to L. Kugelmann, July 11, 1868, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow : FLPH, 1953), pp. 250-3. In the first version of *The German Ideology* there was a passage which ran : "We know only a single science, the science of history. One can look at history from two sides and divide it into the history of nature and the history of men. The two sides are, however, inseparable...'. See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (Moscow : Progress Publishers, 1976), p. 34n. It must be pointed out that in the discussion in *Anti-Duhring*, the only instance Engels finds of the existence of "eternal truths" are mathematical laws ; as we shall indicate very soon, these "truths" are only syntactic truths, i.e., they are true by definition, and, therefore, do not add anything to our knowledge of the world. Engels was apparently unaware of the distinction between syntactic and empirical truths. The confusion, however, persists in Lenin's criticism of Bogdanov in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (Moscow : FLPH, 1947), pp. 130-6.

2 A. James Gregor, *An Introduction to Metapolitics* (New York : Free Press, 1971).

have provided a systematically articulated and comprehensive body of *maximally reliable knowledge claims* that afford men survival and adaptive advantage by affording explanatory and predictive leverage".[3] The important thing to note here is that no one procedure is essential to the scientific method. There may be a variety of procedures depending upon the phenomena to be studied. It is often said, for instance, that the human sciences can never be truly scientific because there is little scope for experimentation. Yet, experiments are in no way germane to the scientific method : the science of astronomy, for instance, has developed with virtually no opportunity for conducting experiments. The question of measurement, again, is similar. There is no *essential* reason why things must be measured : until quite recently, botanists, for instance, had very few instruments for measurement. These are questions of technique, and appropriate techniques can only be developed according to the demands of the phenomena being studied. There is no single invariant set of techniques that goes with the scientific method.

The crucial question is the *reliability* of scientific knowledge. Here, we have to make a distinction between two kinds of truth claims—one, purely formal or analytical, the other, descriptive or empirical. The first refers to the propositions of formal logic, or as a special case, of mathematics. These propositions follow as deductions from a set of axioms, and consequently are implied by these axioms. They do not assert anything regarding the empirical world. The proposition that two plus two is four follows from the definition of natural numbers and the operation of addition. To establish the truth of this statement one does not have to go around counting apples or oranges or anything else, because it does not assert anything about them. The theorem that two sides of a triangle are together greater than the third side, again, is not a descriptive statement at all ; it is formal and its truth is estab-

3 ibid., p. 21. A substantially similar definition is given in another standard statement of the positivist method of social science, Richard S. Rudner, *Philosophy of Social Sciences* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. : Prentice-Hall, 1966).

lished according to the rules of Euclidean geometry. The thing to note here is that these formal truth claims must be *absolutely reliable;* they must follow with complete certainty from the original axioms. This also implies that once established, these "truths" are not corrigible within the given set of axioms.

Formal truths, however, do not add anything to our knowledge of the world. To know something about the world, we must have *descriptive* statements which assert about empirical categories that something is or is not the case.[4] Thus, we might say that a political party is the organised expression of class interest. If this statement is true, it adds something to our knowledge of social organisations. The truth status of this statement, however, is not of the same order as "two plus two equals four". For to determine the validity of this statement, we cannot rely on a purely formal deduction from a set of axioms. We have to examine political parties and class interests and corroborate empirically the hypothesised relationship between the two. Now, here, one cannot have absolute reliability. All one can expect is *maximal reliability,* which is a statistical criterion. This means that any descriptive statement is accepted because it is more reliable than all others currently available. In principle, however, it remains corrigible; that is, it can be supplanted by another assertion which demonstrates itself to be more reliable. Statistically, this means that we must accept that proposition relating two or more empirical categories (variables) which explains the largest proportion of the variance. This holds equally for all scientific propositions, whether relating to physical or social phenomena.

Any *scientific theory* makes assertions which are claimed to be true both in an analytical as well as an empirical sense. A

4 It should, of course, be pointed out that in many instances the distinction between analytic and synthetic statements is not very clear. This point was argued very forcefully by Friedrich Waismann. I do not, however, think that the conceptual distinction, and the corresponding differences in the criteria of validation, are necessarily impaired by this.

theory is a deductively connected set of assertions : the primary assertions are axioms, the others are logically implied by the axioms. The truth of these axioms are not self-evident. They are inductive generalisations; sometimes they are completely imaginary logical artifacts. Their acceptability depends upon the empirical reliability of the deductions that are made from them. A scientific theory, therefore, is an axiom system from which certain descriptive assertions about the empirical world can be deduced ; it is, in other words, a "hypothetico-deductive" system.[5] A scientific theory, consequently, must consist of certain conceptual constructs with formal connections between them and with rules of correspondence with the empirical world. The formal connections and the rules of correspondence represent the operational definitions of the theory; their reliability, maximal for the empirical connections and complete for the formal, determines its scientific validity.

Although the structure of a scientific theory is represented in this fashion, the actual process of constructing theory cannot be attributed to any simple method such as deduction or induction. It is always a mixture of both, plus that creative use of scientific imagination which Aristotle called "retroduction".[6] One is reminded here of Einstein's comment : "I think that theory cannot be fabricated out of the results of observation, but that it can only be invented".

This also clarifies the question about the need for abstraction in the construction of theories. In order to clarify the formal or empirical connections between conceptual categories or descriptive variables, it is often necessary to consider certain factors or relationships in isolation from others. It is fashionable these days to talk about "models", although the isomor-

5 Ernest Nagel, *The Structure of Science* (New York : Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961) ; Carl G. Hempel, *Aspects of Scientific Explanation* (New York : Free Press, 1965).

6 See Arthur S. Goldberg, "Political Science as Science" in Nelson W. Polsby et al., *Politics and Social Life* (Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1964). Also, C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1970).

phism between the real thing and its model is absent in almost every social science "model" that I know of.[7] It also means that in order to handle the logical connections more conveniently and effectively, the use of mathematical reasoning will be helpful. This will produce greater clarity and consistency of thought as well as the development of a relatively unproblematic and consistent language. It is also true that it is much easier to make inductive inferences out of mathematical models.[8] Of course, different kinds of mathematics must be developed according to the subject being studied : an indiscriminate adoption of the techniques of mathematical physics does not necessarily lead to an enrichment of social theory.[9] The crucial question here, of course, relates to the rules of correspondence between the conceptual and the empirical categories, that is to say, the operational definitions by which we can translate the statements of the model into assertions

7 The term "model" has a very definite meaning in the physical sciences, particularly in atomic physics ; in the social sciences the term is used with incredible looseness. See May Brodbeck, "Models, Meaning and Theories" in Llewellyn Gross, ed., *Symposium on Sociological Theory* (New York : Harper & Row, 1959), pp. 373-403.

8 See Kenneth J. Arrow, "Mathematical Models in the Social Sciences" in D. E. Lerner and H. J. Lasswell, eds., *The Policy Sciences* (Stanford : Stanford University Press, 1951).

9 This has been the bane of modern economics. Again, this point can only be established with much more detailed arguments, but a few comments from an eminent mathematician and cybernetist may not be out of place. "Just as primitive peoples adopt the Western modes of denationalized clothing and of parliamentarism out of a vague feeling that these magic rites and vestments will at once put them abreast of modern culture and technique, so the economists have developed the habit of dressing up their rather imprecise ideas in the language of the infinitesimal calculus....The mathematics that the social scientists employ and the mathematical physics that they use as their model are the mathematics and the mathematical physics of 1850....Very few econometricians are aware that if they are to imitate the procedure of modern physics and not its mere appearances, a mathematical economics must begin with a critical account of these quantitative notions and the means adopted for collecting and measuring them." Norbert Wiener, *God and Golem, Inc.* (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 1969), pp. 89-90.

about the empirical world. The element of abstraction is obviously necessary in theory-construction. But whatever level of abstraction one may need to go to, the validity of a theory must ultimately be decided on the descriptive assertions it makes about the real world and the reliability of those assertions.

We now come to the crux of the matter : what constitutes reliability? The reliability of an assertion, according to Gregor, means "minimally, that *intersubjective confirmation* of some specific observations is forthcoming".[10] The validity of a descriptive assertion involves its confirmation on the basis of intersubjective evidence. This has been a fundamental contention of logical positivists, although all of them are not agreed on exactly what the process of confirmation amounts to.[11] The earlier positivists suggested that all scientific assertions should be verifiable. Later, Popper argued that the criterion should be "refutability" rather than "verifiability".[12] Thus, all descriptive assertions which are meaningful must be, in principle, refutable by demonstration, and must, therefore, remain for ever corrigible.

Assertions such as Locke's, that the "Law of nature... obliges everyone... that no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions", or Rousseau's, that "the general will is always right and tends to the public advantage", do not admit of any empirical testing, because concepts such as "the law of nature" or "general will" do not have accepted operational referents which may be used to confirm or disconfirm the statements. These assertions, whether or not we believe in them, are not scientific propositions and cannot, in principle, add to our scientific knowledge of the world.

10 op. cit., p. 53. Italics mine.

11 For a brief description of these arguments, see John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy* (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1968), pp. 367-423. A historical introduction to the positivist methodology is Leszek Kolakowski, *Positivist Philosophy from Hume to the Vienna Circle*, tr. Norbert Guterman (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1972).

12 Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York : Basic Books, 1959).

However, many assertions found in classical political philosophy such as the one by Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic*, "In every case the laws are made by the ruling party in its own interest" or by Herbert Spencer, that "the quality of society is physically lowered by the artificial preservation of its feeblest members", can be seen as descriptive statements which may be confirmed or refuted by reference to the empirical world once concepts such as "the interest of the ruling party" or "the physical quality of society" can be given an operational meaning.

Popper's criterion, however, logically leads to an uncomfortable position. If every meaningful assertion is, in principle, refutable, then we can question the definition (the "meaning") of every term used in that assertion. This would require that we define the terms in the form of a different set of prior concepts, which, in turn, can be questioned. There is thus the possibility of infinite regress. If we take our earlier assertion regarding political parties and class interests, we may ask for the meaning of the term "class". This could be defined, let us say, in terms of "the relations of production". This again might be a problematic definition and some prior concepts explaining the meaning of "relations of production" would become necessary. And this can go on *ad infinitum*. Analytic philosophers have replied here that there exists in every scientific language a set of basic unproblematic primary terms ("protocol sentences", as Carnap and Neurath originally called them) on whose meaning there is universal agreement. These sentences are unproblematic not because there are no prior assumptions attached to them, for that there must be : it is impossible to avoid theoretical assumptions, even in our ordinary language, as Feyerabend of modern epistemologists has argued so forcefully. It is rather that the assumptions are universally considered as acceptable. It is, indeed, obvious that unless there are a set of basic meanings on which there is agreement, no communication is possible. Protocol sentences, therefore, are the basic definitions on which there is intersubjective agreement.

This, interestingly, elucidates the question of "objectivity"

and "adherence to facts" in science, and in turn reveals the falsehood of the "fact-value dichotomy" on which empiricism and positivism have traditionally rested. "Facts" are never "value-free", for every assertion of a fact involves a generalisation over an infinite number of smaller facts, and therefore, a prior set of assumptions. Take a simple fact of modern Indian history.[13] "On 15 August 1947, India achieved her independence." On the face of it, this appears a simple enough fact. Yet is it all that "simple" ? Why, for instance, do we choose the date 15 August 1947, and not 26 January 1930 when the Indian National Congress observed Purna Swaraj Day, or 21 October 1943 when the Provisional Government of Free India was proclaimed in Singapore, or 2 September 1946 when the first central executive manned by Indians took office, or 26 January 1950 when the republican constitution of India was first proclaimed ? Obviously, when we accept the above statement as a "fact", we have in mind certain *criteria* by which we pick and choose and generalise over an entire period of India's political history and then select the events of a particular date as symbolising in a sense a certain landmark. In other words, the above statement of "fact" is a generalisation over innumerable other facts comprising the history of India's independence. Secondly, the criteria on the basis of which we make this generalisation are dependent on certain prior *assumptions*—theoretical or ideological, but nonetheless assumptions—about what we mean by "independence". Thus we accept 15 August 1947 as the date of India's independence, and reject the other dates, because we hold a certain idea of "independence", which in turn is related to our concepts or notions of such things as "nation", "nation-state", "colonialism", "imperialism", and so on. And these concepts, we all recognise, are not entirely unproblematical in the domain of political theories. Consequently, when we accept this "simple" statement as a statement of fact, we accept it in

13 The classic discussion of the problem of "facts" in history still remains Carl L. Becker, "What are Historical Facts ?" reprinted in Hans Meyerhoff, ed., *The Philosophy of History in Our Time* (Garden City, N. Y. : Doubleday), pp. 120-37.

relation to certain larger theoretical or ideological conceptions. And if we differ on these conceptions, even in our acceptance of the fact we perhaps mean different things by it.

The point is that there are no "facts" (and again there is no difference here between physical and social phenomena) which are not generalisations based upon certain assumptions. The only facts are those which are generally agreed upon by virtue of certain reasonable criteria of intersubjective confirmation. And these facts change. What was accepted as eminently reasonable in one century may not be acceptable as a fact in another. To medieval political philosophers of Europe the existence of a natural law was obvious ; no one required any evidence or proof of its existence—it was a primary category whose meaning was accepted. Sixteenth-century thinkers, however, called such an assumption into question. Not only does fresh evidence disconfirm old facts, but even the criteria of reasonableness change. This is where the sociology of knowledge impinges on epistemology. One of the main contentions of historical materialism is that there is no knowledge which is eternally valid, that knowledge itself changes as the material bases of society change. Indeed, the agreement on basic assumptions or concepts or facts on which scientific knowledge must be based itself changes with changes in socio-historical conditions. The basic assumptions upon which our knowledge is built rests upon a certain consensus—a consensus which accepts the assumptions as reasonable. This consensus, however, is temporary ; it exists only so long as the reasonableness of those assumptions is not seriously challenged. It is, of course, the claim of historical materialism that these changes in consensus are intimately related to structural changes in society.

We have established, therefore, that all scientific theories are constructed in terms of a basic language, and rest upon certain assumptions which are generally accepted as unproblematic and reasonable. In the physical sciences, most terminology and assumptions enjoy relatively general and long-term acceptability, although the major scientific revolutions, such as the Galilean or the Einsteinian, were challenges to older

assumptions and represent their substitution by new ones. In the social sciences, there is considerable contention regarding theoretical assumptions, and hence, theoretical concepts and terms. The nature of this contention, and the relevance here of Marxism, can now be made clear.

III

The purpose of all scientific enquiry is obviously to produce viable explanatory theories. A theory, according to the established positivist conception, is "a systematically related set of statements, including some lawlike generalizations, that is empirically testable".[14] The strongest lawlike generalisations are those which are deterministic, irreversible, sequential, necessary and sufficient.[15] There are several such generalisations which are found in the various physical sciences, although as we have indicated in the earlier section, the reliability of all such assertions is probabilistic and never certain. But in the physical sciences there do exist fairly reliable systematic process laws, i.e., logical relationships between variables on the basis of which we can, given the present state of a system, specify a subsequent or prior state. We do not have any such laws regarding social phenomena which are quite so strong. In the social sciences we can only have historic process laws, to use which we require information about the past history of a system in order to predict some future state.

So much is clear. What is more important for our discussion, however, is the way in which we can arrive at these historic process laws. In his analysis of the scientific enterprise, Kuhn suggests that in order to provide a schematic guide for research, there must first be a "paradigm",[16] or to use Gregor's terminology, a "preliminary conceptual schemata". This conceptual schemata must consist of certain broad theoretical or specula-

14 Rudner, op. cit., p. 10.

15 Hans L. Zetterberg, *On Theory and Verification in Sociology* (Totoma, N. J. : Bedminster, 1965).

16 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1962).

tive hypotheses about the phenomena being studied, so as to determine what will count as relevant data and then to make some sense of this data. But this is only a preliminary stage. Before we can understand in a meaningful way the empirical relationships we establish between a limited number of variables within a limited domain, we must have a longer theoretical framework which places the limited domain within the perspective of the larger universe of enquiry. Thus, to make any sense of an empirical relationship we may establish between, let us say, party preference and the age group of voters, or between the social structure of a town and the occupants of office in municipal government, we must have a general theory of social structures in which we can locate concepts such as political power, party preference, political generations, etc. This is a vital question which is either not recognised by the usual run of "empirical" researchers in the West (or for that matter in India), or if recognised, not paid any attention to. *A general theory of society is a necessary framework for constructing and understanding partial theories.*

This leads to two very important conclusions. First, there is no sense in arbitrarily demarcating separate disciplines of social science. If the significance and meaning of a small set of events can only be understood by placing it in the context of the whole universe of study, then any partial theories which we may develop regarding economic relations or political life would not be meaningful if we permanently assume away all non-economic or non-political variables. Yet this is exactly what is done under the present arrangement of sectioning out the study of society into various social "sciences".

The answer to this problem is not "interdisciplinary" research. The farce which has resulted in most universities from this ramshackle experiment is common knowledge. When basic conceptual schemes, empirical techniques, research strategies—indeed, the whole intellectual tradition of a researcher—are structured within the confines of one narrow discipline, the problem of constructing more general theories embracing the contents of several disciplines is not solved by a forced mating of diverse concepts or inappropriate techniques.

The answer must be a conscious effort to study society as a totality, a totality whose "meaning" is historically revealed, and a totality which is for ever changing.

The second conclusion relates to our choice of a general social theory. And here it will be my contention that at the present time there are only two sets of assertions regarding social phenomena which could claim to represent general theories of society. One of these is essentially a liberal theory of society which, in its various manifestations, either implicitly or expressly forms the framework for all Western or, more properly, bourgeois, social research. The other is historical materialism.

The liberal macrotheory has grown out of the positivist sociology of Comte, through Durkheim, Weber, and the functional anthropologists, to its culmination in recent decades in the functionalist sociology of Parsons and his school. The functionalist macrotheory does conceive of the social system as a whole within which particular problems must be located. But the assumption is "that a process or set of conditions either 'contributes' to the maintenance (or development) of the system or it is 'dysfunctional' in that it detracts from the integration and effectiveness of the system. It is thus the functional reference of all particular conditions and processes to the state of the total system as a going concern which provides the logical equivalent of simultaneous equations in a fully developed system of analytical theory."[17]

That the functionalist "theory" of the social system represents, both in its conservative and radical versions, an essentially liberal (capitalist) conception of society has been amply demonstrated by Alvin Gouldner.[18] In its application to politics particularly, the liberal ideological foundations of the entire theoretical edifice become clear in the works of Gabriel Almond and his associates.[19] Yet, even among

17 Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory Pure and Applied* (New York : Free Press, 1954).

18 Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (New York : Basic Books, 1970).

19 The most important works here are G.A. Almond and J.S. Coleman,

Western social scientists, functionalism is rapidly losing its status as the general theory of society—this indeed is the crisis which Gouldner talks of. Functionalism has in recent years been subjected to seriously damaging criticisms with respect to its logical and scientific status, its adequacy is describing non-Western and non-liberal social systems, and above all, its suitability as a theory of instability and social change.[20]

IV

Many of the more telling criticisms of functionalism have, in fact, been made from a positivist standpoint on the scientific method. Yet, positivist attempts to construct an alternative theory of society have not been any more successful. The dominant effort in this direction has gone towards the construction of a theory of social choice. Instead of a structural theory of society, the concern here is to produce a consistent theory of collective choice given a set of individual preferences and alternative sets of decision rules. The exercise is analytical in

The Politics of the Developing Areas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960) ; G.A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics : A Developmental Approach* (Boston : Little, Brown, 1966) ; G.A. Almond, *Political Development : Essays in Heuristic Theory* (Boston : Little, Brown, 1970).

20 Some of the important critiques of functionalism, particularly in reference to its applications to politics, are Carl G. Hempel, "The Logic of Functional Analysis" in Gross, ed., *Symposium on Sociological Theory*, op. cit., pp. 271 - 307 ; Alvin W. Gouldner, "Reciprocity and Autonomy in Functional Theory" in ibid., pp. 241 - 70 ; Rudner, op. cit., ch. 5 ; Robert E. Dowse, "A Functionalist's Logic", *World Politics*, 18, 4 (July 1966), pp. 607 - 22 ; John C. Harsanyi, "Rational-Choice Models of Political Behavior vs Functionalist and Conformist Theories", *World Politics*, 21, 4 (July 1969), pp. 513 - 38 ; W.G. Runciman, *Social Science and Political Theory* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1969), ch. 6 ; A. James Gregor, "Political Science and the Uses of Functional Analysis", *American Political Science Review*, 62, 2 (June 1968), pp. 425 - 39 ; Alvin Rabushka, "Functionalism, Comparative Politics and Scientific Explanation : Have We Reached a Dead-End ?", *Government and Opposition* (Summer 1971). Plus, of course, there is Gouldner's book already cited.

a purely instrumental sense. It is not denied that any method of arriving at a collective choice on the basis of a set of individual preferences will involve a value judgment. Nevertheless, as Arrow explains, "given these basic value judgments as to the mode of aggregating individual desires, the economist should investigate those mechanisms for social choice which satisfy the value judgments and should check their consequences to see if still other value judgments might be violated. In particular, he should ask the question whether or not the value judgments are consistent with each other, i.e., do there exist any mechanisms of social choice which will in fact satisfy the value judgments made ?"[21]

The limits of this kind of instrumental analysis are made even clearer by Sen[22] who makes the distinction between "basic" and "non-basic" value judgments. "Basic" judgments are those which apply under all conceivable circumstances, while others are "non-basic". If a particular value judgment is considered basic, and a person would hold it under all conceivable circumstances, then one cannot dispute it on any factual or analytical grounds. If, however, they are "non-basic", i.e., conditional, then a factual or analytical examination can be made about its validity or consistency with other value judgments. Now, most value judgments that we make everyday are "non-basic", and hence are amenable to analysis of this kind. Further, although value judgments may be demonstrated to be non-basic, no value judgment can be *demonstrated* to be basic, since at no point of time can one consider every conceivable circumstance. Consequently, an instrumental analysis of social choice can be conducted for virtually all sets of value judgments one is likely to encounter.

Unfortunately, the tangible results of much of this instrumental analysis of mechanisms of social choice have not been particularly meaningful as elements of a theory of society. The early attempts were concerned with certain paradoxical

21 Kenneth J. Arrow, *Social Choice and Individual Values* (New York : John Wiley, 1963), pp. 4 - 5.

22 Amartya K. Sen, *Collective Choice and Social Welfare* (San Francisco : Holden-Day, 1970), pp. 59 - 64.

situations in choosing according to the simple majority rule. These were later generalised in Arrow's famous general possibility theorem which proved that there was no possible rule by which a set of collectively chosen preference orderings for society could be obtained which satisfied four extremely mild and plausible necessary conditions of logical completeness and consistency, rationality and democracy. This was an undoubtedly significant result, which raised several questions about the validity of trying to find social orderings of preference by any democratic procedure. Later analysts have sought to avoid this rather disastrous result by relaxing several of Arrow's conditions, or by trying to find methods of social *choice* rather than complete *orderings*. Compared to the volume of work that has gone into these attempts, the results are not exhilarating. Indeed, it is very difficult to imagine how the dozens of papers now appearing on subjects such as strategic voting without collusion under binary and democratic group decision procedures, or the necessary and sufficient conditions for Nash-stability of sincere voting situations, would ever add up to a more meaningful general theory of political institutions. Abstracted completely from all considerations of the historical development or the structural context of social institutions, these studies have now reached the stage of a laborious but essentially barren pursuit of logical rigour for its own sake.

These are, of course, attempts to build theoretical formulations on the basis of purely instrumental analysis of certain assumptions about behaviour, institutional arrangements and logical requirements which appear to have a certain broad acceptability. Their explanatory scope is, naturally, severely limited by this very mode of analysis. There are, however, certain other theories which attempt to reach towards a more general theory of social institutions and change while claiming, at the same time, not to transgress the limits of non-cognitive instrumental analysis. One example of this is the theory of constitutional choice proposed by Buchanan and Tullock.[23] This theory assumes a society consisting of

23 James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, *The Calculus of Consent*

rational individuals whose only goal is to maximise individual utilities, and then goes on to deduce from this that the "ideal" constitutional rule of collective decision-making is that of unanimity. In institutional terms, this implies that collective activity should be decentralised so that the costs of bargaining and reaching unanimity are reduced as far as possible. Secondly, by allowing vote-trading in matters of political choice, i.e., allowing bargains and contracts as in market exchange, the attainment of unanimity would be made even easier.

The formulation obviously ignores the entire problem of imperfections or inequality in the basic structure of the initial situation in which contracts are to be made, and when applied in a constitutional, i.e., political, situation involving the state which is not a voluntary organisation but an organisation of power, the absurdity of the theory is patent. Replying to the charge that the rule of unanimity would inevitably tend to preserve the *status quo* in political relations, Buchanan and Tullock defend their formulation by saying that it "provides us with an extremely weak criterion for 'betterness', a criterion that is implicit in the individualist conception of the State itself".[24] Indeed, the apparently harmless 'positivist' conception of the utility-maximising individual can only lead to the rationalisation of an extremely narrow and conservative individualist ideology if the scope of explanation is extended beyond purely instrumental analysis to a more general political theory of institutions and social change. This is, in fact, admitted by Buchanan and Tullock themselves, for at the end of their theoretical exercise they concede that their purpose is to "provide some theoretical determinacy to the working of individualist democracy", and to provide its supporters with "a somewhat stronger theoretical base from which to defend their position against the continuing onslaughts of the proponents of idealist democracy".[25] So much for "value-free" scientific theory !

Perhaps the most significant of recent attempts to reconstruct

(Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 1962).

24 ibid., p. 14.

25 ibid., p. 301.

the liberal macrotheory is John Rawls's much-discussed *A Theory of Justice*.[26] It is doubtful if Rawls would consider his work "positivist" in the sense in which modern bourgeois economists or political scientists define the methodological foundations of their work. It is quite clearly intended to go beyond the limits of merely instrumental analysis, and in fact proposes certain principles which could serve as elements of a normative theory of social institutions and social change. On the other hand, Rawls asserts that his theory is also "a part, perhaps the most significant part, of the theory of rational choice".[27] It would be interesting to discuss how this is so, and how far Rawls succeeds in combining a liberal theory of society with a theory of rational choice.

Rawls's principles of justice in their final form, and the rules of priority between those principles, are :

First Principle : Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all.

Second Principle : Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both : (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle, and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

First Priority Rule (The Priority of Liberty) : The principles of justice are to be ranked in lexical order and therefore liberty can be restricted only for the sake of liberty. There are two cases : (a) a less extensive liberty must strengthen the total system of liberty shared by all ; (b) a less equal liberty must be acceptable to those with the lesser liberty.

Second Priority Rule (The Priority of Justice over Efficiency and Welfare) : The second principle of justice is lexically prior to the principle of efficiency and to that of maximizing the sum of advantages ; and fair opportunity is prior to the difference principle. There are two cases : (a) an inequality of opportunity must enhance the opportunities of those with the lesser opportunity ; (b) an exces-

26 (London : Oxford University Press, 1972).

27 ibid., p. 16.

sive rate of saving must on balance mitigate the burden of those bearing this hardship.

Besides, there is a *general conception* underlying all this, viz.,

> All social primary goods—liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, the bases of self-respect—are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any or all of these goods is to the advantage of the least favoured.[28]

The analytical method by which these principles are derived is particularly instructive. Rawls assumes a hypothetical situation in which all individuals care only for their personal interest (a standard assumption of "methodological individualism"), but negotiate with each other under a "veil of ignorance" in order to arrive at certain commonly agreed principles of institutional arrangement. That is to say, when this negotiation takes place, no one knows what his social or economic position, his special interest or his own personal abilities will be in the new society. Rawls calls this the "original position" in which social institutions are commonly agreed upon through mutual negotiations, i.e., a contract, made in a situation of *uncertainty*. The arrangements agreed upon in this contract will be just, because all structural imperfections, inequalities or special interests are eliminated by the device of the original position.

What decision rules would the individuals follow in making their negotiations in the original position ? In the theory of decision-making under uncertainty, there are two schools, each of which suggests a different decision rule in such situations of uncertainty. One is the *expected utility maximisation rule,* which is most commonly accepted by social scientists working in the new positivist tradition. According to this rule, when an individual is faced with the problem of choosing between several alternative states, he will estimate for each of the outcomes the utility which will accrue to him if that outcome actually transpires, and also assign the probability or expectation that the outcome will occur. He will then choose the alternative which maximises his expected utility.[29] Rawls,

28 ibid., pp. 302 - 3.

29 This is a very loose description of the expected utility maximisation

however, objects to the use of probabilities in the original position, because, he says, there can be no basis for subjective probabilities, or even logical probabilities completely determined by symmetry considerations, if there is absolutely no empirical evidence available regarding possible future states.

Instead, Rawls in his attempt to construct an alternative to the utilitarian theory, adopts the other decision rule, viz., the *maximin principle*. This principle says that an individual must evaluate each alternative in terms of the worst possibility that can occur to him should he choose that alternative. He must then choose the one in which there is the possibility of least harm. Now, many decision theorists have pointed out that the maximin principle often leads to decisions which are highly irrational, because it eliminates alternatives in which there is even the slightest chance of a disastrous outcome, no matter how attractive they may otherwise be. If strictly followed, it means that no one may cross a street if there is even a remote chance that he may be run over by a car. And where the maximin principle yields decisions which seem reasonable, it is found that they are precisely those situations where the maximin principle is more or less equivalent to the expected utility maximisation principle.[30]

Following the maximin principle in the original position, Rawls deduces his principles of justice in which every possible institutional arrangement is evaluated in terms of the interests of the *least advantaged*. He thus arrives at a conception of society which guarantees greatest equal freedom, fair equality of opportunity, and the admissibility of inequality only on the ground that it maximises the prospects of the least advantaged. Applied to present-day society, it would mean substantial

rule. For a more detailed and rigorous discussion, see R. Duncan Luce and Howard Raiffa, *Games and Decisions* (New York : John Wiley, 1967), pp. 12 - 34.

30 See the criticism of Rawls by John C. Harsanyi, "Can the Maximin Principle Serve as a Basis for Morality ? A Critique of John Rawls's Theory", *American Political Science Review*, 69, 2 (June 1975), pp. 594 - 606. Also, Kenneth J. Arrow, "Some Ordinalist-Utilitarian Notes on Rawls' Theory of Justice", *Journal of Philosophy*, 70 (May 1973).

redistribution of wealth and income sufficient to achieve and maintain fair equality of opportunity and to guarantee man's self-respect. In ideological terms, it is a bold attempt to incorporate into the corpus of liberal theory, based upon the assumption of the rational individual pursuing his self-interest, considerations of collective rationality which, in the present context, arise essentially out of the ideology of social democracy.

Nevertheless, the analytical problem of holding on to the concept of a rational calculating individual pursuing his self-interest (the fundamental assumption of possessive individualism), and yet steering clear of the nonegalitarian consequences of utilitarianism, once again proves an impossible task. Rawls seeks to perform this feat by devising a situation where there are self-interested individuals but no particular interests. The objection has been made that this is impossible : you cannot have individuals with a hypothetical knowledge of what it means to have interests and desires without their actually having particular interests and particular desires.[31] Rawls then proceeds to derive his liberal-egalitarian principles of justice by adopting the maximin decision rule—an essentially conservative rule with a strong emphasis on security and risk-aversion. This procedure has led some of Rawls's critics to make the rather paradoxical point that, contrary to appearances, Rawls's man is not bourgeois man and his theory not egalitarian at all. Rather, his choice of the maximin rule suggests profoundly conservative biases which are "anti-capitalist in thrust and to some degree anti-liberal in their spirit".[32] In the end, what Rawls suggests by way of policy is a continual transfer of incomes and resources from the wealthy to the least advantaged classes, enough to satisfy the minimum "human" needs of the poor, but not exceeding a limit where the productivity and efficiency of the economy begin to fall. Needless to say, this is an idealist prescription which ignores the entire

31 Benjamin R. Barber, "Justifying Justice : Problems of Psychology, Measurement, and Politics in Rawls", *American Political Science Review*, 69,2 (June 1975), pp. 663 - 74, at p. 664.

32 ibid., p. 666.

political process through which such decisions must be made in society, and in which all existing concentrations of capital and wealth imply concentrations of political power.[33] The fundamental theoretical problem in the new liberal democratic macrotheory of reconciling a self-seeking individualist conception of man with an avowed concern for a dynamic egalitarian welfare society remains unresolved, despite the methodological innovations of positivist rationality.

The difficulties with the liberal macrotheory have led a number of positivistically oriented political scientists to beat a retreat—a retreat from all considerations of general theory to a devotion to narrowly defined limited problems. Here, it is felt, something can be said about the real world of politics without seriously impairing the tenets of "positivist science". General theories of society try to generalise about huge events which have no identifiable structure. Hence, such theories are impossible to verify or falsify, and are therefore, in a scientific sense, meaningless. So, forget about general theory, concentrate on relatively small and oft-repeated events about which empirical laws can be discovered and formulated as theorems within an axiomatic structure of theory. These assumptions will strictly delimit the theoretical field to a narrow area where events can be precisely described.

Of political scientists, Riker has made the most sustained plea for "positive" political theories of this kind.[34] The example he constantly urges political scientists to emulate is that of the demand-supply price theory in neoclassical microeconomics. Here, he feels, is a well-formulated theory based upon an empirical law (the law of demand) which is universally

33 See in this connection C. B. Macpherson, *Democratic Theory : Essays in Retrieval* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 87 - 94. Also see Brian Barry, *The Liberal Theory of Justice : A Critical Examination of the Principal Doctrines in* A Theory of Justice *by John Rawls* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1973).

34 William H. Riker, "The Future of a Science of Politics", *American Behavioral Scientist* (1977) ; William H. Riker and Peter C. Ordeshook, *An Introduction to Positive Political Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. : Prentice-Hall, 1972).

valid if properly restricted, embedded in a theory of choice, and the conclusions non-obvious, non-trivial and strongly supported by empirical evidence. The restricted applicability of the theory merely to situations of competitive equilibrium is not, according to him, any more disturbing than the fact that the law of falling bodies is restricted to a vacuum.

Riker highlights certain areas in political science in which progress has been made in a similar direction. Three propositions, in particular, seem to represent "more or less embryonic political theories" which could be developed further :

(1) that simple majority elections in single member districts favour the two-party system, a proposition formulated by Maurice Duverger[35] ;

(2) that in two-party systems with a single ideological dimension and a unimodal distribution of voters, the platforms of both parties converge to the ideological position of the median voter, a proposition first formulated by Downs[36] and later developed further by Davis, Hinich, Ordeshook, McKelvey and others[37] ;

and (3) that in situations similar to n-person zero-sum games with side payments, participants create coalitions just as large as they believe will ensure winning and no larger, i.e., the "size principle" formulated by Riker.[38]

What Riker thinks is particularly commendable about these propositions is that they are essentially of the same theoretical structure as price theory : they are based upon certain

35 Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties,* tr. Barbara and Robert North (London : Methuen, 1964), pp. 206 - 28.

36 Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York : Harper & Row, 1957).

37 There are many papers published recently in the field of electoral competition, but the most general statement of the problem is Otto A. Davis, Melvin J. Hinich and Peter C. Ordeshook, "An Expository Development of a Mathematical Model of the Electoral Process", *American Political Science Review* (June 1970).

38 William H. Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions* (New Haven, Conn. : Yale University Press, 1962).

empirical laws about the behaviour of voters, politicians and leaders and are theorems within an axiomatic theory of rational choice. They are also theories about equilibrium social states which go beyond mere psychological observations to the social consequences of interactions between different groups of people with different interests and motives. Finally, they are about small and oft-repeated events which can be precisely described and defined : they do not fall into the trap of overambitious formulations about a general theory of society.

Riker does not show himself to be aware that the theoretical status of the fundamental assumptions behind these propositions about political phenomena, or of those of price theory for that matter, may itself be called into question.[39] What, for instance, is the theoretical basis for assuming that voters are maximising utilities when they vote for a particular candidate (unless this is so in a purely tautological sense), or that voter preferences are unimodally distributed, or that election candidates are interested only in winning.[40] In other words, by which criteria or in what theoretical context do we define concepts such as electoral competition, ideological preferences, party platforms, etc., and accept the primary assumptions which use such concepts ? And once such questions are brought in, there is no escaping the fact that partial theories, in order to be intelligible, must be placed in the context of a general theory. Despite all protestations to the contrary, it is not as though the "positive" theories of politics do not implicitly assume a certain general conception of society when they accept as valid the assumption that ideological preferences are unimodally distributed among the electorate, or that voters vote for the candidate who is ideologically closest to them, or—

39 For one such recent critique, see Krishna Bharadwaj, *Classical Polical Economy and Rise to Dominance of Supply and Demand Theories*, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences R. C. Dutt Lectures on Political Economy 1976 (Calcutta : Orient Longman, 1978).

40 The argument that candidates who act otherwise are rejected by the system only begs the question : what, then, is this system ? What sort of society would produce such an electoral system ?

a fundamental assumption—that they are maximising utilities when they are voting.[41] Certain general propositions about society are implicit in all these assumptions. These propositions are not, however, integrated into a cohesive theory of society, but that is precisely the crisis of liberal theory today. The problem, however, is not solved by running away from such questions.

It is possible, of course, to argue that the method of working upwards from certain well-formulated and well-tested partial propositions towards a more general theory gives us a viable research strategy. The question that would then become relevant concerns the objectives of social scientific enquiry. Certain comments are in order here. The example often cited here of the development of the theories of physical science is apt to be misleading. The physical sciences underwent the most phenomenal developments in a period of history which also experienced far-reaching socio-economic changes in the structure as well as the techniques of production. There was a tremendous social urge for change in which technological development went hand in hand with the development of scientific theory. It is often forgotten that the fundamental assumptions of the bourgeois social sciences — the idea of the self-seeking rational individual, the perfectly competitive market and its equilibrium — were all developed in this historical period of change, most notably in the political theory of Hobbes, Locke and later of the utilitarians, and in the economic theories of Adam Smith, Malthus and Ricardo. The social ideas of medieval Europe underwent fundamental and sweeping changes in this period. From that day, inspite of much analytical window-dressing, the fundamental assumptions about man and society have remained unchanged in liberal social theory.

At the present juncture, a plea for exclusive attention to rigorously formulated partial theories of competitive equilibria, ignoring all considerations of a general theory of social development, implies that we turn our eyes away from the

41 How, for instance, would such models explain the phenomenon of entire villages in India boycotting the elections to register their protest on some local issue? Are the voters here maximising utilities? How?

changes which are taking place today in different parts of the world. The evidence is now massive that these theories, whether about equilibrium prices or equilibrium party strategies, are totally useless in situations which prevail in most countries of the world. Such academic exercises are perhaps feasible in countries where the fundamental coordinates of social interaction remain largely stable, or where, in the absence of any urgent movement for social action, the motivation for social scientific enquiry is literally reduced to the mere advancement of scholarly careers. In the meantime, the liberal theory of society remains a complete shambles.

V

The alternative general theory of society that is available to us today is the theory of historical materialism. That this framework is far better adapted to analyse society in terms of the historical development of social structures and their interrelationships, and particularly to tackle the problems of instability and change, can, it seems to me, hardly be doubted. t is, in fact, a general theoretical framework within which one could look for historic process laws about partial structures, applicable to limited and concrete situations. It must be recognised, of course, that this general theory only attempts to provide a simple and abstracted theoretical system whose specific descriptive implications are necessarily incomplete and for ever corrigible. There exists, therefore, considerable scope for the development of partial historic process laws which provide increasingly powerful explanatory theories, and the consequent enrichment of the general theory as well.[42]

42 Consider this passage from *The German Ideology*: "This manner of approach [the materialist conception of history] is not devoid of premises. It starts out from the real premises and does not abandon them for a moment. Its premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation or fixity, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions. As soon as this active life-process is described, history ceases to be a collection of dead facts, as it is with the empiricists (themselves still abstract),

This point has been expressed quite clearly by Lukacs : "The framework is complete. As a requirement and approach to the general study of society, as an interpretation of society in its globality, in its totality, in view of its structural and cultural, i.e., historical transformation — in these respects, Marxism is really complete. But it also is complete as a method, i.e., as a mode of analysis and as the criterion for establishing the theoretical hierarchy of the constitutive factors of society. Completeness of method, however, does not necessarily imply that one can find in Marx everything in all its specific contents. Instead, these can come to light only through long, patient research, conducted on the basis of the Marxist method, which brings out the global, historical sense of social evolution....What the positivists don't understand is precisely this : facts must be interpreted, thus transcended; the process of abstraction is fundamental for the construction of a general theory. And without a general theory, facts are and remain meaningless."[43]

or an imagined activity of imagined subjects, as with the idealists.

"Where speculation ends, where real life starts, there consequently begins real, positive science, the expounding of the practical activity of the practical process of development of men. Empty phrases about consciousness end, and real knowledge has to take their place. When the reality is described, a self-sufficient philosophy loses its medium of existence. At the best its place can only be taken by a summing-up of the most general results, abstractions which are derived from the observation of the historical development of men. These abstractions in themselves, divorced from real history, have no value whatsoever. They can only serve to facilitate the arrangement of historical material to indicate the sequence of its separate strata. But they by no means afford a recipe or schema, as does philosophy, for neatly trimming the epochs of history. On the contrary, the difficulties begin only when one sets about the examination and arrangement of the material—whether of a past epoch or of the present—and its actual presentation. The removal of these difficulties is governed by premises which certainly cannot be stated here, but which only the study of the actual life-process and the activity of the individuals of each epoch will make evident." Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, op. cit., p. 43.

43 Franco Ferrorotti, "Colloquia con Gyorgy Lukacs", *La Critica Sociologica,* 17 and 18 (1971), pp. 179-84 and 92 - 104, translated

What I have argued here is not simply that historical materialism provides "certain useful insights into social processes" and must, therefore, be taken seriously by social scientists (which is essentially what most of the celebrated "radical sociologists" plead). The argument is that we must work with a general macrotheory of society in order to structure our research at lower levels of generalisation, and that historical materialism is *the* general theory of society at the present juncture in history. This, however, is not the place for a detailed discussion on this matter.

as "An Interview of Georg Lukacs", *Sociological Abstracts*, 20, 1 - 2 (Jan-Apr 1972), pp. i - vi and 20, 3 (May 1972), vii - xvi.

Shibani Kinkar Chaube

Politics among the Social Sciences: A Historical Overview*

The disintegration of political economy

It is customary for anyone writing on political theory to stress, at the first opportunity, the distinction between theory and thought. A thought is an intellectual exercise of a general order encompassing desire, speculation, comment, criticism and explanation. A theory is, more than anything else, a 'logical file of knowledge' with explanatory purpose. While such knowledge may lead to the other variants of thought, its immediate concern is restricted to verifiability.[1] It is with the realisation of this distinction that the birth of the modern social sciences—economics, sociology including anthropology, and political science—is historically associated.

Of course, until the late nineteenth century there was no detailed specialisation and what passed for 'the social science' was the broad discipline of political economy informed by a

* The writer has benefited from discussions with his colleagues at the CSSSC. Among them Professor Amiya Bagchi, Professor Asok Sen, Dr Partha Chatterjee and Dr Sobhanlal Datta Gupta have read the first draft of the paper. The responsibility for any remaining defect belongs to the writer.

1 See Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, *Analytical Economics: Issues and Problems* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 12-14.

sense of history. The phrase 'political economy' appears first in the title of David Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (London, 1817) and it exhibits a deep awareness of the interrelation between the polity and the economy of a society. According to one view, political economy was the product of European mercantilism—the 'managed economies' preceding the industrial revolution—and 'aimed to maximise the profitability of the nation for the use of the monarch'.[2] The name 'classical political economy', however, is given to the theory of the industrial revolution originating from the philosophy of John Locke and flowering in the writings of Adam Smith and David Ricardo. The basic assumption of the 'classics' was that the state was 'the creature of economic power no less than its master'.[3]

One major problem of theory in social sciences, rarely admitted, is the role of philosophy. Philosophy enters social sciences at two stages : (1) building of hypotheses and (2) their verification. The first entry is more easily detectable than the second. Assuming that *complete* knowledge of things can hardly be gathered, social scientists of necessity satisfy themselves with the knowledge 'sufficient' for the construction of a theory. The hypotheses determine the logic of filing such knowledge which, in its turn, depends upon the social scientists' world-view. Verification of the hypotheses in terms of the reality in the social sciences is easily vulnurable to the social scientist's perception of his universe that is composed of human relationships rather than physical objects. When Adam Smith was reflecting the spirit of the industrial revolution by advocating *laissez faire*, he was clearly assuming a primacy of the economy which, to him, could take care of itself without state intervention.[4] His basic assumption, evidently, was the permanence of capitalism.

2 Scott Greer, 'Sociology and Political Science' in Seymour Martin Lipset, ed., *Politics and the Social Sciences* (New Delhi : Wiley Eastern, 1972), pp. 49-64, at p. 51.

3 Eric Roll, *A History of Economic Thought* (London : Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 92.

4 See Greer, op. cit., p. 51.

Greer, a sociologist and critic of 'economic determinism', finds in classical political economy itself the germ of seperation between politics and economics since it was with the classics that 'Economics developed around the notion of the self-regulating system of production, distribution, consumption and saving'.[5] Quite logically, he places Marx in the tradition of the 'classics'. 'Marx was, in his convictions concerning the primacy and autonomy of the economic system, a direct descendant of Adam Smith'.[6] It is to Marx that the crisis of political economy is most frequently ascribed. It is, however, equally ignored that with all its merits classical political economy left severe gaps in its theoretical framework which only Marx could expose.

The principal concepts of economics over nearly the past two hundred years, according to Roll, have been 'private property and enterprise, private exchange, the market economy'.[7] Of these three, the first two are evidently articles of faith, the last an all-purpose theoretical framework. Yet there have been shifts of emphasis. Thus, although Adam Smith wanted an uninterrupted operation of the economic market, he explained its mechanism 'by more fundamental concepts, either relating to human conduct or derived from a view of society and its historical development'.[8] The quest for such a fundamental law based the supply and demand theory of the market on the theory of exchange value which led to the development of two different kinds of labour theories of value in the hands of Ricardo and Marx. Both Ricardo and Marx demonstrated that the surplus value of labour was appropriated by the capitalist owners of industry. Ricardo, like Smith, believed in the permanence of capitalism and the 'iron law of wages' appeared to him rational. Thus, political economy, in its later days, was identified with 'shallow dogmatism by which well-to-do people in the first half of Queen Victoria's reign tried to convince working men that any change

5 ibid., p. 52.
6 ibid.
7 Roll, op. cit., p. 20.
8 ibid., p. 371.

in the distribution of the good things of life was "scientifically impossible."[9] Marx reacted by refuting 'the laws of political economy' as entirely irrational. To him the capitalist mode of surplus appropriation was exploitative, and the capitalist system transient.

The crisis of political economy developed slowly. James Mill's *Elements of Political Economy*, published in 1821, is the 'last expression of unquestioning faith in the Ricardian school'. Soon the vicious capitalist 'trade cycle' set in and the optimism of the classics started to dissolve. In England and France 'the influence of classical political economy makes itself felt in an unsuspected quarter : and, as a reaction, a powerful apologetic strain makes itself felt in the growth of an economic orthodoxy'.[10] It was in the year of continental revolution (1848) that *The Communist Manifesto* was published. In the same year John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* diluted some of the basic premises of classical political economy.

Not until the lapse of half a century after James Mill was capitalist economy restored to another generally accepted theory—the neoclassical economics. The chief innovation of the neoclassical school was the reduction of the entire set of problems of economics—production, distribution, exchange and consumption—to marginal analysis. 'Behind demand is marginal utility, reflected in the demand prices of buyers (the price at which given quantities will be demanded); behind supply is marginal effort and sacrifice, reflected in the supply prices (the prices at which given quantities will be forthcoming)'.[11] The net effect of the innovation was the elimination of the great problem of classical political economy—the problem of distribution—through its reformulation in terms of marginal returns. The 'classics' viewed it as a problem of the social structure.

9 Graham Wallas, 'Human Nature in Politics' (1908), extracted in Heinz Eulau, S. J. Eldersveld and Morris Janowitz, eds., *Political Behavior : A Reader in Theory and Research* (New Delhi : Amerind, 1968), pp. 9-11, at p. 9.

10 Roll, op. cit., p. 141.

11 ibid., pp. 396-97.

The 'neoclassics' reduced it to the problems of individual preferences and bargains. The orientation of the economists thus changed from the society toward the individual.[12] The structural problem was finally eliminated through the reduction of the problem of distribution into the theory of employment.

Crisis of identity of social sciences

The unifying element between political economy and the earlier tradition of social thought was the acknowledgement of the interdependence between individual action and the social structure. The negative aspects of this interdependence were the source of all social criticisms and reform/revolutionary programmes. Marxism was the strongest form of such criticism and programme. 'The most outstanding works of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century emerged from the arguments against Marx'.[13] Neoclassical economics ignored the Marxist challenge by taking the social structure as 'given' and concentrating on the problem of individual choice. Thus emerged 'a subjective theory of value ... only compatible with an individualist view of society' : in some of its more extreme formulations it even became 'atomistic'.[14]

The impact of the emergence of neoclassical economics was a crisis of identity for political science which now became engaged in the study of governmental institutions without regard to social realities. The hiatus between the two offsprings

12 This changing mood of the non-Marxist economists has been appropriately caught by Sweezy in the changing definitions of Economics as the science of investigation into 'the nature and causes of the wealth of nations' (Adam Smith), 'the laws which regulate the distribution of the produce of the earth' (Ricardo), 'man's action in the ordinary business of life' (Marshall), 'price and its causes and corollaries' (Davenport), 'human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses' (Lionel Robbins). See Paul M. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development : Principles of Marxian Political Economy* (London : Dennis Dobson, 1946), p. 12.

13 Stanislav Andreski, *Social Sciences as Sorcery* (London : Andre Deutsch, 1972), p. 144.

14 Roll, op. cit., p. 372.

of political economy was sought to be filled by the new science of sociology,[15] derived from the writings of Herbert Spencer. Even in sociology there appeared a split between the structuralist bias of Emile Durkheim and the emphasis put by Max Weber on human action. Spencer differed from Marx; but the difference rested in Spencer's prognosis of the individuation of society and Marx's emphasis on class contradiction. The social structure was of primary concern to both of them. Durkheim was concerned with the stability of the social structure. Weber, on the other hand, took the social structure as 'given' and concentrated primarily on 'action' with reference to individual psychology.[16]

At the turn of the century, psychology itself was getting a new shape under the impact of the behaviourists who redefined their subject as 'the science of action'—action flowing from motor responses to situational stimuli rather than the unquantifiable faculties of the brain. Though 'behaviourism' in psychology sprang from Pavlov's emphasis on the association of biological acts with situational stimuli, it should be noted that the more sustained influence of psychology on the social sciences in general was that of the individualistic Watsonian variety of behaviourism as modified by the premises of psycho-analysis about 'instinct' as the motivator of action.[17]

There remained, however, one methodological problem: how precisely is individual behaviour quantifiable in psychological terms? In physics, the source of all scientific aspirations of the social sciences, it has been established that the behaviour of light particles is measurable not individually, but in quantum. Pareto, one of the fathers of neo-classical economics, confessed that utility is measurable not cardinally, but ordinally. He thought that a 'scale of preferences' is *sufficient*

15 Andreski, op. cit., p. 144.

16 See Julien Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber* (London: Allen Lane, 1968), p. 88.

17 For summaries of the behavioural and the psychoanalytical schools of psychology, see Robert S. Woodworth, *Contemporary Schools of Psychology* (London: Methuen, 1960) chs.3 and 4; and C.E.M. Joad, *Guide to Modern Thought* (London: Faber & Faber, 1942), p. 3.

for economic analysis. The best result that can be achieved from this kind of psycho-mechanics is, therefore, probabilistic.

Seeking to redirect the attention of political science from institutions to the new developments of psychology, Graham Wallas, father of modern political science, recalled that 'The thinkers of the past, from Plato to Bentham, had each his view of human nature, and he made those views the basis of their speculations on government'.[18] A linkage was thus established by the 'new political science' with the general emphasis of the other social sciences on the psychological aspect of action. Yet the early political behaviourists could not altogether ignore the structural aspects of their themes. Wallas's contemporary in the United States, Arthur Bentley, wrote that political behaviour could be meaningful only when it was organised in 'groups' around definite interests.[19] To the extent that Bentley's behaviour was derived from interests structured around pragmatic groups rather than classes, his theory was 'a convenient dilution of Marxism', but 'hardly ... a substantial alternative'.[20] According to Giovanni Sartori, 'the interest terminology either leads to fuzzy theorizing or acquires its substance from the more or less covert assumption that interest generally is "economic interest."'[21]

The behavioural paradox was exposed when Charles Beard, a second-generation new political scientist, wrote *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the USA* clearly depicting the functional correlation between the federal structure of the USA and the victory of the big moneyholders over smaller proprietors and farmers in the battle over the conversion of the USA from a confederation into a federation. The thesis went against the popular American myth that the federation was a victory of straight-thinking Americans over the narrow-minded

18 Wallas, op. cit., p. 9.

19 Arthur F. Bentley, 'The Process of Government—A Study of Pressures' (1908), extracts in Eulau et. al., op. cit., pp. 14-24, at p. 14.

20 Giovanni Sartori, 'From Sociology of Politics to Political Sociology' in Lipset, op. cit., pp. 66-100, at p. 71.

21 ibid.

ones and was roundly condemned by conservative Americans, at the same time being admired by the leftists. In the 1935 edition of his book, Beard tried to make amends but reminded his critics that the idea that economic difference could give birth to political division was as old as at least Hamilton's *Federalist Paper* No. 10.[22] Beard was rejected by the behaviourists who reduced 'interests' to the rather abstract category of 'attitudes'. L. L. Thurstone, who proposed the term, defined it as 'the sum total of a man's inclinations and feelings, prejudices or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and convictions about a specific topic'. Richard Jensen comments that 'Since the scientific methodology of the day in psychology (and in most sciences) did not stress the analysis of mutual interaction of a number of variables and constraints within a unified system, Thurstone's formulation proved satisfactory to the political scientists'.[23]

There is indeed a very positive value of the behavioural approach which represented 'a break with the social absolutism and moralism of Christian theology'. As LaPiere correctly stresses : 'If the important aspect of any social structure is its functions, it follows that no structure can be judged in terms of structure alone'.[24] The behavioural approach destroyed the 'sanctity' of any established social-political institution and could encourage rational assessment of such institutions. This comment is even more applicable to Freud who did a great deal to destroy the 'holiness' of society.

Here precisely lies the rub. The 'functionalist' theory that developed after World War I, first in anthropology, then in sociology and finally in the other social sciences, rejected the scientific potential of this theory of action. Robert Merton, a functionalist sociologist, condemned the political implications

22 Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the USA* (1913 ; New York : Macmillan, 1961), see particularly pp. vi and 14-15.

23 See Richard Jensen, 'History and the Political Scientist' in Lipset, op. cit., pp. 1-28, at pp. 5-6.

24 Richard LaPiere, *Collective Behavior* (New York : McGraw-Hill, 1938), pp. 55-56.

of Freud's doctrine as anarchistic.[25] Talcott Parsons came out heavily against the behavioural school. Unless behaviour is viewed in terms of interaction, it has little relevance to the social sciences.[26] David Easton, who developed the concept of 'the political system', accorded behaviour the status of 'data' while, at the same time, making a distinction between 'behavioralism' and the 'outmoded behaviorist views'.[27] Against mounting attack the political behaviourists beat a retreat. In 1956, a *Reader in Political Behavior* admitted the importance of the structural and situational variants in the political process which have been of interest to the political scientists.[28] In 1961, Dahl signed the epitaph of the 'behavioral protest' with the kind assurance that its point had been taken in the 'main body of political science'.[29] Two years later a leading behaviouralist called his method a 'persuasion'.[30]

A theory of action

In 1937 a 'voluntaristic theory of action' consistent with the concern for institutional integration was floated by the Harvard sociologist, Talcott Parsons.[31] Combining the positivistic tradition of Vilfredo Pareto and Emile Durkheim and the idealistic tradition of Max Weber, Parsons formulated the action theory in the following form :

1. Behaviour is oriented to the attainment of ends or goals or other anticipated states of affairs. 2. It

25 Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New Delhi : Amerind, 1972), p. 175.

26 Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (Glencoe, Ill. : Free Press, 1951), pp. 544-45.

27 David Easton, *The Political System* (1963 ; Calcutta : Scientific Book Agency, 1972), chapter 8.

28 Eulau *et al.*, op. cit., 'Introduction', p. 3.

29 Robert A. Dahl, 'The Behavioral Approach in Political Science : Epitaph of a Successful Protest Movement', *American Political Science Review*, 59 (1961), pp. 763-72.

30 Heinz Eulau, *The Behavioral Persuasion in Politics* (1963 ; New Delhi : Vakil, Feffer and Simons, 1970).

31 Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* (New Delhi: Amerind, 1974), p. 11.

> takes place in situations. 3. It is normatively [teleologically] regulated. 4. It involves expenditure of energy or effort or motivation.[32]

The robust element in the theory of action was its liberal dynamism. 'As process, action is, in fact, the process of alteration of the conditional elements in the direction of conformity with norms [goals]. Elimination of the normative aspect altogether eliminates the concept of action itself and leads to the radical positivistic position. Elimination of the conditions of the tension from that side, equally eliminates action itself and results in idealistic emanationism.'[33] In just over a decade, however, Parsons became sceptical of its significance. 'A central problem...has been, and is, how to bring theory of this sort closer to the possibilities of guiding of and testing and refinement by technical research, especially with the use of technically refined instruments of observation and of the ordering and empirical analysis of observational data'.[34]

Although in 1938 Einstein spoke of the 'decline in the mechanical view' in physics[35], there was a definite movement towards the same view in the US social sciences. In 1948 Parsons sponsored an interdisciplinary manifesto of some US sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists on a mechanical *general theory of action* which the authors called 'structural-functional'.[36] The relevant data about human action in society being 'highly fragmentary, though by no means absent', the theory of action had of necessity to be ordered into an 'empirical-theoretical' rather than a perfectly theoretical scheme in the sense of classical mechanics. If the purpose of a theory of action was to identify the circumstances in which an action tends to be recurrent, it would not be enough to say that 'in the

32 This handy summary is provided in T. Parsons and E. A. Shils, eds., *Toward a General Theory of Action : Theoretical Foundations for the Social Sciences* (New York : Harper & Row, 1962), p. 53.

33 Parsons, op. cit., p. 732.

34 ibid., Preface to the Second Edition (1949), p. D.

35 A. Einstein and L. Infeld, *The Evolution of Physics* (New York : Simon & Schuster, 1938).

36 Parsons and Shils, op. cit., p. 51 and the Preface.

long run only behavior which is adequately rewarded will tend to persist'.[37] It would be necessary to know the reward structure and its relation to the value and role structure in the society under study. 'This is the most promising path to the extension of the empirical relevance of generalizations from the one structural case to families of structural cases'.[38] It was hoped that the progress of knowledge would ultimately facilitate the growth of a perfect theory. The test of the significance of this theory, meanwhile,

> takes the form of the "functional" relevance of the process. The test is to ask the question, what would be the differential consequences for the system of two or more alternative outcomes of a dynamic process. Such consequences will be found to fit into the terms of maintenance of stability or production of change, of integration or disruption of the system in some sense.[39]

Harald Mey thinks that Parsons moves in the wrong direction when he surrenders the dynamic principle (in *The Structure of Social Action*) of interrelationship between person and society in favour of a 'one-sided imprint-system of society on to person'.[40] In the new scheme of things action becomes 'role' and psychology, particularly Freud's psychoanalysis, acquires a prominent position.[41] Three major 'points of reference' emerge—personality, culture and society (accompanied by the somewhat honorific epithet 'system')—in the new theoretical frame of 'interaction' conditioned by what is called the complementarity of expectations. The system of interaction is analysed in terms of the extent of *conformity* of ego's action with alter's expectations and *vice versa*. 'Interaction makes possible the development of culture on the human level

37 Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (Glencoe, Ill. : Free Press, 1951), p. 20.

38 Parsons and Shils, op. cit., p. 242.

39 Parsons, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

40 Harald Mey, *Field Theory : A Study of its Application in the Social Sciences*, tr. Douglas Scott (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 90.

41 Parsons and Shils, op. cit., p. 52.

and gives culture its significance in the determination of action'.[42] The systems of interaction 'which have become differentiated to a cultural level' form the central theme of Parsons's magnum opus, *The Social System*.[43]

The key concept of *The Social System* is that of the 'division of labour as developed by Adam Smith and his successor utilitarians'. The social system, conceived as 'a system of instrumentally oriented interaction', is a generalised version of the classical case of exchange, where alter's action is a means to the attainment of ego's goal, and vice versa, ego is a means of the attainment of alter's. Exchange in this sense may be confined to a highly *ad hoc* particular transaction, but it may become elaborated into a highly organised and durable system of interaction. As this occurs, ego may become specialised in the process of "production" of means of the attainment of the goals of one or a class of alters. Reciprocally, the attainment of his own goals is enmeshed in expectations of (to him) 'instrumentally significant results of the actions of these alters'.[44] Thus, social action resembles the process of exchange, its motivation resembles choice of the means of gratification of needs. The system of interaction resembles the operation of the market. And society is a generalised form of what Smith meant by 'economy', differentiated according to the principle of division of labour.

A note on functionalism

Social sciences today have grown largely by disowning the philosophical tradition of the past and borrowing from the natural sciences. Thus, the eighteenth century theory of separation of powers was influenced by Newtonian physics, and Herbert Spencer wrote his *Social Statics* in 1851. Max Weber, on the other hand, is regarded as the Galileo of social sciences. The terms 'structure' and 'function' owe their origin to Newtonian mechanics which, for a long time, dominated physics

42 ibid., pp. 15-17.

43 Parsons, op. cit., p. 5.

44 ibid., p. 70.

and biology, and then entered the field of social sciences.

There the theory cropped up first in colonial anthropology through the study of some primitive societies. The biological view of functions as the part which the components of an organism play in supporting it was applied to the analysis of culture of a primitive society. Bronislaw Malinowski defined 'function' as the part an organ plays 'in the social and cultural system'. Radcliffe-Brown defined the function of any recurrent activity as 'the part it plays in the social life as a whole and therefore the contribution it makes to the maintenance of the structural continuity'.[45]

This anthropological version of what the Germans had earlier developed as the organic theory of state/society proved unsuitable for broader sociological purposes, particularly for complex and developed societies. It blurs the distinction between 'interdependence' and 'process'.[46] The quest for such interdependence opened up the 'dynamic' vision of functions. The new concept of stability would imply not that a system was static, but that it was 'going', capable of maintaining its overall integrity by adapting itself to demands for change. In this view, 'function' is the consequence of an action that is relevant to the social structure in terms of the maintenance of its integrity. A social system being a system of interaction among two or more individuals, on a socio-cultural plane, human actions as inputs would produce the changes in the social structure suitable to the needs of its constituents as well as to its own integrity.

The ultimate goal of Parsons's theory of action, it has been stressed, was the 'perfection' of classical mechanics. In fact, the concept of 'system' belongs to the domain of classical mechanics. Robert Merton, Parsons's student, generalised the concept of 'functions'. 'The entire range of sociological data' was subjected, by Merton, to functional analysis.[47] And as the difficulties of such extensive generalisation are only too

45 See Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, p. 76.

46 ibid.

47 ibid., p. 104.

obvious, Merton restricted the scope of his theories to the middle range. Middle-range theories lie between minor hypotheses and unified general theories and Merton claimed that they could fit even the Marxist theoretical framework.[48]

Merton rejected the concept of 'functional requirement' of social systems, as developed by erstwhile sociologists and anthropologists, that tended to be 'tautological or *ex post facto*', being confined to the conditions for 'survival' of a given system, and thus become a conservative doctrine.[49] Instead, he defined 'functions' as 'those observed consequences which make for the adaptation or adjustment of the system'. 'There is also an empirical possibility of *non-functional* consequences, which are simply irrelevant to the system under consideration'.[50]

'The key concept bridging the gap between statics and dynamics in functional theory is', according to Merton, 'that of tension, contradiction, or discrepancy between the component elements of social and cultural structures. Such strains may be dysfunctional for the social system in its then existing form; theory may also be instrumental in leading to changes in that system...when social mechanisms for controlling them are operating effectively, these strains are kept within such bounds as to limit change of the social structure'.[51]

Conversely, the absence of such mechanisms creates conditions for the arrival of a state of *anomie*. Durkheim, author of the term in sociology, meant by it a condition of relative normlessness in society, a property of the cultural and social crisis. Later sociologists like MacIver and Riesman, however, added to this social aspect of the problem a psychological aspect.[52] Merton includes among deviant behaviours, innovations, rebellion and anomie.[53] Deviance

48 ibid., pp. 39-44.

49 ibid., p. 106.

50 ibid., p. 105.

51 ibid., p. 176.

52 ibid., pp. 215-16.

53 ibid., p. 218, and Parsons, *The Social System*, p. 294.

begins 'when the individual has assimilated the cultural emphasis upon the goal without equally internalizing the institutional norms governing ways and means for its attainment'.[54] Anomie, therefore, is the polar opposite of integration, being the 'absence of structured complementarity of the interaction process'.[55]

This new theory of *anomie* serves two purposes. On the one hand, by emphasising that deviant behaviour is as much a product of social structure as conformity, it repudiates the anarchistic hypotheses of Hobbes, Freud and Eric Fromm.[56] On the other hand, by emphasising the psychological aspect of *anomie*, it regards the phenomenon as a personal failure in the form of the contradiction between the cultural goals he adopts and the means he possesses.[57] But the main point about *anomie* is the sociologists' negative perception of it—as normlessness. Its most organised form, revolution, is therefore not a means of structural transformation of society. Stability rather than transition is the 'normal' condition of society. 'As we survey the course of history', Merton writes, 'it seems reasonably clear that all major social structures have in due course been cumulatively modified or abruptly terminated.... But at a given moment of observation, any such social structure may be tolerably well accommodated both to the subjective values of many or most of the population, and to the objective conditions with which we are confronted.' Hence, 'recognising as they must, that social structures are forever changing, functional analysts must nevertheless explore the interdependent and often mutually supporting elements.'[58] In 1951, Talcott Parsons took comfort from the fact that 'Though proclaimed and threatened for a long time this [a communist revolution] has not yet happened in any major industrialized country of the

54 Merton, op. cit., p. 195.

55 Parsons, op. cit., p. 39.

56 Merton, op. cit., p. 175.

57 ibid., p. 211.

58 Merton, op. cit., pp. 94 - 95.

Western world, least of all in the most highly industrialized, the United States'.[59]

If Merton's functional analysis is regarded as an extended version of Parsons's action theory, two significant properties of functionalism emerge. In the first place, Parsons's general theory has restored, to some extent, the interrelation of the sciences of society lost since the break-up of political economy. In the second place, it has brought back the social structure into the frame of the action theory. This has been called 'sociological imperialism' in which 'all economic, political and psychological realities are subsumed under a tautological category called "interactions".'[60] The not-so-shockingly original statement that 'This fundamental relationship between need-dispositions of the personality, role-expectations of the social system and internalized-institutionalized value-patterns of the culture, is the fundamental nodal point of the *organization* of system of action',[61] which is apparently the substance of the action theory, will vindicate the judgement vis-a-vis the initial premise that 'a social system is the mode of organization of action elements relative to the persistence or ordered processes of change of the interactive patterns of a plurality of individual actions'.[62] Stronger comments have come from liberal sociologists like Stanislav Andreski, who has called it 'promiscuous crypto-conservative', and has added : 'Not surprisingly, as far as I know, no dictator has yet banned the books of the arch-priest of euphemistic sociology, although in most communist countries even Keynes is forbidden'.[63]

Politics as a synthetic science

The functionalists' achievement rests in a new kind of integration of the sciences of society, lost since the decay of political

59 Parsons, op. cit., p. 520.

60 Irving Louis Horowitz, *Foundations of Political Sociology* (New York : Harper and Row, 1972), p. xvii.

61 Parsons, op. cit., p. 540.

62 ibid., p. 24.

63 Andreski, op. cit., p. 153.

economy, on an interdisciplinary plane.[64] The action theory was ordered into these theoretical subsystems : (a) psychology, corresponding to personality, (b) anthropology, corresponding to culture (latent-pattern maintenance and tension-management), (c) economics, sociology and political science corresponding to the social system. In a narrow sense these last three are regarded as the social sciences.[65]

Parsons, however, disfavours the reduction of economic theory in terms of the theory of rational choice as, on the one hand, it is only partly relevant to the explanation of the economic process which is the 'allocation of facilities', and, on the other, is 'within certain limits psychological'. Economics 'as a *social* science is concerned with the phenomena of rationnal decisions within an institutionalized system of exchange relationships'. This being, 'within the theory of action,...a highly distinctive complex...the claim of economic theory to autonomy with respect to it seems quite justified'.[66] Economics, as a social science, is concerned with the *adaptive* functions of society.

64 It may be pertinent here to draw a distinction between the 'interdisciplinary' and the 'multi-disciplinary' method. The multi-disciplinary approach sprang from the acknowledgement of the autonomy of the disciplines and the need for marshalling of the knowledge of *different* disciplines in addressing particular problems. The 'interdisciplinary' approach addresses different disciplines from one central point of reference : the theory of action.

65 Parsons, op. cit., pp. 545-52. See also Talcott Parsons and Neil J. Smelser, *Economy and Society : A Study in the Integration of Economics and Social Theory* (Glencoe, Ill. : Free Press, 1956), pp. 52-3.

66 Parsons, op. cit., pp. 548-50. Autonomy notwithstanding, Economics was hardly accorded the status of a special theory (see Parsons and Smelser, op. cit., p. 28). Parsons chose to enter directly into the internal controversies of economics while rejecting the psychological atomism of the extremist utilitarians, but approving of the more moderate views of Pareto and Hicks. He stressed that 'the goal of the economy is not simply the production of income for the utility of an aggregate of individuals. It is the maximization of production relative to the whole complex of institutionalized value-systems and functions of the society and its sub-systems'. Parsons and Smelser, op. cit,, pp. 22-23.

The traditional concern of sociology is institutionalisation and integration. Parsons is a sociologist ; he only contributes a dynamic element to this problem of institutional integration. To him, sociological theory is 'that aspect of the theory of social systems which is concerned with the phenomena of institutionalization of patterns of value-orientation in the social system, with the conditions of that institutionalization, and of changes in the patterns, with conditions of conformity with and deviance from a set of such patterns and with motivational processes in so far as they are involved in all of these'. No doubt, sociology is at the centre of the *general theory* of the social system.[67]

The case of political science, according to the authors of the manifesto, was 'somewhat different', because of its traditional focus on the philosophical and ethical problems of government. Government was a legitimate field of study. 'But, like economics, its special relevance does not emerge until degrees of differentiation on both theoretical and empirical levels beyond those reached in the...general statement have appeared'. And as 'the processes and structure of government necessarily have highly diffuse functions in social systems', political science was more likely to draw from 'a much wider range of the components of the general theory of action and to find its distinctiveness in the way it combines these components in relation to its special empirical interests, rather than in the technical elaboration of a narrow and sharply focused segment of the theory of action, as is the case with economics'.[68]

Subsequently, Parsons administered a stronger reprimand to political science which he called a 'synthetic science in the social system field, not one built about a distinctively *analytical* conceptual scheme, that is, a strictly limited set of variables'. The claim of political theory to analytical status was justified by the only formula that it should be treated as a theory of power. But power, in the *political* sense, being 'inherently diffuse as contrasted with the specificity of economic power...

67 Parsons, op. cit., p. 552. See also the Preface, p. vii.

68 Parsons and Shils, op. cit., p. 29.

a theory of political power must in the nature of the case take into account, *as variables*, most of the variables of the social system'.[69]

Parsons's elaboration of the distinction between political power and economic power is crucial for the later development of political science toward an analytical status. Power is a relational phenomenon, being one's capacity in society to control the action of others, and can be split broadly into economic and political power. The differences between these two types of power are summed up in this way :

> While the structure of economic power is ... lineally quantitative, simply a matter of *more and less*, that of political power is hierarchical; that is, of *higher and lower* levels. The greater power is power *over* the lesser, not morely *more* power *than* the lesser. Political power is relational, not merely in reference, that is, to *n* political exchange partners, but in direct significance.[70]

Obviously, Parsons's view of economic power is based on the neoclassical analysis; it relates to a competitive market and not production relations where power would mean the power of the employer over the employee. Parsons did not take long to revise the hierarchical view of political power. By that time, myth-making in social science had developed as a sophisticated creed obfuscating the reality of social hierarchy.

Politics and Sociology

The obfuscation of social hierarchy had been contingent to the great ideological battle against Marxism. Vilfredo Pareto, one of the founders of neo-classical economics, substituted the concept of the 'ruling class' by that of the 'elite'. This polite description could not hide the concentration of economic and political power in societies based on private ownership. Max Weber, therefore, went a step ahead; he sought to separate

69 Parsons, op. cit., pp. 550-51. Note the difference of emphasis on the status of political science : 'somewhat different' (in Parsons and Shils, op. cit.,) and 'wholly different' in (Parsons, op. cit.).

70 ibid., p. 126.

political and economic power. 'Part of Weber's work may be seen as an attempt to "round out" Marx's economic materialism by political and military materialism. The Weberian approach to political structures closely parallels the Marxian approach to economic structures. Marx constructed economic periods and located major economic classes in them; he related the several social and political factors to the means of production. In political matters Weber looks for the disposition over weapons and over means of administration'.[71] To the extent that Weber balanced 'economic determinism' by the autonomy of politics, both the economy and the polity were subsumed in a new sociological imperialism represented by that omnibus term 'interaction'.

Politics was thus given a sociological basis by Max Weber who defined the state as an 'infinity of diffuse and discrete human actions, both active and passive, factually and legally regulated relationships, partly unique and partly recurrent in character, all bound together by an idea, namely the belief in the actual or normative validity of the rules and of the authority relationships of some human beings toward others'.[72] But he acknowledged the role of power as the state successfully 'claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a definite territory'.[73] The initial impact of Weber on political theory was the sociological reaction that politics was a theory of power.[74]

There were, however, two problems with the power approach. One was its discomforting association with the nineteenth

71 H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 'Introduction' in Gerth and Mills, eds. and trs., *From Max Weber : Essays in Sociology* (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 47.

72 E. A. Shils and H.A. Finch, eds., *Max Weber on the Methodology of Social Sciences* (Glencoe, Ill. : Free Press, 1949), p. 99.

73 Max Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', in Gerth and Mills, op. cit., p. 78.

74 ibid. Also see George E. G. Catlin, *A Study of the Principles of Politics* (New York : Macmillan, 1930) ; *Systematic Politics* (London : George Allen & Unwin, 1962) ; and H. D. Lasswell, *Politics : Who Gets What, When, How* (New York : McGraw-Hill, 1936).

century force theory, if not with the Marxist theory.[75] David Easton, a functionalist, gave vent to this suspicion when he criticised Lasswell's volume on Politics :

> ... it is devoted to exploring the sources of power held by a political elite. Its focus, therefore, is not on the way values are distributed but on the way the elite, which has power, uses it to acquire the desirable things of society, such as safety, income, deference....
>
> It centres only on one problem, however crucial it is today : the tendency in mass societies for power to concentrate in the hands of a minority. It assumes that this oligarchic tendency in the political system eternally prevents the diffusion of power beyond the governing group.[76]

V. O. Key asserts that the 'characteristic of democratic orders, or at least of the American democratic order, is a wide dispersion of power.... Moreover, the power structure tends to be segmented : authority over one question rests here and over another there.'[77] 'As long as we adhere to the notion that power is an empirically separable variable of social stratification', writes Nelson Polsby, 'we must reject these as improper, and search for specific, separate empirical indices by which power can be measured.'[78]

Here arises the second problem. Is power empirically separable from the network of social relations? Parsons and his structural-functionalist colleagues have argued that *political* power, being concerned with the overall problem of order, is not isolable. The only way out of the logical paradox

75 Catlin, of course, emphasised that this analysis is 'more fundamental than the Marxist', in as much as it assigns a certain *primacy* to social control. *Systematic Politics*, p. 79.

76 David Easton, *The Political System : An Inquiry into the State of Political Science* (1953 ; Calcutta : Scientific Book Agency, 1971), pp. 120-21.

77 V. O. Key, *Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups* (New York : Crowell-Collier, 1945), pp. 4-5.

78 Nelson Polsby, *Community Power and Political Theory* (New Haven Conn. : Yale University Press, 1963), p. 104.

was to eliminate the problem of order from the frame of analysis. It is within the structural-functional framework that David Easton builds up the concept of the 'political system' by identifying 'the significant political variables' and describing their mutual relations[79] only to reassert the autonomy that Parsons and his colleagues denied political science.

An analytical theory of politics

Easton shifts the focus on 'policy' for the society and defines political science as the science of 'the authoritative allocation of values as it is influenced by the distribution and use of power'.[80] Easton accepts Parsons's stricture that political power is a relational phenomenon and, therefore, analytically not separable. But, 'The interest of political science in power is only educed from its preoccupation with how policy is made and executed'.[81] A policy is authoritative only when the people to whom it is intended to apply, or who are affected by it, consider that they must or ought to obey it. Easton argues that this is a psychological rather than moral explanation[82], and thus shifts the attention of political science from power to consensus, from the elite to the people.

Secondly, he proposes the possibility of a quantitative approach to politics. 'Authoritative allocation of values' sounds like 'allocation of resources' in economics. 'It indicates that even where the state ... does not exist (as among nomadic tribes or non-literate societies), as long as something we call social policy appears, then there are data for political research. The concept of the state as here interpreted refers to special political circumstances ; the idea of authoritative allocation of values characterizes a function or web of interrelated activity present in every viable society.'[83] The specific terms of this quantitative approach were spelt out some years later : 'The

79 Easton, op. cit., p. 61.
80 ibid., p. 143.
81 ibid., p. 144.
82 ibid., p. 132.
83 ibid., p. 143.

allocation of values for a society and the relative frequency of compliance with them are the *essential variables* of political life.'[84]

Easton does not rule out power, he only relegates it to a secondary position. His input-output model is, therefore, more tentative. Posing the central question of a functionalist —'How do political systems manage to persist in a world of both stability and change?'—Easton begins by defining the political system as a 'system of behavior imbedded in an environment to the influences of which the political system itself is exposed and in turn reacts'.[85] A transaction or exchange between systems being the gist of the input-output relation, the behaviours of persons in the periphery of the political system are regarded as inputs and 'the decisions and actions of authorities' within the political system as outputs.[86] 'Outputs not only help to influence events in the broader society of which the system is a part, but also, in doing so, they help to determine each succeeding round of inputs that finds its way into the political system. There is a *feedback loop* the identification of which helps us to explain the processes through which the system can cope with the stress.'[87]

Of all social scientists, Easton must be given the highest credit for bringing politial theory to the proximity of economic theory in analytical status. If power could not be separated from the ruling class/elite, it would be a constant and evade analysis. But if power could be fused into authority and order into consent, politics could be analysed in terms of input and output.

84 David Easton, 'Categories of Systems Analysis of Politics' in David Easton, ed., *Varieties of Political Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. : Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 143-54, at p. 148. This essay summarises Easton, *A Framework of Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. : Prentice-Hall, 1965), and is a revised version of Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York : John Wiley, 1965).

85 ibid., pp. 143-44.

86 ibid., pp. 150-51.

87 ibid., p. 152. Easton owes part of this theoretical sophistication to Deutsch's communications theory of politics. Karl W. Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government* (New York : Free Press, 1963).

From this base one logical step forward was the market theory of politics of which Buchanan's individualistic model is illustrative. The model is not necessarily interest-centric. 'As a logical theory of political behavior the model is equally applicable to a world of altruists and egoists, even to a world of saints'.[88] The only theoretical requirement is that the individual goals are distinguishable. Such a model would naturally rule out any 'transcendental public interest'. Public interest as such is worked out by means of a distinction between the day-to-day decision-making and the 'constitutional' decision-making, 'where individuals may be thought of as participating in choices on the set of rules under which subsequent day-to-day decisions are to be made'. This second set of decisions is important. 'The essential element here is the recognition that self-interest at the level of decisions on rules or on institutions that are expected to remain in effect for long time periods, imposes on the individual an attitude and a behavior pattern that are not identical with those which the same self-interest would dictate in particular choices on specific issues.'[89] Buchanan suggests that, while the zero-sum 'pure-conflict' model of the mathematical game theory is applicable to day-to-day politics, the positive-sum model applies to constitutional choice involving the growth of consensus. The model is thus essentially based on the assumption of the voluntary nature of political association. It would virtually rule out power as participation in the "great game of politics" must, on balance, be mutually beneficial to all parties, or else revolution would ensue.

Power and political theory

Easton, it appears, was *partly* able to persuade the patriarch

88 James M. Buchanan, 'An Individualistic Theory of Political Process' in Easton, op. cit., pp. 25-27, at p. 28. For a summary of the development of the market bargaining theory, see Ithiel de Sola Pool, 'The Public and the Policy' in Ithiel de Sola Pool, ed., *Contemporary Political Science : Toward Empirical Theory* (New York : McGraw-Hill, 1967), pp. 22-52, at p. 37.

89 ibid., p. 29.

of functionalism to grant political science the status of an analytical science. His sociological commitment to integration militated against the purely individualistic assumptions of the market theory. In the volume edited by Easton, Parsons, therefore, outlined a scheme for analytical separation of political power.[90] Starting from the 'key orienting concept' of polity as 'a primary functional subsystem of society, strictly parallel in theoretical status to the economy', concerned, not conceretely, but analytically, with all action in 'collective pursuit of collective goal'.[91] Parsons redefined power as 'a medium of controlling action which, *under certain conditions*, is exchangeable for other such media operating in contexts from which power is excluded' (for example, money and influence).[92] Parsons insisted that the polity, like the economy, is more than a network of simple exchange relationships. As he had analysed the economy in terms of input-output analysis, and as Easton had done it in political theory a little earlier, Parsons applied the input-output model for an analysis of the polity.

Parsons rejects the common (individualistic) belief that democratic association is inherently egalitarian and the power system is inherently hierarchical. Parsons himself subscribed to the hierarchical view of power earlier. In the differentiated context now, he modifies his old stand. For a democratic hierarchy, even if bureaucratically structured, is ultimately based on franchise ; and 'franchise is directly a form of power'. The uneven distribution of authority to make binding decisions, in such systems, is explained by the delegation of authority to the leadership in view of the increasing scale, complexity and urgency of collective business. Power 'becomes necessary in giving representatives power vis-a-vis their constituencies—especially the minorities in them who are yet bound by their

90 Talcott Parsons, 'The Political Aspect of Social Structure and Process' in Easton, ed., *Varieties of Political Theory*, pp. 71-112.

91 ibid., pp. 71-72.

92 ibid., pp. 85-88. Emphasis added in order to show the qualified nature of Parsons's sanction.

representatives' votes—and yet giving the outcome of legislative votes binding character for the collectivity as a whole'.

> Legitimation...functions to define what political organization is for and, hence, to define the nature and scope of agencies—collectivities and roles—which perform political functions. Correlative with these structural definitions are both authority and implementation of legitimate responsibilities and access to power and the conditions of its use. In a sufficiently differentiated polity we call this the *constitutional system*—with private as well as public collectivities having constitutions more or less formally specified. Where the political aspect of the social structure is sufficiently differentiated from the others, *all* authority is "rational-legal" in Weber's sense.[93]

The key word in the functionalist approach to the social structure is, therefore, differentiation. Vis-a-vis the individual, it distinguishes his achievement from his ascriptive status. 'The ascription-achievement variable defines the major axis of differentiation of actors in a social system in their capacity as actors whose own orientations are to be analysed'.[94] In politics, 'Differentiation is marked by the development of legitimised procedures for expressing opposition to current leadership without impugning one's loyalty to the system'.[95]

Such a view of differentiation may be illustrative of the tautology of which Parsons has been notoriously accused of. Opposition to current leadership is differentiated from opposition to the system. Yet Parsons himself acknowledges that there may be 'vested interests' in a society resistant to change.[96] The original model of differentiation presented by Herbert Spencer, a century ago, implied an increasing rate of individuation through which society would achieve a new type of integration. One of the legacies of Spencer was the growth

93 ibid., p. 82.

94 Parsons, *The Social System*, p. 96.

95 Parsons, 'The Political Aspect', p. 85.

96 Parsons, *The Social System*, p. 491.

of the pluralist doctrine now popular among some US political scientists like Dahl.[97] Parsons is sceptical of its individualistic implications. 'It may very well be ... that the recent emphasis on the pluralism of expressive orientations is related to a phase of development of our own culture and of the social sciences within it, and will prove in the long run to be untenable.'[98]

Power thus remains at the centre of political science since the classical period, and Almond takes pride in this heritage.[99] Yet, Almond criticises classical Greek political theory for its stress on 'the interrelations of social stratification with the political system as the basis of political classification and political change, leaving the internal operation of the political process in a relatively unelaborated form'.[100] And Sartori spells out the criticism of Lipset : 'As long as we take for granted that changes are *reflected in*, not *produced by*, the political system itself, we necessarily neglect to ask to what extent conflicts and changes may either be channeled, deflected, and repressed or, vice versa, activated and reinforced, precisely by the operations and operators of the political system.'[101]

Almond provides us with an interesting history of the functional approach in which he shows that it was only in the context of the democratic revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly the American revolution, that political theory arrived near the analytical separation of the social structure and the political process as well as of the structure and the function.[102] This gives an insight into the process of political theorising itself. It is only in the context of *full* democracy that one can sensibly assume the social/

97 See Robert A. Dahl, *Pluralist Democracy in the United States : Conflict and Consent* (1967 ; Calcutta : Scientific Book Agency, 1969), particularly pp. 3-24.

98 Parsons, op. cit., p. 501.

99 Gabriel A. Almond, 'Political Theory and Political Science' in Ithiel de Sola Pool, op. cit., pp. 1-21, at p. 18.

100 ibid., p. 5.

101 Giovanni Sartori, 'From Sociology of Politics to Political Sociology' in Lipset, ed. *Politics and the Social Sciences*, pp. 65-100, at p. 89.

102 Almond, op. cit., p. 6.

political structure to be products of voluntary action — 'full democracy' encompassing the polity, the economy and the society. Alternatively, functional analysis gets its relevance in a period of transition when an old order is making way for a new one. The ability of eighteenth century Europe to disaggregate the structure and the function was first detected by Marx in the concept of the autonomy of 'civil society' (of the upcoming bourgeoisie) from the control of the feudal state.[103] Later, in the heyday of capitalism, when the bourgeoisie attained hegemony over civil society as well as control over state power, function and the structure were reintegrated. For very obvious reasons, the modern functionalist, in pleading for the autonomy of politics, refuses to view power as springing from the social/economic stratification system.[104] For the same reason, Talcott Parsons considers as innocent a book as Lipset's *Political Man* as the work of an 'undogmatic' Marxist.[105]

The problem of change

Almond's school of political development in fact grows out of the theory of separation of powers and reaches into the sociological and communication theory for useful conceptual tools and explicitly differs from the 'systems' approach of Easton and Deutsch that starts from the other end.[106] It turns Easton's conception of authority into 'legitimate use of compulsion' in order to restore a broadened view of Weber's conception of force, and defines the political system as 'the legitimate, order-maintaining or transforming system in the society'.[107]

103 Karl Marx, 'The German Ideology', Chapter I, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow : Progress Publishers, 1973), Vol. 1, p. 76.

104 See Robert A. Dahl, 'The Evaluation of Political Systems' in Ithiel de Sola Pool, op. cit., pp. 166-91, at pp. 188-89.

105 See Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man : The Social Bases of Politics* (New York : Doubleday, Anchor edition, 1963), p. xxi.

106 Almond and Powell, op. cit., p. 12, fn. 10.

107 Gabriel A. Almond, 'Introduction : A Functional Approach to Comparative Politics' in Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman, eds., *The Politics of Developing Areas* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 3-64, at p. 6.

It presents a comparative, rather than historical, scheme of classification of political systems between two broad categories : the intermittent and the differentiated. The actual categories are, however, three : (1) the primitive systems with intermittent political structures, (2) the traditional systems with differentiated governmental-political structures, and (3) the modern systems with differentiated political infrastructures.[108]

There are three different sources of this classification. The 'intermittent', primitive systems with 'no differentiated political roles and no specialized political structure'[109] are derived from anthropology, while the 'traditional' systems are derived from Weber, and the term 'modern' is preferred to Weber's 'rational-legal' in keeping with the spirit of value-free science.[110] Since its application first in communications research, the term 'modern' has acquired a special value in the social sciences in general and political science in particular.[111] The modern political systems were described as 'those in which there is a specialized political structure consisting of associational interest groups, political parties, and media of communication.' The emergence of a secularised political culture and an awareness of the role of government in changing human conditions are also common features.[112] The political participant develops a set of specific attitudes toward the political input structures, such as parties and interest groups, and toward the role he can play in these structures. In Britain, the Scandinavian countries, the USA and Switzerland, a very large proportion does reach this level. The attitude, it was hoped, was likely to spread with the spread of literacy.[113]

108 For details, see Almond and Powell, op. cit., p. 217.
109 ibid., p. 43.
110 ibid., pp. 44-47.
111 Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (Glencoe, Ill. : Free Press, 1958) ; Lucien W. Pye, ed., *Communications and Political Development* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1963) ; David E. Apter, *Political Modernization* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1965). For a critique of the theory of modernization in Western social sciences, see *Daedalus*, Winter 1973.
112 Almond and Powell, op. cit., p. 255.
113 ibid., pp. 58-59.

This faith in literacy, a heritage of the European Enlightenment, emphasised repeatedly by John Stuart Mill and the liberal democratic thinkers after him, is, however, contrasted with the Enlightenment theory of evolution. 'The enlightenment theory of progress towards democracy and the rule of law is giving way to a multilinear theory of political development leading us through a break through the historical and cultural parochialism of the field', writes Almond. 'And we are on the eve of a search for rational-choice theories of political growth—an approach which may make political theory more relevant to public policy.'[114] This pithy statement about the new directions of political science sums up the functionalist conviction, shared by Easton too, that social/political systems tend to persist through adjustment and adaptation. As historical changes are ruled out, social sciences today shed their earlier critical attitude to society and look for a 'rational choice' which is the best bargain in a given situation. By prescribing 'rational choice' in a systematic order, social sciences can evidently hope for 'relevance' to the makers of public policy who are also the funding authorities for the huge amount of empirical research going on in the social sciences today.

A comparison of this faith in the spread of literacy, a heritage of the Enlightenment, with the functionalists' disavowal of the enlightenment theory of evolution and progress may be slightly puzzling unless one notes the functionalist hypothesis that 'the earlier historical experience of political systems as well as the environmental challenges to which they are currently exposed affect their propensities to change and set limits on the ways in which they can change'.[115] In other words, change is chiefly a motivational problem of the actors, and *not inherent* in a social structure.[116] Consequently, 'a

114 Gabriel A. Almond's presidential speech at the American Political Science Conference, 1966, 'Political Theory and Political Science' in Ithiel de Sola Pool, ed., op. cit., pp. 1-21, at pp. 14-15.

115 ibid., p. 215 ; cf. Parsons, *The Social System*, p. 491.

116 Parsons, *The Social System*. op. cit., p. 493.

general theory of the process of change of social systems is not possible in the present state of knowledge'.[117]

It is now possible to summarise the functionalist theory of action. A social/political system is made of patterned interaction systems and, therefore, *normally* tends to persist. As action is primarily based on motivations and secondarily on the role-expectation of the system, and as motivation is primarily a function of cognition, modern social sciences can at best look forward to a probabilistic theory of social/political change depending upon chance and exogenous factors.

The social sciences and dialectics

Speaking of the ancient Greeks who tried to explain 'the why' of things by logical order, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, a Harvard economist, observes that 'Had Logic by chance been applied first to constructing a theoretical science in a different field from geometry—where things neither move nor change, but merely are—the war now fought between logical positivists and realists would have very likely exploded soon after the first *Elements* [*of Geometry* by Euclid]'.[118] In his survey of the relative development of the natural and the social sciences, Georgescu-Roegen notes that Geometry fitted in the frame of positivistic logic excellently, for it had only one—and a quality-free attribute—length. Mechanics was the next chapter in physics to become a complete theoretical system, and he cautions us that 'what mechanics understands by "space" and "time" is not *location* and *chronological time*, but *indifferent distance* and *indifferent time interval* ... The space, the time, and the mass of mechanics all have in modern terminology, a *cardinal* measure'. Consequently, 'even the spectacular progress achieved through theoretical mechanics is confined to a phenomenal domain where the most transparent types of measure suffice'. The situation changed with the advent of thermodynamics when *noncardinal* variables like temperature and chronological time entered the theoretical

117 ibid., p. 486.

118 Georgescu-Roegen, op. cit., p. 10.

texture.[119] Even mechanics is still 'struggling with patchy knowledge not unified into a single theoretical body' for most variables in material structure 'are in essence quantified qualities.'[120] Quantification is possible only when a standardised measure of quality is evolved by the human community concerned. Otherwise, the craze for cardinal measures, developed around self-identical notions, degenerates into what he calls the 'arithmomorphic superstition'. Hence the conclusion that 'thinking, even mathematical thinking, would come to a standstill if confined to self-identical notions.'[121]

What applies to the natural sciences, applies more effectively to the social sciences based largely on metaphorical parallels with the natural sciences. To repeat the commonplace : man is more than a machine; he is a living, thinking and creative being. This poses two kinds of problems for the social sciences : first, the standardisation of the norms of human action, and second, the measurement of his special faculties. When the functionalists speak of 'standardized values', they are liable to the mistake, deliberate or otherwise, of confusing it with dominant values which frequently emanate from the holders of power in a society. The concept of 'consensus' is equally liable to confusion if the market situation is considered in isolation from the relations of production which ultimately govern the market.

Georgescu-Roegen regrets that 'today there is little, if any, inducement to study change unless it concerns a measurable attribute',[122] even though qualitative change poses the greatest challenge to scientific activity. Even in physics, which for long ignored qualitative change, thermodynamics seeks to reestablish the theory of generation and annihilation of atoms, implying that change is not only locomotion.[123] Qualitative changes have never ceased to be the central theme of the life sciences.

119 ibid., p. 48.

120 ibid., p. 49.

121 ibid., p. 44.

122 ibid., p. 42.

123 ibid., p. 30.

But social scientists, misled by the success of physics, have tended to believe that science cannot study change. The conclusion is inescapable that 'qualitative change eludes arithmomorphic schematization.'[124] It is here that dialectical concepts gain relevance in the sphere of the social sciences.

Dialectics is a logical method like positivism, and it was developed to a high degree, at the philosophical level, by Hegel. Positivism tends to regard dialectics as loose thought, even though dialectics does not deny the usefulness of the positivist method.[125] Like positivism, dialectics comes in science only after its dissociation from the world of ideas. Science can only be materialistic and on this assumption there is hardly any difference between dialectics and scientific positivism. It is on the nature of matter, on the other hand, that dialectics and positivism differ. Society being included in this broad category of 'matter', social sciences reflect the difference between the two approaches.

Marxism

Inspite of sharp differences among social scientists, dialectical social science is now standardised as Marxism. Very appropriately, therefore, the positivist social sciences are at war with Marxism. Talcott Parsons notes it as 'a striking fact' that *general* orientations in the field of social theory 'have, in recent years, tended increasingly to polarize between a nondogmatic and non-political "Marxian" position and one which in the broadest sense may be called one or another version of the theory of action.'[126] And Lipset, whom Parsons considers to be one of the nondogmatic Marxists, interprets this differentiation as follows :

> What Parsons believes, of course, is that sociological analysis may be divided between those who place a

124 ibid., p. 31.

125 ibid., pp. 27-28.

126 Talcott Parsons, 'The Point of View of the Author', in Max Black, ed., *The Social Theories of Talcott Parsons* (Englewood-Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, 1961), p. 362.

> primary stress on values as the key source of action, and those who emphasize the significance of interests. The former orientation, stemming from Max Weber, is pitted against the latter, which flows from Karl Marx.[127]

Whereas the distinction made by Parsons is no doubt critical, its reduction into a conflict between value and interest may appear somewhat simplistic. Parsons himself acknowledged the 'massive structuring of interests' in society, noted by Marx, as 'real'.[128] Parsons's (and the action theorists') emphasis on goal-gratification as the primary motivational factor may include interest-orientation. The issue of interest pertains to the early debate of the behaviourists. Parsons substituted the entire concept of behaviour by the concept of role.

Nor does the difference stand on the voluntaristic bias of Parsons's action theory and the allegedly 'deterministic' character of the Marxian theory. In the whole strand of sociological thought from Weber to Parsons, the social structure is either taken as 'given' (as in the case of Weber) or enters the theoretical frame of action as a conditioner (as in Parsons). The allegation that Marx accorded a deterministic primacy to social structure is, on the other hand, misconceived. Marx unmistakably asserted that the social structure is the result of human action. Criticising *'all* hitherto existing materialism', Marx wrote in 1845 that 'The materialistic doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator needs educating.'[129]

In 1859 Marx wrote that, in the social production of their life, 'men enter' into definite relations. Yet such relations

127 Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man : The Social Bases of Politics*, p. xx.

128 Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory* (1948; Indian edition, New Delhi : Light and Life, 1975), p. 323.

129 Karl Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach', no. III, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I (Moscow : Progress Publishers, 1973), p. 13.

are 'indispensable and independent of their will.[130] Social relations are 'given' in the sense that they place individuals in respective positions and constrain their freedom to operate. Yet, it is for men 'to change'[131] such relations, and the entire communist *movement* is a programme for action along that line. Here arises the first of the basic differences between functionalism and the Marxist *theory* of action. The functionalist assumption that men generally conform to the existing norms makes it possible to circumscribe the scope of action and consequently to analyse it with the pretensions of mechanics. In Marxism, action, being fundamentally oriented to changing the given social system, can, on the other hand, be hardly predicted within the same mechanistic framework of precision.

Marx admitted this limitation. 'In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological—forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge a period of such transformation by its own consciousness ; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production.'[132]

This leads to the other difference between the Marxist and the Western social sciences of today. It lies in their respective *views* of the social structure. In the Marxist view, there is a fundamental contradiction within the system of production relations that constitute the *ultimate basis* of social relations and leads to its crisis, if not collapse. 'The production relation', a mainstay of classical political economy, is simply absent in neo-classical economic theory and, hence, in the other social

130 Marx, 'Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy', ibid., p. 503.

131 Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach', no. XI, ibid., p. 15.

132 Marx, op. cit., p. 504.

sciences in the West. The Western social sciences today take satisfaction from the fact that *normally,* i.e., in terms of statistical frequency, social/political systems tend to survive and seek to analyse the mechanism of this survival. This is a positivistic choice of the Western social sciences today.

But when the Western social sciences ignore the question of production relations, which lead to the problem of distribution in the classical sense, there is obviously an *ideological* choice that affects their scientific potential. It leads to the assumptions that every society is *normally* capable of maintaining its integrity by adapting itself to the changing demands of its constituents and that there is no *inherent* reason why a social structure must, in the long run, face a crisis.[133] This prevents them from explaining historical change resulting from class contradiction in any elaborate and systematic form. It is symptomatic of this theoretical shortcoming that Parsons's exhaustive work, *The Social System,* running beyond 550 pages, has just three pages devoted to revolutionary upheavals, and this ignores the socialist transformation of Eastern Europe (outside the USSR) and China, treating Soviet Communism and Nazism at par.[134]

The point needs to be traced from the *scientific* angle. Historical changes can be analysed not in terms of frequency, but in terms of their qualitative significance. And yet, by the time Parsons's book was published, one-third of the globe had experienced socialist transformation. The socialist system had already stabilised itself beyond doubt. On the other hand, the Nazi experience was short-lived. In sheer quantitative terms (with reference to time as well as space), the socialist

133 There is, however, a rather late realisation among the political development theorists that such crises do actually appear, and Ithiel de Sola Pool ('Foreword' in Ithiel de Sola Pool, op. cit., pp. x-xi) denies that contemporary political science is non-normative. Although Parsons is satisfied that revolutionary change can hardly occur in the industrialised countries of the West, the Marxists see the potential for such change and explain the political/economic stability of the West in terms of the benefits of economic imperialism.

134 Parsons, *The Social System,* pp. 520-22.

revolution could not be considered an aberration. The later attempt of the political development school to categorise the USSR as 'radical totalitarian', in terms of the absence of political subsystem autonomy, is poor compensation for this deficiency.[135] In any case, it does not explain the socialist revolution. Consequently, the action theory's claim to 'universalistic' and 'dynamic' status appears pretentious.[136]

Conclusion

The case of this paper is the need for a closer examination of the specific contributions of the two alternative theories of society. A more 'scientific' social science would need to examine to what extent the 'vested interests' can be *entrenched* in society in an exploitative relation—in the Marxist sense—explaining 'the presence in the population of sufficiently intense, widely spread and properly distributed alienative motivational elements'. [137] This may need the shedding of the Weberian confidence in the process of rationalisation 'as a general directional factor in the change of social systems'. [138] That faith is not in keeping with the social scientific opposition to evolutionism and is even subject to varying interpretations. This faith is only more useful to the Western social sciences, concerned as they are with institutional integrity rather than Spencer's model of individuation [139] or Marx's model of dialectics. For Weber made rationalisation situation-specific.

135 Almond and Powell, op. cit., p. 217.

136 Parsons deals more elaborately with the repercussions of change introduced by scientific and technological advance. But, like the general orientation of this theory of the social system towards conditions in the United States, the orientation of this treatment also tends towards the same country. See Parsons, op. cit., pp. 505-18.

137 ibid., p. 521.

138 ibid., p. 499.

139 For a summary of Spencer, see Barnes, 'Herbert Spencer and the Evolutionary Defence of Individualism' in Harry Elmer Barnes, ed., *An Introduction to the History of Sociology* (abridged edition, Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 81-108, particularly pp. 93-94.

And Parsons himself has shown that in the West inequality has been functionally rationalised in terms of equality of opportunity.[140]

By the same token, Marxists may benefit through a utilisation of the specificity of the action theory. If their central purpose is social transformation, the intricate mechanics of the survival of a social system are very significant points of enquiry. Hitherto, progress in Marxian theory has been chiefly confined to two aspects of the problem : the structural and the (revolutionary) organisational. Yet there are diverse schools of thought in those respects. Every class system may inevitably come to a crisis. But why does not every such crisis lead to a revolutionary transformation ? One answer is imperialism which saved Western capitalism at a critical stage of history. But all class societies simply do not become imperialistic. Fascism is an alternative for capitalism in crisis. This is a field of investigation which can be specifically approached with some psychological orientation, concentrating to a greater extent than hitherto on problems of ideology and consciousness and the institutionalisation of beliefs in society, within the broad framework of structural enquiry.

140 Talcott Parsons, 'Equality and Inequality in Modern Society or Social Stratification Revisited' in Edward O. Laumann, ed., *Social Stratification : Research and Theory for the 1970s* (Indianapolis : Bobbs-Merryl, 1970), pp. 13-72, at pp. 14-16.

Sobhanlal Datta Gupta

The Concept of Political Development and its Meaning as an Ideology

I

The concept of 'political development', when it first made its appearance, was believed to have come to stay. Soon, however, this proved to be an illusion. The expression had been coined in the West, to be specific, in the United States, in the late '50s. Then, in a decade's time, the literature on political development came under attack; interestingly, the attack came from people who could in no way be labelled as marxists or even radicals. But the operational use of the concept proved to be so confusing that doubts came to be expressed quite overtly. The confusion was made worse by the fact that scholars failed to agree on the meaning of this concept.[1] To explore its meaning as well as the relevance of recent criticisms it is necessary, therefore, to trace the chequered path of development of this concept.

To put it very briefly, the slow emergence of the newly liberated countries in the post-war period, coupled with the

1 For such a wide-ranging meaning of the concept, see Lucien W. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development* (New Delhi : Amerind, 1972), pp. 33-45.

ever-deepening gap between the levels of development of the capitalist countries in the West and the countries freed from colonialism, provided the major impetus for inquiring into the problems of development faced by these countries. While this concern for development of the backward countries is quite understandable, it does not, however, explain the concern for *political* development. But for scholars in the West, for the defenders of the bourgeois order, it was all very simple. They assured themselves, and accordingly they assured the backward peoples too, that capitalism as an economic system and liberal-democracy as its superstructural political framework had come to stay in the West. Neither the war nor the march of communism in Eastern Europe could pose any serious threat to its stability, its values, its over-all consensus about the eternal viability of liberal-democracy. Moreover, the war-ravaged capitalist world showed remarkable strides in the sphere of economic growth. This only proved, they said, the correctness of the strategy of development within the framework of political stability as guaranteed by the operation of liberal democracy. The stage was thus set; political development came to be identified with the development of capitalism as experienced classically by the liberal democracies in the West. Market society in the West was thus made the ideal; its political working came to be believed as sacrosanct. Despite many odds, the stability of capitalism and its capacity to maintain order were taken for granted. People like Seymour Martin Lipest set the mood in the '60s.[2] This, however, was only the beginning.

Besides the historical necessity of legitimising the model of liberal democracy in the newly-liberated countries, there were strong theoretical reasons behind the emergence of this concept. In his excellent study of the growth of this concept, Colin Leys has quite correctly suggested[3] that the concern for development in the underdeveloped areas was first shown by the behavioura-

2 Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man : The Social Bases of Politics* (New York : Doubleday, 1963), particularly Chapter 13.

3 Colin Leys, ed., *Politics and Change in Developing Countries* (London : Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 3-4.

lists and that, too, for two reasons. In the first place, the behaviouralists were intrigued to find that political behaviour in these countries was rather less accessible to measurement than in the developed regions and that a fundamental theoretical problem was how to identify in these countries the significant elements of such behaviour. Secondly, the enthusiasm for interpreting political development in terms of the model of liberal democracy was very largely the result of a blind infatuation with Max Weber and his theory of the ideal-type. This provided the necessary booster for idealising liberal democracy.

Combining the historical circumstances and the theoretical considerations, it now becomes easier to arrive at a fairly clear understanding of the paradigm of political development. It may be mentioned here that an understanding of this paradigm cannot be arrived at by simply looking at a classificatory scheme of the schools of political development, although such attempts have been made by a number of scholars,[4] quite unsuccessfully, since such a classification is always arbitrary and never complete. Such analyses are primarily descriptive for they do not provide any theoretical rationale for the classifications. Consequently, the meaning of political development, explored by so many different schools, remains as ambiguous as ever. The present paper deviates from this framework and attempts a rather different analysis of some of the major models of political development.

II

The quest for political development begins with the quest for a meaningful understanding of political underdevelopment in the backward areas. What, however, is political underdevelopment according to the developmentalists ? A concrete

4 For such typical classifications, see Pye, op. cit.; Chong-DoHah and Jeanne Schneider, "A Critique of Current Studies on Political Development aud Modernization", *Social Research*, 35, 1 (Spring 1968), pp. 130-158; Robert A. Packenham, "Approaches to the Study of Political Development", *World Politics*, 17, 1 (October 1964), pp. 108-120.

reply to this question would provide plausible clues towards a theoretical clarification of this concept. However, such replies are not easily forthcoming since opinions differ. Such an exploration, however, becomes easier by studying, even casually, the sense of dissatisfaction of the developmental theorists with the pattern of political backwardness prevailing in the underdeveloped countries. In the '60s, Karl Von Vorys and Myron Weiner came forward to voice this dissatisfaction. Von Vorys was very much intrigued by the political disturbances, the lack of stability, the impending threat of revolutionary changes that characterised the backward countries. "It is becoming uncomfortably apparent", he wrote, "that there are few newly independent countries about which it could be said with some confidence that their political systems will survive this decade. Revolutions occur with distressing regularity ; demonstrations and riots seem endemic. Politics rarely contests within the framework of the political system. Invariably it is the contest about the political system".[5] While for Von Vorys it was this "contest about the political system" that frustrated the development of political systems in the backward countries, for Weiner underdevelopment consisted in the lack of political integration in these countries as well as in the incapacity of the political systems to cope with the new problems of integration.[6] Political instability and political fragmentation being the symptoms of political underdevelopment, both Weiner and Von Vorys have traced the occurrence of such phenomena to the persistence of tradition, the traditional social structures, and the value-systems generated in the process.

This is particularly relevant for two reasons. Once a causal connection is built up between the persistence of tradition and political instability, the latter leading to political underdevelopment, it follows that the mark of political development would be stability and integration ; secondly, such stability

5 Karl Von Vorys, "Towards a Concept of Political Development", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 358 (March 1965), p. 15.

6 Myron Weiner, "Political Integration and Political Development", ibid., p. 55.

and integration would be reached by terminating the persistence of traditional social structures and values, since these stand in the way of modernity. In other words, by modernising the traditional societies, stability and integration would be ensured, and this would in turn ensure political development. Political development of underdeveloped countries, therefore, would be conditional on the growth of modern social structures and values. In the '60s, the search for fostering and legitimising this pattern of growth towards modernity as opposed to tradition thus became the predominant concern of the developmental theorists. This, it may be recalled, coincided historically with the desperate search of post-war capitalism to protect itself, to legitimise and rationalise a theory of stability and order in the face of world-wide revolutionary changes. Thus, for the exponents of the idea of political development, the quest for modernising the traditionally backward countries became synonymous with the quest for fostering the structures of capitalism and liberal democracy. In other words, the level of political development would be dependent on the extent of growth of socio-economic structures as envisaged in the West. For exponents of this model of political development, politics thus became a *dependent variable*.

The initiative in this direction was taken up by the Princeton School in the United States, under the leadership of Gabriel Almond and his associates. Employing a structural-functional framework, the leading exponents of this school suggested that while all political systems performed certain common input and output functions through the presence of certain common structures, in the developed political systems such structures were autonomous, performing the functions in a specialised, differentiated way, avoiding overlapping of functions.[7] This

7 For a statement of this framework, see Gabriel Almond's "Introduction : A Functional Approach to Comparative Politics", in Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman, eds., *The Politics of the Developing Areas* (Princeton, N. J. : Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 3-64, and G. A. Almond and G. B. Powell, Jr., *Comparative Politics : A Developmental Approach* (New Delhi : Amerind, 1972). The input functions were identified by Almond as (a) political

meant, and Almond made it explicitly clear, that since such structural differentiation as had taken place in the liberal democracies in the West was found to be lacking in the backward countries, they were politically underdeveloped. Political development, therefore, would take place in these countries only if differentiation of functions through development of corresponding structures could be ensured, following the pattern of development of capitalism in the West. Political development, therefore, would be measured in terms of development of the social and economic structures of capitalism and the political framework of liberal democracy.[8] Almond's methodology of understanding the concept of political development through the use of functional categories as applied to the explanation of liberal democracy, however, becomes sufficiently clear from his following observation : 'The problem essentially was to ask a series of questions based on the distinctive political activities existing in Western complex systems. In other words, we derived our functional categories from the political systems in which structural specialisation and functional differentiation have taken place to the greatest extent. Thus the functions performed by associational interest groups in Western systems led us to the question, "How are interests articulated in different political systems ?"...The functions performed by political parties in Western political systems led us to the question, "How are articulated demands or interests aggregated or combined in different political systems ?"...',[9] and so on. In his latest work, Almond has quite frankly acknowledged how in the late '50s and '60s the intellectual vision of the Princeton School was clouded with these assumptions. Almond writes,

> socialisation and recruitment, (b) interest articulation, (c) interest aggregation and (d) political communication, while he characterised the output functions as (a) rule-making, (b) rule-application and (c) rule- adjudication.

8 This is particularly evident from Almond's incorporation of the output functions in his structural-functional framework, which amounts to a plea for the theory of separation of powers. This is implicitly recognised by Almond, in Almond and Coleman, op. cit., p. 17.

9 ibid., p. 16.

> 'Though we were concerned with political development and change from the very outset (the instability of the new nations made this inescapable), we were quite aware that these models and classification schemes which we were constructing in the late 1950's and early 1960's were not developmental or causal theories. We were also aware of the fact that we were comparing non-Western political systems according to Western categories and from a Western perspective. After all, we were Westerners, beginning with the knowledge and concerns of the West, trying to understand how the newly emerging or rapidly changing political systems of Asia, Africa, and Latin America were similar to or different from our more familiar institutional systems and processes....The logic of our undertaking was elementary. As the Western nations were in some sense modern, and the non-Western ones were in almost all cases not modern but seeking to become so, the historical experience of the modern nations had some relevance for our understanding of the problems and prospects of modernizing efforts among the new nations. We did not assume that the new nations would follow in older developmental "paths", but rather that the historical experience with modernization, and the various hypotheses suggested in Western historiography, might give us an initial grip on the developmental prospects of the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America'.[10]

Once the pace was thus set by Almond, the plea for treating Western liberal democracy as the classical model of a politically developed society, free from the forces of instability, disruption, chaos and revolutionary challenges, came to be shared by a number of scholars, mainly from the United States. Claude Welch, writing in the late '60s, identified political development

10 Gabriel A. Almond, "Approaches to Developmental Causation", in Gabriel A. Almond et al, eds., *Crisis, Choice, and Change : Historical Studies of Political Development* (Boston : Little Brown, 1973), pp. 2-3.

or political modernisation with the presence of three features, namely, (a) increased centralisation of power in the state and weakening of the traditional authority; (b) differentiation and specialisation of political institutions; (c) increased popular participation in politics and greater identification of individuals with the political system as a whole.[11] S. N. Eisenstadt and Myron Weiner, writing in the '70s, tried to conceptualise the idea of political modernisation in terms of almost similar structural variables.[12]

Another variant of this approach is the model of Karl Deutsch, who emphasises the role of social mobilisation which, he argues, would increase the potential level of political tensions or demands and bring about changes in the quality of politics by affecting the range of human needs, thereby promoting political development.[13] While it is true that the treatment of the concept of political development in the writings of Almond, Welch or Deutsch is definitely not identical, it can be broadly suggested, however, that the models interpret the concept predominantly in terms of structural components.

As distinguished from this methodology of looking upon political development as dependent on the growth of certain *structures*, a somewhat different approach was provided by scholars like Edward Shils who tried to interpret political development in terms of its being conditional on the growth of the *values* of liberal democracy. Writing in the '60s, Shils laid down a catalogue of values which he found to be of universal validity, such as "the growth of individuality and creativity,"

11 Introduction, in Claude Welch, Jr., ed., *Political Modernization: A Reader in Comparative Political Change* (California: Wadsworth, 1967), p. 7.

12 S. N. Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Change, and Modernity* (New York: John Wiley, 1973), p. 74. Also Myron Weiner, "Political Problems of Modernizing Pre-industrial Societies", in A. R. Desai, ed., *Essays on Modernization of Underdeveloped Societies*, Vol. (Bombay: Thacker, 1971), pp. 166-174.

13 See Karl W. Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development", *The American Political Science Review*, 55, 3 (September 1961), pp. 493-514.

"the institutionalization or the reasonable criticism of authority and the incorporation into the political order of dissent", "participation in consultation and decision".[14] It does not require much imagination to understand the basic liberal-democratic principles underlying such a prescription. While Shils cautions that the institutional arrangements through which such values have attained some measure of realisation in the West may not be necessarily relevant in the backward countries, he, however, is emphatic in suggesting the universal importance of attaining these values. "These are all values of universal validity", he says, "and regimes that do not find a place for them and similar values are less good than those that do".[15]

On a later occasion, Shils elaborated in more detail his plea for universalising these values. Every society, he contends, has a value-system at its "center" which evokes in the members of that society a feeling of minimum appreciation for the authority that sustains the social order and the institutions through which that authority works. This, Shils observes, is caused by man's eternal search for integration, i. e., the search for a permanent 'need to be in contact with symbols of an order which is larger in its dimensions than their own bodies and more central in the "ultimate" structure of reality than is their routine everyday life'.[16] Accordingly, Shils draws the conclusion that class conflicts in the Western society eventually get themselves neutralised by an overwhelming attachment to the central value-system that ensures this integration. Since the experience of the underdeveloped countries shows that these forces of dissent cannot very often be contained because of the comparatively underdeveloped value-systems at the "centers" of such societies, for their development Shils prescribes the development of such a "center" which

14 Edward Shils, "On the Comparative Study of the New States", in Clifford Geertz, ed., *Old Societies and New States : The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa* (New York : Free Press, 1963), p. 25.

15 ibid.

16 Edward Shils, *Center and Periphery : Essays in Macrosociology* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 7.

societies, for their development Shils prescribes the development of such a "center" which would ensure integration and stability. In other words, for Shils, the measure of political development is the guaranteed presence of the age-old values of liberal democracy, namely, stability and consensus.[17]

In his later writings, Gabriel Almond, too, emphasised this viewpoint. In defending the premise of his earlier writings that the Western system is the classical model of political development, he now introduced the notion of universality of the Western values since these, he suggested, were historically determined, although the paths of realisation of these values might not be identical. In other words, Almond makes us believe that this is no plea for Western chauvinism because the trends of development, at least in his opinion, objectively point to similar directions although there might be distinct variations in regard to the end products.[18]

In the '70s this quest for legitimising the concept of political development in terms of values was given a much more sophisticated twist by a number of leading representatives of the Princeton School, like Lucien Pye and Leonard Binder. In the late '60s, Pye had already provided the theoretical clues in this direction by identifying three major value components of the development syndrome, namely, equality (emphasising the value of political participation), capacity (meaning the rational and legitimate exercise of authority) and differentiation (implying functional specificity of roles within the system). The realisation of these values, he pleaded, was related correspondingly to the quality of functioning of the political culture, the authoritative structures and the non-authoritative structures in the system.[19] Binder took up this clue provided by Pye and formulated a more detailed syndrome for the model of political development. Binder introduced the notion of 'crisis' within the framework of a structural syndrome. Accordingly, he suggested that while the three major value-components provided

17 ibid., pp. 179-181.

18 Gabriel A. Almond, *Political Development : Essays in Heuristic Theory* (Boston : Little Brown, 1970), pp. 288-291.

19 Pye, op. cit., pp. 45-48.

by Pye were valid, to understand the moments of political development one had to identify five types of structural challenges (crises) posed in each of these areas by another set of value-components, namely, identity, participation, distribution and penetration.[20] This structural interaction of values would determine the magnitude of political development.

A careful scrutiny of these models would suggest that over time there has been a slow and very subtle shift from an early preoccupation with the structural components of the bourgeois social order (Almond, Deutsch) to the value-components of development (Shils, the later Almond, Binder). This shift was conditioned particularly by the experience of the deepening crisis of capitalism in the West which now revealed that the social structures of capitalism could no longer be regarded as absolutely free from a series of inescapable crises. Instead, as J. P. Nettl points out, the focus now shifted to the identification of values and goals of this social order, and the search for providing a theoretical rationale in defence of the predominant values of Western society became more important. As a result, it now came to be believed that while the structures of Western democracy were not immutable, the values and goals were, and the institutional means of attaining them might vary. This was taken up by the theorists of political development and "while the measurement of progress was still tied to the state of the West, the means of getting there varied, became 'functionalized'."[21]

However, despite the differences of range and dimension, it is quite evident that the models discussed so far are predominantly oriented towards interpreting the concept of political development in terms of certain *non-political components*, namely, the social structures of capitalism and the values of liberal democracy. The 'political' element of development continues to play a subsidiary and an almost dependent role.

20 Leonard Binder, "Crisis of Political Development" in Leonard Binder et al., *Crises and Sequences in Political Development* (Princeton, N. J. : Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 64-66.

21 J. P. Nettl, "Strategies in the Study of Political Development" in Leys, op. cit., p. 19.

The more discerning ideologues of bourgeois society soon discovered the absurdity of these models which, they cautioned, were prone to boomerang on their exponents. This was stated in very clear terms by Glenn D. Paige in the mid-'60s when the Princeton School was on the upswing. Paige warned that the implication of these models, which treated the 'political' element all the while as a dependent variable, was to implicitly acknowledge that without certain socio-economic prerequisites the political patterns of liberal democracy would not be realisable in the developing areas.[22] While Paige did not elaborate his argument, it becomes quite evident that he indirectly reprimands the advocates of these models for providing an absolutely deterministic and linear view of political development which envisages the possibility of development in liberal-democratic terms exclusively through one channel as experienced in the West, without exploring other alternative avenues. This sort of criticism, however, in no way challenges the goals of these models; the criticisms are mainly with regard to the methodology that tries to transplant, without providing any valid rationale, the structural and value components of liberal democracy. Almond's structural-functional model particularly ran into serious difficulties because of his claim of absolute validity of the Western experience and measurement of political development accordingly. As a result, even the admirers of Almond's model had to point out, much to their discomfort, that in that case the Soviet Union could not be treated as a politically developed society since in that system there was hardly any structural differentiation of functions, the operation of the system being wholly controlled by an all-pervasive CPSU.[23] Almond himself perhaps never imagined that his

22 Glenn D. Paige, "The Rediscovery of Politics" in John D. Montgomery and William J. Siffin, eds., *Approaches to Development: Politics, Administration and Change* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), p. 51. This neglect of the primacy of politics is also the main thrust of Rajni Kothari's recent criticism of these models. See his "State and Nation Building in the Third World" in Rajni Kothari, ed., *State and Nation Building: A Third World Perspective* (New Delhi: Allied, 1976), pp. 1-22.

23 Robert E. Holt and John E. Turner, *The Political Basis of Economic*

model would have such unexpected implications for future readers. This would perhaps explain why other scholars, exploring the meaning of political development in the mid-'60s under the shadow of the Princeton School, were cautious in not suggesting such stupid formulations. Alfred Diamant, for instance, looking at the concept of political development, treated it as a "process of meeting demands in a flexible manner" and hastened to add that he did not exclude "dictatorial" or "totalitarian" forms which could generate political demands, that is, development. Hence, for Diamant, some political development had taken place in the USSR at least since 1953 and no political development had taken place in Germany between 1933 and 1945.[24]

These, however, I repeat, were no criticisms. These scholars simply tried to rectify some of the obvious weaknesses of the models of their fellow scholars without questioning the rationale behind their crusade for identifying the goal of development of the newly-liberated countries with capitalism and liberal democracy. It is not, however, true that honest, trenchant criticisms of the goal and purpose of these models and even of the very concept of 'political development' were not forthcoming. Particularly sharp was the criticism voiced by Ann R. Willner in the early '60s, when she charged the exponents of some of these major models for being guided by a very strong "ethnocentric bias", for generalising thereby the experience, goals and values of the West as being equally valid for the underdeveloped countries and focussing mainly on the lack in the developing countries of the attributes of the developed ones. She wrote, almost in a fit of emotional outburst, 'How can we deal with change other than as a process along some known dimensions in the direction of familiar Euro-American systems ? How can we overcome the normative bias that causes us to attribute to members of these societies goals, motives, and values similar to ours ? Or

Development : An Exploration in Comparative Political Analysis (New Delhi : Affiliated East West, 1970), pp. 13-15.

24 Alfred Diamant, "Political Development : Approaches to Theory and Strategy" in Montgomery and Siffin, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

the related projected fallacy by which we predict their possible responses on the basis of what ours would be in similar circumstances ? In other words, how can we enlarge our perspectives and try to view the politics of these countries from the "inside out" as well as from the outsider's vantage point?"[25] More positive and increasingly sharp criticisms are coming up in the '70s from quite a number of scholars who are becoming obviously intrigued at the presumptions of these models. The sophisticated twists of the Princeton spokesmen, particularly, are coming under fire. Pye and Binder are being challenged on the ground that they have not been able to provide very definitely any valid, rational, empirical explanation for their pet formulation that the syndrome of political development has to be studied in terms of equality and differentiation. Secondly, they are being charged that, through the arbitrary identification of certain abstract value-components, they are actually trying to prop up a political strategy for the maintenance of the ruling elite. It goes without saying that Binder's 'crisis-model' is particularly open to this criticism. Finally, and that constitutes the most important element of these criticisms, the basic premise of the Princeton fashion-makers that political development is identical with the values and structure of stability as experienced in the West, has come under sharp attack. Critics contend that the ideological implication of these models framed by Binder and his school is that, instead of formulating the question "what is the good society and how it could be achieved", these people start with the question "what is the stable society", as order is not considered a precondition for achieving the highest political good : rather order itself becomes the highest political good.[26]

Interestingly, barring these few criticisms that abstractly questioned the normative, ethnocentric bias of these models,

25 Ann Ruth Willner, "The Underdeveloped Study of Political Development", *World Politics*, 16, 3 (April 1964), p. 480.

26 Richard Sandbrook, "The 'Crisis' in Political Development Theory", *Journal of Development Studies*, 12, 2 (January 1976), particularly pp. 170-180.

the major important theoretical criticisms came from people on the Right.[27] Finding it increasingly difficult to work out these models in the conditions of underdeveloped societies, the search for alternative methodological frameworks began in the mid-'60s, to espouse, however, exactly the same cause of stability, order and consensus.

III

The growing disenchantment with these models began in the mid-'60s. It was found that the experiment with liberal democracy, its values and structures, was an abject failure in most of the developing societies. Instead of stability and order, the forces of dissensus and instability, sporadic and violent outbursts of revolt, almost unpredictable breakdowns of civilian government, were gradually becoming the regular features of these societies. What was taking place, therefore, was not political development, rather political de-development. Samuel P. Huntington's critique is particularly noteworthy in this context. Huntington's major criticism against these models was that conceptually their exponents had committed the blunder of identifying political development with political modernisation.[28] On the basis of certain structural and value components which were derived from the experience of the West, they had built up the paradigm of political modernisation and had come to believe that attainment of political modernisation was synonymous with the attainment of political development. Political modernisation, as a result, came to be identified with the following features : a) functional differentiation ; b) national integration ; c) democratisation and pluralism ; d) political participation. Despite their

27 Thus, the most violent reaction has been from the side of a rabid anti-communist like John Kautsky who, interestingly, is particularly critical of the ethnocentric bias of these models and, accordingly, finds the concept of political development not useful at all. See John H. Kautsky, *The Political Consequences of Modernization* (New York : John Wiley, 1972), p. 14.

28 Samuel P. Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay", in Welch. op. cit., pp. 207-210.

presence, however, Huntington pointed out, in the backward societies they actually led to political decay and not to development. As illustrations, he stated that political participation was encouraging the forces of political instability as people were getting organised and expressing their discontent : similarly, development of the social and economic structures of capitalism through American foreign-aid programmes was actually opening up increasing disparity between the rich and the poor and thereby letting loose the forces of instability, chaos and political de-development. In other words, the values and institutions of political modernisation, transplanted in the developing societies, did not necessarily ensure stability, and this led to political decay.

Interestingly, despite the apparently wide differences between Huntington and the model-builders of political development whom he criticises, their basic understanding of the ideological meaning of political development remains the same. While Almond, Deutsch, etc., try to plead for the case of stability by equating its realisation with the realisation of political development in terms of certain structural and value components, Huntington's concern, too, is to understand political development in terms of political stability. The only difference is that Huntington finds their prescription not correctly applicable to the study of political development. As a result, Huntington emphasises not the relevance of such non-political variables as values and structures, but the political element of development, namely, the role of viable political institutions (i.e., a disciplined and organised political party) which would ensure the sustenance of political stability by containing the forces of instability and disruption.[29] Methodologically, this is extremely important since Huntington's framework looks at political development in the context of politics playing the role of an *independent variable,* as distinguished from the models discussed earlier. This emphasis on the

29 ibid., p. 245. Huntington elaborated this framework in the late '60s. See Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn. : Yale University Press, 1968), particularly Chapter I.

entrepreneurial role in political institutionalisation reveals in very clear terms the ideological implication of Huntington's position, although there are opinions that question the very possibility of any development at all in the undeveloped countries through any such political institutionalisation.[30] Huntington thus suggests that the forces of revolutionary change that are now rocking the so-called stability of most of the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America would have to be contained by any means through the measures of political institutionalisation. This would mean that even if such stability was ensured through adoption of the Brazilian model of Latin America, this would, according to Huntington's formulation, be conducive to political development since development, it follows, is primarily conditional on the attainment of stability through political institutionalisation. As one critic of Huntington has very rightly pointed out, his concept of political development is particularly notorious, because to consider disorder a function of mobilisation and to treat decay that refers only to disruptions of the status quo by subordinates, "is to overlook the disorder that may be imposed by those seeking to safeguard privilege and help perpetuating a kind of status quo that defies elementary requisites of the political community". Popular challenges to corrupt regimes, therefore, would be brushed off as aberrations of stability and the legitimacy of the means employed by corrupt and reactionary governments to stay in power through maintenance of stability would never be questioned.[31]

30 For this somewhat unconventional critique of Huntington's plea for political institutionalisation, see Gerald A. Heeger, *The Politics of Underdevelopment* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), p. 11. Referring to Huntington's formulation, he writes: "Institutions are more likely to be facades for transient and often intermittent patterns of interaction among central elites and between them and the periphery. The personalism that permeates underdeveloped political systems seems, at times, to yield a political process that is not simply uninstitutionalized but, in fact, hostile to modernization". P. 70.

31 Mark Kesselman, "Order or Movement ? The Literature of Political

This view of political development in terms of the primacy of politics as an independent variable was given another methodological twist by David Apter. Apter's basic contention was to search for the appropriate type of political system which would transform a backward, traditional society into a modernised, developed system without generating forces of instability. Accordingly, Apter suggests that in the initial stages of modernisation, since the necessary social infrastructure of the industrial society is not present in the underdeveloped societies, what is required is an exceptionally well organised political system able to maintain a high degree of control. The implication is that in the initial stages of development, stability would have to be ensured through a high control system, preferably a bureaucratic type, so that the forces of disintegration that may be let loose in the early years of modernisation may be effectively contained. However, once this initial phase is completed, which Apter equates with the growth of the necessary infrastructures required for early industrialisation, the need for coercion would subside and in its place the need for a mobilisation system based on information would arise, since in the changed context, stability would be best ensured not by coercion but by information.[32]

A careful analysis of Apter's model would reveal that, like Huntington, he too wishes to view political modernisation within the framework of stability which would have to be ensured by promoting the appropriate type of political system. In other words, for Apter the primacy of politics is relevant only to the working out of the necessary types of political systems that would have to ruthlessly contain all possible forces of discontent which might generate threats to stability, at least in the initial years. For both Huntington and Apter, the end of political development is common: as regards emphasis on the primacy of politics in development, Huntington is concerned

Development as Ideology", *World Politics*, 26, 1 (October 1973), pp. 142-143.

32 David E. Apter, *Some Conceptual Approaches to the Study of Modernization* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), pp. 349-350.

with political institutionalisation, while for Apter it is the development of the appropriate political system.

As distinguished from Huntington and Apter, in the late '60s Dankwart Rustow introduced another model, emphasising the primacy of politics in terms of political leadership.[33] While for Huntington it is political institutionalisation and for Apter it is to effect a shift from a high control to a mobilisation system, for Rustow the most important conceptual category for effecting political development is political leadership which, however, he fails to identify and relate to the objective conditions prevailing in the underdeveloped countries. The result is, as Gabriel Almond has more or less correctly pointed out, that Rustow actually fails to specify the rationality of that leadership which would cause development, and the use of this conceptual category thereby is bound to include leadership phenomena that might be wholly irrational.[34]

In fact, a survey of the models discussed so far, despite the differences in methodological emphasis on the primacy of politics, would suggest that the normative essence of the models remains basically the same. In their search for rationalising the case of political stability, while the Princeton School looks upon development as dependent on the growth of certain non-political components like structures and values, the Huntington-Apter paradigm, too, pleads for stability, emphasising, however, the political components, i.e., institutionalisation and system-building. The only major difference between these two broad paradigms is that while the Princeton School as well as Weiner, Deutsch and others belonging to the first category plead for stability in terms of the values and structures of liberal democracy and inviting thereby the charge of ethnocentrism, the other school, disillusioned with the prospects of liberal democracy in the newly-liberated countries, expresses concern for containing the forces of instability and violent changes and defending thereby, whatever be the normative implications, the cause of status quo, order and

33 Dankwart Rustow, *A World of Nations* (Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institution, 1967).

34 Gabriel Almond in Almond et al., op. cit., p. 19.

stability at any cost. But despite these subtle methodological distinctions, neither of these two paradigms of political development can answer the following sets of questions which come up in course of analysis of these models. In the first place, what is the theoretical rationale behind the premise that the question of political development can emerge only within the paradigm of stability? Secondly, what prevents the exponents of these models to look into the material causes of this instability that characterises the majority of the third world countries? In other words, these models cannot explain this predominant concern for stability for the simple reason that they never try to explain the potential sources of instability. On the contrary, it is assumed, as one critic has remarked, that increase in the total supply of power would automatically resolve the problems posed by underdevelopment.[35] This constitutes, for all purposes, an excellent plea for, what another critic has suggested, defence of the stability of the ruling elite in the developing societies without caring for the cause of social justice that is to be meted out to the masses below.[36] This exposes, most tellingly, the teleology behind the concept of political development, that is, the desperate search for preventing the generation of the forces of social revolution, by deliberately ignoring the study of the political relevance of the so-called structural or value components of development, by not clarifying, for example, what would be the political and ideological content of social mobilisation (Deutsch), or by blatantly refusing to mention who would effect political institutionalisation (Huntington), or which social force would provide leadership (Rustow). On the conceptual plane, too, leaving aside their ideological import, the models give rise to serious misgivings. As another critic has pointed out, despite the claim of explaining the phenomenon of development, the models are essentially based on certain static categorisations since no rationale is given either behind the choice of their premises or the categories of analysis. Consequently, what happens is that

35 Kesselman, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

36 Sandbrook, op. cit., pp. 180-181.

there remains no scope to state the historicity of such a model as the country under study is raised to a level of abstraction, tailored to certain categories. And once this is done, useless generalisations can follow since abstract categorisation, frozen in time and space, has a fascination of its own,[37] a typical illustration of which is Leonard Binder's syndrome of political development.

IV

Besides these ideological critiques which question the content of these models, "purely normative" criticisms are also coming up, particularly in the '70s, which require careful and critical consideration. Scholars like Rajni Kothari and Denis Goulet have joined in the fray, their contention being that the models of political development being aimed at providing a theoretical justification of the dependence of the third world countries on the Western powers, what is necessary, if development proper is to take place, is to break away from the centres of power, irrespective of their political content. Development, the philosophical premise thus runs, is antithetical to power since the latter, unless it is rationally diffused, curbs the autonomy of man who creates the urge for development. This has been very clearly stated by Rajni Kothari who feels, "The whole problem of autonomy turns on a wide distribution of enough power without which the autonomy of some turns into dominance over others....Power should be purposive and not an end in itself; and it should be rationally distributed.... But for it to play that role it is imperative that its concentration be put to an end. Neither justice nor non-violence (our major operational values) can be realized without an adequate distribution of power—between men and states."[38] Accordingly, development is a "normative", "non-ideological"

37 A. R. Dennon, "Political Science and Political Development", *Science and Society*, 33, 3, (Summer-Fall 1969), pp. 287-288.

38 Rajni Kothari, *Footsteps into the Future : Diagnosis of the Present World and a Design for an Alternative* (New Delhi : Orient Longman, 1974), p. 39, fn. 18.

issue because poverty and inequality, the symptoms of underdevelopment, according to Kothari, "are themselves reflections not just of prevailing relations of production but rather of structures and values that deny dignity to the human being."[39] The meaning of political development, therefore, according to Kothari's prescription, would have to be viewed in an abstract, a purely normative perspective, since development, for him, is synonymous with the realisation of autonomy which would have to be attained by breaking away from the centre of power. This being the methodological framework, Kothari's model of political development comes down to the following: on the international plane, the countries of the third world would have to assert their autonomy against the domination of "super powers" since, for Kothari, any attempt to distinguish between the political content of the two worlds of imperialism and socialism or between these two power blocs and the third world countries is irrelevant. Realisation of autonomy of these "peripheral" countries by going into conflict with the "centres" of power thus constitutes the dimension of political development. In the internal sphere too, underdevelopment being a function of the loss of autonomy, the people living on the periphery would have to assert their autonomy against the powers accumulated at the centre, whatever be the political content of the power structure, since accumulation of power tends to curb autonomy and thereby development. Hence, Kothari suggests that decentralisation, following the Gandhian prescription, would be the best guarantee for political development since this would ensure the most perfect realisation of the value of participation and thereby autonomy.[40]

This normative view of political development in terms of an abstracted relation of conflict between the "centre" and the "periphery", which reaches out ultimately for realisation of the autonomy of man and the state as against the structured

39 ibid., p. 73.

40 This is the theme underlying Kothari's current writings which have been cited in this paper. It is, incidentally, a major shift from his earlier position.

centres of power (irrespective of their political and ideological content), has come to be shared by many other scholars who have expressed their disagreement with the ethnocentric assumptions of the major models of political development. For Denis Goulet, the basic question concerning development/underdevelopment is neither economic, political, nor technological; it is moral.[41] Elaborating the theme, Goulet observes, almost echoing the words of Rajni Kothari, "The dehumanization of poor nations, classes and persons is not due solely to conditions of inherited misery or to uncritical acceptance of modernisation, but also to the deterministic character of the world's economic and political systems. These systems severely limit options in domestic and international policy. Certain uses of power render men powerless to control or even to understand the processes affecting them.... Alternative norms governing the use of power need to be constructed as possible models."[42]

There is a consistency in these criticisms. The quest for political development should be treated as the quest for a good society where justice, autonomy and the dignity of the individual would flourish. However, how this vision of a good society would become real is not clarified. Rather, this normative model raises certain intriguing issues. In the first place, there is no question of choice between capitalism and socialism, since the logical implication of the framework would be that power of the party of the working class being all-pervasive in a socialist society, socialism is the most dreaded evil. Secondly, the "centre-periphery" model, elaborated by Kothari, would suggest that for the third world countries there is no choice of allies between the imperialist and the socialist world. This, incidentally, constitutes the central essence of the super power theory now preached with utmost zeal by the ideologues of imperialism. Thirdly, without referring to the political content of the power-structure in relation to the masses, an abstracted, non-political view of the relationships of power virtually

41 Preface in Denis Goulet, *The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development* (New York : Atheneum, 1971), p. vii.

42 ibid., p. 337.

provides a justification for stability and order without inviting, most cleverly, the charge of ethnocentrism.[43] This exposes the hollowness of these so-called normative criticisms of the empirical models of political development. It is believed, and very rightly so, by many critics of the developmental paradigm as developed by Almond and his associates, or by Shils, Eisenstadt, Deutsch and Weiner, that to understand the ideological content of these models it is necessary to study them in the context of the foreign policy interests of American imperialism in the third world countries to stem the tide of the growing influence of communism.[44] The kind of stability and order desired by the cold war strategists of the United States came to be provided with an excellent theoretical justification in the models developed in the early '60s, the models that treated politics as a dependent variable. The situation, however, changed much to the dislike of the political strategists of imperialism. Soon it was discovered that the attempt to foster the values of capitalism and social structures in these countries encountered very serious operational difficulties. The strategy changed accordingly. The importance of frequent *political* interventions of imperialism to destabilise potentially unfriendly regimes now began to be felt. That led to the emergence of the Huntington-Apter-Rustow school which, in the name of criticising the earlier models, stressed the need for treating politics as an independent variable by formulating the theories of political institutionalisation, political system-building, or political leadership. The ideological meaning of this shift is, as Dennon has pointed out, to provide a rationale for America imperialism's political

43 Elsewhere I have tried to explore in detail the ideological implications of Kothari's "centre-periphery" Model. See Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, 'Rajni Kothari and the "Centre-Periphery" Model : A Critique', *Socialist Perspective*, Vol. 3, Special Number (May 1976), pp. 29-45.

44 Kesselman, op. cit., pp. 139-140 ; Dennon, op. cit., p. 285 ; Chong-Do Hah and Jeanne Schneider, op. cit., the paper beginning with the statement, "One of the most popular goals of the American ideological offensive toward the emerging nations is political development and modernization". P. 130.

intervention in the third world countries, on the plea that the latter are not sufficiently aware of the political dimensions of development, namely, institutionalisation, leadership, or system-building, and to achieve all these, increasing political collaboration with the USA is necessary.[45] Similarly, the so-called normative critiques of these models as provided by Denis Goulet or Rajni Kothari are equally, if not more, deceptive and hypocritical. Treating political development as a value, divorced from politics, ideology and power, and then building up the theory of "super-powers" on this premise, is the worst form of methodological jugglery to hoodwink the third world countries. This, it should be stressed, coincides excellently with the third phase of American imperialism's political maneouvre, in the face of the ever-increasing appeals of socialism, to get a foothold in the third world countries by preaching the theory of "end of ideology", by frantically trying to emphasise the irrelevance of ideological choice of allies, by arguing that in their own interests these countries should maintain an equidistant position in relation to the "power-politics" of the "super powers". The ultra leftists, for obvious reasons, have joined in this fray. This, I believe, has particularly helped men like Kothari and Goulet to pose themselves as nonconformists who pretend to break new grounds in their criticisms of the models of political development.

As stated earlier, this is no criticism at all; on the contrary, the confusion created by these philosopher-critics helps most perfectly the designs of American imperialism in the changed historical context. Just as the Huntington-Apter-Rustow framework, starting out as a critique of the Almond-Deutsch-Shils model, proved to be an excellent eyewash, similarly the Kothari-Goulet model, too, comes round to a defence of the ideology of the status quo, avoiding, rather surreptitiously, the criticisms faced by the other two schools. In fact, a careful scrutiny of these three approaches shows that whatever be their methodological distinctions, there are certain very essential common features which bind together all three of them. First, the three approaches are bogged down basically to a

45 Dennon, op. cit., pp. 296-297.

defence of stability. This is done in a more sophisticated way by the Kothari-Goulet school which, diluting the question of power, writes off conceptually the question of political transformation. Secondly, there is an absolute and an almost inexplicable silence over the question of the human dimension of the *political* content of development. This is particularly revealing in the Huntington-Apter-Rustow model where a blank cheque is given to institutionalisation or leadership without reference to the legitimacy of these moves. The Goulet-Kothari model makes the confusion worse by interpreting it in terms of such high-sounding, abstract phrases like "goodness", "justice", "freedom" and "autonomy" without reference to the actors who would work them out, besides simply breaking away from the centres of power. Thirdly, none of these approaches raises the simple question : what are the material factors that cause underdevelopment and what, correspondingly, are the material means to overcome this underdevelopment and reach out for development ? For Almond, Shils and others it is the persistence of structures or values, while for Kothari and Goulet it is the domination of "periphery" by the "centre" that would explain underdevelopment. The prescription for development, accordingly, is never objective, being based on certain essentially subjectivist, ideological considerations.

This provides the clue to the real understanding of the meaning of the 'political' in relation to development, and this points to the crucial relevance of marxism. Development, essentially, is the problem of transformation of those material conditions which constitute underdevelopment. Underdevelopment, it is true, has its own features like illiteracy, persistence of outdated values and structures, etc. But these are only the symptoms of underdevelopment which, however, are caused by a structured pattern of human relations in the production economy. Development involves the question of transforming these relations, viz. the class relations, since underdevelopment, in this perspective, is the function of deprivation of the producer class of the potentiality of its labour-power. For the system to develop, the fullest development of this potentiality must be ensured ; it becomes necessary, therefore, to transform

those class relations which condition underdevelopment, which comes down to the question of achieving this breakthrough politically. Development thus becomes related basically to this act of political transformation, to the question of political power, and this, precisely, constitutes the 'political' dimension of development. The methodological trickery of the exponents of the bourgeois models of political development consists in their interpretation of the superstructural manifestations of underdevelopment (in the sphere of values and structures) as the causes of underdevelopment and, consequently, the prescription for development, too, logically never transcends the perspective of stability. This is done either through fostering the growth of structures and values of liberal democracy (Almond, Shils), or political institutionalisation (Huntington), or restructuring of the "centre-periphery" relation of power by means of decentralisation (Kothari). The bourgeois concept of development is, in that sense, never really political since development is kept separate from political transformation of the material conditions which hinder development. In other words, the stability paradigm of these models is basically aimed at eroding the very concept of politics and thereby the question of political power and ideology[46] that is relevant for the people of the third world to achieve a breakthrough in their material conditions. And this also explains the scepticism of these theorists towards any symptom of instability. This being its orientation, the concept of 'political' development, essentially, is an excellent cover for ideological distortion of the meaning of the 'political', and thereby of 'development'. The task of development, as the poverty of the third world countries grimly reminds us, is to effect radical shifts in the relations of class forces. On the plane of theory, to effect this transformation would mean to ideologically challenge most effectively this mystified view of 'political

46 For good ideological critiques along this line, see Robert Sinai, "Modernization and the Poverty of the Social Sciences" in Desai, op. cit., Vol. 1, especially pp. 57-59. Also Vladimir Mshvenieradze, *Anti-Communism Today* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), pp. 84-90.

development' and restore the proper relevance of politics. This is exactly what the marxist notion of politics aims to achieve, and this is what makes the marxist approach 'politically' most relevant to development, when contrasted with the multifarious 'models' that blur our intellectual vision.

Partha Chatterjee

Political Development and the Question of Political Stability*

Most modern bourgeois political theories relating to underdeveloped countries have two primary concerns : one, the establishment of a "developed" polity on the liberal democratic model, and two, maintenance of political stability in the process of this development. Both flow from the material and ideological interests of world monopoly capitalism. Yet, these twin concerns lead to certain inevitable contradictions which no bourgeois theory is able to resolve. Curiously, the course of development of this theoretical literature in the United States in the last twenty-five years has a striking resemblance to British colonial theories in the nineteenth century. Both run against the same basic contradiction, namely the structural impossibility of "normal" and independent capitalist development, with its associated political and social ramifications, in a colonial or post-colonial society.

I

The concept of political development is a relatively recent innovation in political theory. The reasons are not difficult to

* Originally published as "Modern American Political Theory with Reference to Underdeveloped Nations", *Social Scientist*, 24 (Septem-

trace. The idea of the development of a polity according to a certain pattern or direction—development, not merely change—implies a prior concept of social progress, that is, a notion of social change in a desirable direction. And the history of the idea of progress, we know, is only a little more than two hundred years old.

Perhaps the first clear reference, explicit or otherwise, to a concept of the development of a polity occurs in the political discussions of the English utilitarians,[1] although in terms of intellectual history, the roots of their concept can be traced back to Montesquieu, Condorcet, Adam Ferguson and Comte. To the utilitarians there was a specific problem of policy which related to their concern about the best methods for the administration of British colonies, particularly India.[2] So they constructed the rudiments of a theory of the stages of development of a society (the levels of civilisation, as they termed it) and the kinds of political institutions suitable for each stage. The most developed polity was naturally one which had attained the highest level of civilisation (implicitly, England in the nineteenth century !) and its political institutions were those of representative democracy, where the governing few were kept in check by the governed many through a series of stable institutional arrangements. Societies which were lower down in the scale of civilisation could not afford to have such advanced institutions, since the governed many were incapable of operating the delicate machinery of representative government. The

ber 1974), pp. 24-42. The author is indebted to S. K. Chaube, S. Datta Gupta, Barun De and Asok Sen for their valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

1 See particularly, John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861, many editions), chs. 2, 4, 18; James Mill, *The History of British India* (1820), *passim*; James Fitzjames Stephen, *Liberty, Equality and Fraternity* (1873).

2 On the influence of the utilitarians on British colonial policy in India, and the underlying assumptions of that policy, see especially Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (London : Oxford University Press, 1959), and Raghavan Iyer, 'Utilitarianism and All That', in Raghavan Iyer, ed., *St. Antony's Papers*, 8, South Asian Affairs, No. 1 (London : Chatto and Windus, 1960).

best possibility of development of these backward societies lay in a prolonged period of benevolent imperial rule whereby, through progressive legislation and the gradual development of advanced political institutions, the level of civilisation of these societies would be raised.

The concept of political stability, on the other hand, is as old as political philosophy itself. An ordered polity has perhaps been the ultimate concern of all political theory, and starting as far back as Plato's *Republic*, and particularly *The Laws*, the question of stability has remained a fundamental issue of political philosophy as well as of political science. What is distinctive about the modern discussion on this problem is the necessity of relating the concern about political stability with the reality of social change. Nowhere in the modern world is change such a vital issue as in what is variously known as the underdeveloped, or developing, or non-Western, or "third", world. Specifically, the current Western literature on political development is expressly concerned with the relations between general social, and particularly political, development and the stability of democratic institutions. How far is social change and modernisation compatible with the working of democratic institutions ? If there are incompatibilities, which should gain priority ? And what, in the light of these relations, is the optimal strategy for modernisation ? These are the central issues with which the theory of political development is concerned.

II

The years following the Second World War saw dramatic changes in the political arrangement of imperialism. It was a period of profound crisis for the traditional imperialist powers, Britain and France in particular. The process of decolonisation which occurred in the next decade or so had a host of contributory causes—the emergence of a new international system in world politics, the crisis of imperialism at home following the social devastation of the greatest war in human history, the growing strength of nationalist movements

in the colonies. Formal decolonisation, however, was accompanied by two developments which are of crucial importance—one, the politics of modern imperialism (or neocolonialism, whichever one wishes to call it), and two, the emergence of the United States as the unquestioned leader of the capitalist powers. These two developments must be borne in mind when assessing much of the recent literature in the social sciences, for the great splurge of interest of American scholars in the countries of the underdeveloped world is not unrelated to the emergence of the United States as a global power of the highest rank. Throughout the 'fifties and 'sixties, American social scientists immersed themselves in the task of unfolding the manifold mysteries of the culture and institutions of Asian, African and Latin American countries, and a very important product of this furious academic activity is the modern theory of political development.

III

Let us confine ourselves to the results of this study. The first phase was rather short. Its fundamental conclusion was that the political development of the underdeveloped countries could only be the result of economic development—a rapid industrialisation of their productive systems and a thorough modernisation of their cultural superstructures. The most comprehensive statement of this position was made in Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth,* a book very presumptuously, but nevertheless significantly, subtitled "a non-communist manifesto". The critical point in the transition from a traditional to a modern industrial society, according to Rostow, was what he called the point of "take-off". To reach "take-off", certain social prerequisites were necessary, such as a relatively high level of education, a new modernising elite, a banking system, transport, commerce. In order to help achieve "take-off", the developed West must ensure the necessary external aid, financial, technological and, in parentheses, political. Once "take-off" is reached, the growing economy could presumably take care of itself, by creating and distributing the necessary

wealth and by establishing and working the new institutional structures to stabilise a democratic order. Policywise, it was, therefore, imperative upon the West to "demonstrate that the underdeveloped nations—now the main focus of Communist hopes—can move successfully through the preconditions into a well established take-off within the orbit of the democratic world, resisting the blandishments and temptations of Communism. This is, I believe, the most important single item on the Western agenda."[3]

IV

This theory was short-lived. It was realised very quickly that rapid economic development, whatever its results in the long run, was highly destablising in its immediate consequences. The higher the rate of industrialisation in an underdeveloped society, the greater and sharper were the discontinuities between the pre-industrial and industrial situations. This always produced radical political movements among the newly mobilised sections of the population, creating serious threats to the stability of the political institutions of that country.[4] Lipset commented on the rapid industrialisation thesis :

> Unfortunately for this theory, political extremism based on the lower classes, communism in particular, is not to be found only in low-income countries but also in newly industrializing nations.[5]

If political development was to proceed on the basic premise that a stability of some sort must be maintained with respect to the political arrangements of the underdeveloped countries (which, in concrete terms, meant that communism must be

3 W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 134.

4 See particularly Mancur Olson, 'Rapid Growth as a Destabilizing Force', *Journal of Economic History*, 23 (December 1963).

5 S. M. Lipset, *Political Man* (Garden City, New York : Doubleday, 1960), p. 54.

prevented), then rapid industrialisation was definitely not the answer.

The next phase in the growth of the theory of political development is perhaps best represented by Lipset's own work. *Political Man* was regarded as representing, in many ways, a major departure from the established methodological orientation of American sociology, which at this time was unquestionably dominated by the approach systematised by Talcott Parsons. The Parsonian method, whose pedigree is traced, perhaps rather one-sidedly, to Max Weber and his study of the cultural foundations of the origin of capitalism in Europe, led the inquiry into social action and social institutions, including politics and political institutions, through a study of the values and norms of a society. The result was, of course, a framework which stressed the elements of consensus within a social system. Lipset, on the other hand, placed primary emphasis on a study of the *interests* of various groups in society. In unravelling "the social bases of politics", therefore, Lipset at least came to grips with the problem of conflict in society. The result was labelled by none other than Parsons himself as "a non-dogmatic and non-political Marxian" approach.[6] The characterisation itself is patently ridiculous, but it does indicate the break which Lipset's book represented in the development of political sociology out of the established discipline of American sociology.

Lipset's method was that of multivariate analysis. Instead of trying to identify any one particular variable which determined the development of a stable democratic system of the Western kind, which still remained the *telos* of political development, he attempted to find a cluster of variables which correlated with what he identified *a priori* as developed political systems. His investigation showed that factors such as wealth, industrialisation, education and urbanisation all correlated fairly highly with European and English-speaking stable democracies, and then, at a decreasing rate, with European

6 See Lipset's 'Introduction' to the Anchor Books edition of *Political Man* (Garden City, New York : Doubleday Anchor, 1962), pp. xix-xxxvi.

and English-speaking unstable democracies and dictatorships, Latin American democracies and Latin American stable dictatorships. This cluster of variables, which together he called economic development, was, therefore, crucial in estimating the prospects of the growth of a developed polity out of a backward society.

But even within this cluster of variables, all were not equally important. Citing Daniel Lerner's study on the Middle East,[7] Lipset emphasises quite strongly that of all these variables, it is education which is definitely a necessary condition for democracy.

> Education presumably broadens man's outlook, enables him to understand the need for norms of tolerance, restrains him from adhering to extremist doctrines, and increases his capacity to make rational electoral choices.[8]

Further, at the level of individual behaviour,

> the higher one's education, the more likely one is to believe in democratic values and support democratic practices.[9]

It is only *after* there is a sufficient spread of literacy, and therefore a wide area for the operation of the media of communication that democracy, that "crowning institution of the participant society", begins to function as a stable social order.

The main thrust of Lipset's argument in identifying economic development, that is wealth, industrialisation, education and urbanisation, as the chief indicator of the prospects of political development leading to the establishment of a stable democratic order, ends up in a proposition which the wisdom of Aristotle had grasped more than two thousand years ago.[10] Lipset says,

7 Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (Glencoe, Illinois : Free Press, 1958).

8 Lipset, op. cit., p. 39.

9 ibid., p. 40.

10 "... the best form of political society is one where power is vested in the middle classes.... good government is attainable in those states where there is a large middle class, large enough, if possible, to be stronger than both of the other classes, but at any rate large enough to be stronger than either of them singly,...The reason why democracies are generally more secure and more

> Increased wealth affects the political role of the middle class by changing the shape of the stratification structure from an elongated pyramid, with a large lower-class base, to a diamond with a growing middle class. A large middle class tempers conflict by rewarding moderate and democratic parties and penalizing extremist groups.[11]

Gradual economic development, by spreading education and urbanisation and increasing wealth, would create such a large, moderate and democratically minded middle class. On the political plane, a broad-based system of authority and legitimacy would be established by preventing the emergence of deep cleavages among the population over a small number of highly salient divisive issues. Repeating the familiar "cross-cutting cleavages" thesis of pluralist democratic theory, Lipset states :

> ...individuals under cross-pressure...those belonging to groups predisposing them in differing directions, or who have friends supporting different parties, or who are regularly exposed to the propaganda of different groups—are less likely to be strongly committed politically.[12]

Of all the evils which beset the path to heaven, the most fearsome is the development of intense ideological politics : the extensive political mobilisation of large numbers of people around highly emotive issues leads to the growth of "mass society"[13], which is the very antithesis of an orderly democratic society. It is important that this point be borne in mind, since this is where later theorists depart radically from Lipset's approach.

permanent than oligarchies is the character of their middle class, which is more numerous, and is allowed a larger share in the government, than it is in oligarchies." Aristotle, *Politics*, tr. Ernest Barker (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 182.

11 Lipset, op. cit., p. 51.

12 ibid., p. 77.

13 William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1957).

V

The next phase is best represented by Apter.[14] In discussing questions of economic development and political stability, Lipset used relatively simple and familiar conceptual categories like class, class interest, ideology, legitimacy, authority, and he handled these within a framework which concentrated mainly on the structure of political authority in its relation to the stratification system. There was no pretense of coping with the totality of a social system. The theoretical framework presented in Apter's book does attempt to do this; it is consequently extremely complex in its sophistication. Almond and Coleman had presented a structural-functional model of a political system which was of little use beyond the comparison and classification of different political systems at specific points of time in relation to the Western democratic model of a developed polity.[15] Apter's framework deals with both the structural characteristics of a political system, and actions of individuals and groups at the behavioural level, and in addition, by introducing a normative dimension to the problem, supplies the system with a dynamic logic.

Let us examine his framework in detail. Apter's basic model of the social system in its general aspects may perhaps be called Parsonian, but he borrows most heavily from the detailed structural model developed by Marion Levy.[16] The key concept here is that of the *role*. In discussing systemic change

14 David E. Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1965).

15 'Introduction' to G. A. Almond and J. S. Coleman, eds., *The Politics of the Developing Areas* (Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 1-64. It is for this reason that we have deliberately neglected to discuss this approach which, it must be noted, has nevertheless enjoyed considerable influence for a number of years in the field of comparative politics, less because of any intrinsic theoretical merit than the dominating position of their proponents within the professional structure of the discipline in the United States.

16 Marion J. Levy, *The Structure of Society* (Princeton, N. J. : Princeton University Press, 1952).

and particularly changes of structure, therefore, the main emphasis is on identifying new roles—the adaptation of old roles to new situations, the creation of new roles, the resistance offered by those refusing to accept new roles. It is only after new roles are created that a system can change.

The whole question of the transition from traditional into modern societies is, therefore, seen in terms of changing roles. Apter defines modernisation as

> the spread of roles which, functionally linked and organized in industrial settings, make their appearance in systems lacking an industrial infrastructure.[17]

The modernised system, meaning thereby a stable but innovative society with differentiated and flexible structures and having the technological skills and knowledge needed for industrialisation, is a necessary prerequisite for the advanced industrial society : "...it is not possible to industrialize without modernization".[18] In considering development, therefore, Apter is emphasising the crucial importance of the political institutionalisation which is necessary for an industrial revolution.

What exactly are these modernising roles which are so crucial ? These roles are what Apter calls *careers*. Careers are not merely occupations ; they are not professions either. They entail a certain authority which derives from competence based on expertise. Careers imply a recognition, within the institutional structure, of their legitimacy as roles which contain the knowledge and skill necessary for the modernisation of a society. Modernisation, indeed, is "a progressive translation of as many occupations as possible into careers".[19] Those who occupy these career roles constitute a modernising elite. In any modernising society, the sections of the elite which perform in the most important modernising roles are the technical and professional career services, the functionaries of modernising political parties, and the military-civil service bureaucracies.

Having identified the key modernising roles, the problem then becomes one of defining the sort of political structure

17 Apter, op. cit., p. v.
18 ibid., p. 67.
19 ibid., p. 163.

which is most conducive to the establishment and effective functioning of these roles. The transitional process is here divided into four stages—(a) establishing the first modernising polity, (b) development from early to late modernisation, (c) transition from late modernisation to early industrialisation, and (d) establishing the industrialised polity. Different types of political structures are suitable at each stage. The establishment of the early modernised polity is best accomplished by a mobilisation system, one which wields the political community into a collective unit creating new values, and educating and socialising the entire community into those values, and emphasising the primary importance of realising the potentiality inherent in those values. The mobilisation system operates through a militant party organisation, and government enterprise is the chief instrument of economic growth. The development from early to late modernisation, however, is more optimally secured under a modernising autocracy or a neomercantilist society. The former is a centralised authority system with a relatively traditional ideology, the monarch representing the unity of the nation. The neomercantilist society does not have a formal monarchical structure—it is usually republican in form—but it also employs a traditionalist ideology and attempts to institutionalise a basically charismatic form of authority. The rationale of all economic activity in both the modernising autocracy as well as the neomercantilist society is political, the form employed being a mixture of private and public enterprise. The third stage of converting late modernisation is again best accomplished by a mobilisation system. The final stage of transition into a modern industrial society requires, for the establishment of a stable democratic order, a reconciliation system, which essentially is the liberal form of representative government as known in the Western democracies.

A crucial question, however, still remains to be answered. Why should traditional society stagnating at a low level of stable social equilibrium attempt to modernise at all ? The answer is supplied by a normative assumption of the model. Apter says

> The work of modernization is the burden of this age. It is an objective that is not confined to a single place or region, to a particular country or class, or to a privileged group of people. Modernization, and the desire for it, reaches around the world.[20]

Today, every society wishes to modernise. Modernisation, consequently, is a matter of choice, and in every society of the world, this choice is being made.

> All around us new moral communities are being established, and the context of moral fulfilment is modernization.[21]

New values are being created, and hence, new roles are established. The whole analysis regarding suitable structures and ideologies follows.

To link up the work of Apter, and the stage of thinking it represents, with the previous analyses of political development, the main point to be noted is that the liberal dogma of accepting only stable representative structures as the media for any kind of development has been given up. In an oblique reference to the work of Lipset or Almond, Apter states quite emphatically :

> Difficulties arise for comparative study because we have enshrined moral principles in models that have served well in a Western political context. The models we derive from concepts of justice, equity, and good society may be quite inappropriate for modernizing societies.... Specifically, what I reject are the comfortably formulated descriptive models that are assumed to embody abstract principles of virtue, when, in reality, they embody one's preferences and prejudices—for example, the definition of democracy as the operation of two-party or multi-party systems, since 'totalitarian' systems exclude more than one party.[22]

Democracy, then, is what is obtained at the end of political

20 ibid., p. 1.

21 ibid., p. 15.

22 ibid.

development. In the period of transition, democratic institutions are not conducive to modernisation or industrialisation, and only a modern industrial society can provide the social bases for democracy. What is needed in the transitional period is a relatively stable structure of authority which can create new values and legitimise political action to realise those values. Given the urge for modernisation, the desired political structure may be utterly undemocratic.

VI

Another important theoretical development now needs to be linked up with this discussion. The concept of the *plural society* grew out of the study of colonial societies, and a major part of contemporary discussions regarding political stability in developing societies hinges around this concept. The concept was first introduced by James Furnivall, a British colonial administrator who spent a lifetime as a civil servant in Burma. In his study of the Dutch East Indies,[23] Furnivall defines the plural society as

> comprising two or more elements or social orders which live side by side, yet without mingling, in one political unit.

In such a society, communities are separated on the basis of race, language or religion, each community having a distinct set of cultural values which are incompatible with those of the other communities. There is, consequently, a complete lack of consensus in the polity. Only an externally imposed authority can hold such a society together, and the obvious candidate is a colonial power.

Furnivall's plural society concept was subsequently handled in two completely divergent ways. One set of scholars

23 J. S. Furnivall, *Netherlands India* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1939). Also, Furnivall, 'The Political Economy of the Tropical Far East', *Journal of the Royal Central Asiatic Society*, 29, (1942), pp. 195-210, and Furnivall, 'Some Problems of Tropical Economy', in Rita Hinden, ed., *Fabian Colonial Essays* (London : George Allen & Unwin, 1945), pp. 161-184.

regarded the plural society as potentially a pluralistic one. The multiplicity of ethnic divisions was seen as either contributing to, or being subordinated by, other cleavages along economic or voluntary associational lines, thereby mitigating the possibility of sharp conflicts and strengthening the basic consensus on values. The studies of Stephen Morris on the Indians of East Africa, Daniel Crowley on Trinidad, and particularly Burton Benedict on Mauritius,[24] take this position. Morris highlights the presence of factions within ethnic groups which very often lead to political alliances cutting across ethnic lines. Crowley points out the familiarity of the members of one ethnic group with the cultures of other ethnic groups, and calls this situation a condition of "plural acculturation" contributing to the growth of social consensus. Benedict, applying the general formulations regarding social development in the sociological theories of Weber or Tonnies, emphasises the transition of a society divided mainly according to primordial groups into one where the chief dimensions are on the basis of class stratification. Economic modernisation, according to Benedict, creates cross-cutting cleavages which foster cooperation among different ethnic groups. Certain other scholars, J. D. Mitchell for example, have also leaned towards the consensualist position without, however, expressly depending upon the logical formulations of the functionalist theory. For him, the question of whether ethnic divisions result in consensus or conflict is purely a matter for empirical observation : no logical necessity is involved here. Mitchell, in his own study, however, cites numerous instances where tribal divisions break down as

24 H. S. Morris, 'Indians in East Africa : A Study in a Plural Society', *British Journal of Sociology*, 7, 3 (October 1956), pp. 194-214; Morris, 'The Plural Society', *Man*, 57, 8 (August 1957), pp. 124-125; Morris, 'Some Aspects of the Concept of Plural Society', *Man*, 67, 2 (June 1967), pp. 169-184; D. J. Crowley, 'Plural and Differential Acculturation in Trinidad', *American Anthropologist*, 59, 5 (October 1957), pp. 817-824; Burton Benedict, *Mauritius : Problems of a Plural Society* (London : Pall Mall, 1965), and Benedict, 'Stratification in Plural Societies', *American Anthropologist*, 64, 6 (December 1962), pp. 1233-1246.

a result of various economic and political pressures.[25]

The contrary position rests upon a rejection of the entire theoretical basis of functionalism as a social theory. The critique of functionalism has by now become quite voluminous,[26] but the main point which is relevant to the present discussion is this. The functionalist theory defines a society as having a minimum consensus on values, "a common value system" as Parsons calls it. Consequently, since all extant societies have such common values, any empirical research proceeds on the assumption that such common values exist, and the researcher, therefore, does not regard disintegrative tendencies, for conflict, or the use of power to control such conflict, as being theoretically very significant. It is this assumption which the conflict theorists of plural society reject. M. G. Smith, for instance, notes that in spite of the growth of a structure of class stratification as the result of economic development,

25 J. D. Mitchell, *Tribalism and the Plural Society* (London : Oxford University Press, 1960). Also see John Rex, 'The Plural Society in Sociological Theory', *British Journal of Sociology*, 10, 2 (June 1959), pp. 114-124, and Malcolm Cross, 'Cultural Pluralism and Sociological Theory : A Critique and Re-evaluation', *Social and Economic Studies*, 27, 4 (December 1968), pp. 381-397.

26 Some of the important critiques from within the tradition of bourgeois social theory, particularly in reference to its applications to politics, are Carl G. Hempel, 'The Logic of Functional Analysis' in L. Gross, ed., *Symposium on Sociological Theory* (New York : Harper & Row, 1959), pp. 271-307; Alvin W. Gouldner, 'Reciprocity and Autonomy in Functional Theory' in ibid., pp. 241-270; Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (London : Heinemann, 1972); Richard S. Rudner, *Philosophy of Social Sciences* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice-Hall, 1966), ch. 5; Robert E. Dowse, 'A Functionalist's Logic', *World Politics*, 18, 4 (July 1966), pp. 607-622; John C. Harsanyi, 'Rational-Choice Models of Political Behavior vs Functionalist and Conformist Theories', *World Politics*, 21, 4 (July 1969), pp. 513-538; W. G. Runciman, *Social Science and Political Theory* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1969), ch. 6; A. James Gregor, 'Political Science and the Uses of Functional Analysis', *American Political Science Review*, 62, 2 (June 1968), pp. 425-439; A. J. Groth, 'Structural-Functionalism and Political Development : Three Problems,' *Western Political Quarterly*, 23, 3 (September 1970), pp. 485-499.

cultural pluralism and its translation in politics do not disappear.[27] Van den Berghe similarly notes that inspite of the presence of non-ethnic divisions in society, political leaders very often use, and even magnify, ethnic divisions in order to gain support in the arena of political competition.[28]

The conflict theorists' case has recently been stated systematically, and very forcefully, by Rabushka and Shepsle.[29] The basic social divisions in any pre-modern society which is also plural, according to them, are primordial, mainly ethnic, that is along lines of race, tribe, language, religion or region. The most relevant characteristic of such divisions is cultural diversity, represented not only in distinct and incompatible value systems but also in separate institutional arrangements coexisting within a single political unit. With political modernisation in the form of the introduction of some kind of democratic institutions, politics exclusively follows these cultural lines. This defines the plural society. Because of the institutional basis of these ethnic groups, and the high emotive salience regarding their cultural values, these are the groups which can be most readily organised and sustained for political action. Consequently, "it is only natural that, when several of those communities are agglomerated into a single political entity, the local politician uses his community as his base of operations." Democratic institutions foster these ethnic divisions by dividing up the territory into constituencies which are in most cases culturally homogeneous and by placing the criterion of victory in the strength of numbers. For political leaders, therefore, the cultural group is the most obvious source of support. In systemic terms, this analysis leads inevitably to the conclusion

27 M. G. Smith, *The Plural Society in the British West Indies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965).

28 Pierre L. Van den Berghe, *Race and Racism : A Comparative Perspective* (New York: John Wiley, 1967); Van den Berghe, 'Pluralism and the Polity : A Theoretical Exploration' in L. Kuper and M. G. Smith, eds., *Pluralism in Africa* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1969), pp. 67-81.

29 Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth A. Shepsle, *Politics in Plural Societies : A Theory of Democratic Instability* (Columbus, Ohio : Charles Merrill, 1972).

that in order to maintain the political intergrity of such a plural society, and to carry through programmes of modernisation (if these are to be attempted at all), the rulers must either manipulate the instruments of democratic government or throw them overboard and replace them with some form of authoritarianism.

Attacking the problem from a very different angle, therefore, this line of theoretical inquiry also ends up in the conclusions of Apter.

VII

Huntington's work[30] attempts to put together all these theoretical developments into a single framework. While Apter's book was concerned more or less exclusively with constructing and detailing a conceptual framework within which the process of modernisation might be studied comparatively, Huntington is truly remarkable for his tremendous command over the empirical details of actual politics in the developing countries. Using this mass of details to establish his rather simple proposition, Huntington brings out the many varieties of development or decay which a transitional society might undergo in the process of change from a traditional society. Huntington's method is strikingly similar to the classical Aristotelian one, and many of his limitations are also germane to that method.

The basic proposition of Huntington's book is this. The whole question of political stability in a changing society depends upon the ratio between two variables, social mobilisation and political institutionalisation. If mobilisation proceeds at a faster rate than institutionalisation, the result inevitably is instability. Why? "Institutionalization is the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability. The level of institutionalization of any political system can be defined by the adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherence

30 Samuel H. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1968).

of its organizations and procedures."[31] This is an explicitly Parsonian definition, the implications of which we will explore below. Social mobilisation, on the other hand, is a process by which

> major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior.[32]

It occurs through urbanisation, the spread of literacy and education, the growth of mass media, all of which form, as we have seen, the very core of modernisation. Now, social mobilisation in itself is a highly destabilising process. It exposes large groups of people previously integrated into the traditional culture to completely new life-styles, new attitudes, and thereby creates high levels of aspirations and wants. Traditional society is unable to change itself quickly enough to satisfy these aspirations, and this leads to dissatisfaction and frustration. These dissatisfied groups are ready material for political mobilisation into movements demanding radical political change, and hence there is political instability.[33]

The concern for stability consequently leads Huntington to add another dimension to the problem posed by Apter. Modernisation is a pre-requisite for the development of an industrial society. Modernisation, however, necessarily implies social mobilisation. And social mobilisation without a correspondingly high level of institutionalisation is destabilising. Consequently, social mobilisation must necessarily be accompanied by a simultaneous process of political institutionalisation whereby changes made in organisations and procedures are given time to acquire value and stability. Social mobilisation,

31 ibid., p. 12.

32 Karl Deutsch's definition quoted by Huntington, ibid., p. 33.

33 This is the well-known "frustration-aggression" hypothesis which has given rise to a sizable literature in Political Sociology. This has now been summarised systematically using social psychological analysis and fairly sophisticated empirical techniques in Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1971).

in other words, should be gradual, and must keep pace with institutionalisation. If mobilisation outpaces institutionalisation, the result is not development, but rather political decay, the degeneration of the polity into what Huntington calls the praetorian society, a condition of permanent political instability and chaos, a society racked by continuous and violent mass political movements—the most extreme version of the "mass society."

Which traditional societies are best adapted for peaceful transition to modernisation? Huntington distinguishes between two kinds of traditional societies—one pluralistic in structure with dispersed power and rigid stratification, the other differentiated with highly centralised power and an open and fluid bureaucratic structure. The former is the classical feudal system, the latter the centralised bureaucratic state. Contrary to what may be expected, it is the former kind of traditional system which is better suited for a gradual and peaceful process of modernisation. The feudal tradition is more conservative, and hence can adapt itself to a gradual process of broadening the base of political participation as modernisation proceeds. The fluid bureaucratic system with highly centralised power is much more likely to generate radical egalitarian movements mobilising large sections of the masses and broadening political participation at a rate far outpacing the adaptability of the traditional political institutions. The examples Huntington cites are feudal Japan as opposed to bureaucratic China, the feudal Fulani-Hausa system of Nigeria as opposed to bureaucratic Buganda.[34]

Coming to the question of the political structures most suitable for stable modernisation, Huntington first considers the role of monarchies. Traditional monarchies have no alternative but to promote social and economic reform, but this necessarily implies a threat to their own existence. The ensuing structural change may be a very limited one as in a coup d'etat (Thailand, for example). Here there is not much scope for further broadening of political participation, and modernisation,

34 Huntington, pp. 166-176.

therefore, must remain relatively stagnant. A second alternative may be to remove the entire institution of monarchy, without replacing it with any alternative institutions which acquire legitimacy (the illustration is the Kassim coup in Iraq). Here the polity degenerates into a praetorian state. The third alternative is a full-scale revolution producing a modern party dictatorship. Most societies, according to Huntington, are unfortunately (read 'fortunately'!) too backward for revolution.[35] In certain contexts, a modernising military dictatorship may be the most effective means for building strong political institutions. This, however, would be the case only in those societies where most social groups are relatively inarticulate, that is where political participation is limited, as in Pakistan or Mexico or Turkey or South Korea or El Salvador.[36] All of these methods, however, are merely temporary arrangements to fill the gap between power and legitimate authority which exists in all changing societies. The only lasting way of solving this problem, according to Huntington, is to develop two-party systems, both parties assimilating the rural masses into their political organisations, and thus producing "the bridge between rural and urban areas which is the key to political stability in modernising countries".[37]

VIII

The question of political stability has become inextricably linked with the modern bourgeois theory of political development. The resulting contradictions within the theory are, therefore, directly related to the very formulation of the problem. As we had mentioned at the very beginning of our discussion, social development necessarily involves large-scale changes both in the material bases of a society as well as in the structures of ideas and values. Any historically rooted theory of development must, therefore, not only take account of small-scale quantum changes in particular social structures

35 ibid., pp. 177-191.
36 ibid., pp. 237-266.
37 ibid., p. 460.

keeping the basic character of the general social system intact, but also admit the necessity of wholesale changes in the very nature of the social system. A theory of development which also holds on to the idea of political stability as a primary assumption must necessarily run into this basic contradiction. Surely, it must be a very simple historically valid proposition that no major changes in the structure of values and norms can occur (and this is what the concept of modernisation implies) without major changes as well in the structure of political authority, as indeed in the more basic structures related to the process of production.

The fundamental inadequacy of the recent Western writings on the subject of political development is, therefore, related to this concern with political stability which prevents the development of any comprehensive theory of historical change in the underdeveloped societies. The result is reflected in the selection and definition of primary conceptual categories and basic assumptions of the different models of development we have reviewed. Lipset is the only theorist who has explicitly recognised the influence on political development of stratification groups and their separate interests; this, however, is entirely at the behavioural level. He, therefore, neglects to develop a theory of the politicisation of classes and the role of political leadership in shaping the movements which arise out of conflicting class interests. Moreover, Lipset lacks a structural theory of a developing political system, which, as Apter and Huntington show, is crucial in determining the course of development. The conflict theorists of plural society also have a theory of group interests; their position, however, is premised on a complete rejection of class stratification as a significant variable in the politics of plural societies.

It is precisely the concern with stability that leads Apter to adopt the Parsonian framework whereby the study of consensual values, as opposed to group interests, becomes central to the study of society. Apter assumes a moral consensus in all developing societies regarding the need for modernisation. His structural theory, consequently, proceeds on the assumption that every one wants to modernise, and the problem thereby is

reduced to the identification of optimal structural characteristics at each stage of development. His framework completely ignores the fact that everyone may not have same urge to modernise, that everyone need not mean the same thing by modernisation, that there may exist politically significant groups who may not want to modernise at all. Huntington, from a different perspective, adopts another Parsonian assumption which is theoretically unacceptable. A crucial concept in Huntington's work is institutionalisation. Now, institutionalisation is defined as the process by which organisations and procedures acquire legitimacy and stability. A society is stable if its organisations and procedures are institutionalised; conversely, the institutions of a society have acquired legitimacy if the society is stable. The tautology is obvious. Huntington's theory of stability, whereby stability is a function of two variables, is not an operational and testable theory since one of the two variables is not an independent variable at all. Such circular reasoning, as those familiar with the critique of functionalist theory will know, is germane to the very logic of functional analysis. The theory of political development demonstrates most vividly the critical inadequacy of functionalist sociology as a conceptual framework for the study of macro-social change.

The modern theory of political development has the same teleological character as the classical utilitarian theory on colonial societies. The ultimate goal of development is the representative democracy of the West European and North American countries. It is with this end in view that all our theorists have prescribed strategies for political development. In the years immediately following the Second World War, this theory reflected a buoyant optimism. The curse of the non-western world was its poverty and economic backwardness, and that was the breeding ground of communism. All that was needed, therefore, was a generous dose of Western aid which would lead these countries through the path of economic take-off into the promised land of democracy. The subsequent development of theory reflects the growing pessimism in Western minds regarding the future of the developing societies. Apter sug-

gested that the transitional phase of modernisation was the most difficult, and to build the cultural and attitudinal basis for the developed industrial society a period of undemocratic rule was necessary. The plural society theorists regarded most underdeveloped societies as being inherently unstable, where integrity and stability could only be maintained by the authoritrain use of power. In Huntington, finally, we find the realisation that not only rapid economic development, but the very process of modernisation itself, is destabilising. The pace of modernisation, therefore, must be slowed down to allow the traditional society to adapt itself gradually to a broader base of political participation.

Indeed there is a much more fundamental theoretical contradiction in the face of which all bourgeois theories regarding social development in underdeveloped countries must inevitably flounder. The theoretical goal of bourgeois development, derived from the premises of the bourgeois ideology of liberalism, is the model of the advanced capitalist societies of Western Europe and North America—their economy, their political structure, their culture. Ironically, the historically indubitable fact is that this advanced capitalism would not have emerged in Western Europe and North America had there not been a vast colonial empire in the rest of the world. And the dialectical relationship which thereby developed between metropolitan capitalism in the West and the dependent economies in the colonies necessarily precluded the possibility of a similar growth towards advanced capitalism in Asia or Africa or Latin America. The structural distortions that were consequently introduced into the colonial economies still make it difficult for underdeveloped countries to grow beyond a state of dependent and stunted capitalist development. In the absence of an independent and full-grown bourgeoisie, the economies of these countries, if they remain within the orbit of the world capitalist system, must maintain a level of stagnation within a range varying from total subordination to foreign monopoly capital to different mixes of comprador-ship, independent national capitalism and partial state capitalism. In colonial and post-colonial societies, there is no

organic class which satisfies the sufficient conditions for the formation of a bourgeoisie which can itself assume the position of social leadership and thereby carry the economy, and thence society, on to a path of industrial and democratic revolution. In the absence of such a hegemonic bourgeois class, the post-colonial bourgeoisie must share power with the traditional feudal and semi-feudal classes and with sections of the upper petty bourgeoisie. The political structure of such a society will, therefore, be determined by the internal configuration of power within the alliance of the ruling classes and the combined strength of this ruling alliance against those whom it exploits. A framework of formal political democracy may exist in situations where, as in India, the ruling classes, in the course of a nationalist movement, have come to enjoy a certain degree of support based on its populist image. This populist image, however, has to be continuously refurbished in order to maintain this class rule within the framework of political democracy ; whenever it becomes inconvenient, the forms of even such political democracy are compromised, and even scrapped. This, however, is only a reflection of the relative political strength of the ruling classes. Socially the bourgeoisie remains inherently weak, and cannot therefore mobilise the internal resources necessary to lead the economy towards an industrial revolution. In most other underdeveloped countries, however, the ruling classes do not even enjoy this degree of legitimacy to permit class rule by elections ; they must necessarily rely on a much more naked use of force. It is quite clear, therefore, that the basic conditions necessary for successful capitalist development are absent in all colonial and post-colonial societies, and this is so because of the very logic of exploitation under colonialism. Consequently, it is also clear that there cannot be any viable political development along the liberal bourgeois path in such post-colonial societies.

That is the basic theoretical contradiction which no bourgeois theory can resolve. The only viable path of economic and political development of an underdeveloped society is premised on a total break with the forces of world capitalism and proceeds ultimately towards a socialist revolution. This

no bourgeois theory can admit. Hence, we have the endless search for groups which are "modern" in their outlook, that is, groups which will be culturally receptive to the West and will agree to enter into economic relationships with it, and groups which will at the same time maintain some measure of political stability at home, that is, protect these economic relationships from the uncertainties of a rapidly changing political leadership. Hence, the twin objectives of political development in contemporary bourgeois political theory are modernisation and stability. In contrast with the early flush of optimistic liberal enthusiasm regarding the democratising effects of economic development, it is now quite clearly admitted that "political development" is better served by a prolonged period of economic stagnation while "institutionalisation" can proceed gradually.

The links between these shifts in the theoretical position and the shifts in the official neocolonial policies of the Western powers, particularly the United States, can be shown quite clearly. The Rostow stage is linked to the period when Western policy proceeded on the assumption that the economic development of the backward countries was the key to making the world safe for democracy. The crucial positions here were occupied by those countries of Asia which were already on their way to the take-off stage and which had already established some form of democratic institutions. The policy implication was that massive doses of Western financial and technological aid had to be pumped into the economies of these countries in order to help them achieve the all important "take-off." The shift in policy occurred when it was realised that financial aid did not necessarily bring that elusive "take-off" within the grasp of the stagnant economies of these countries, and, more important, that it bred divisive political movements challenging the existing regimes. Economic development and modernisation sharpened existing social cleavages and created new ones. Not only that, the development of capitalism in the underdeveloped countries often impelled the bourgeoisie of the third world countries to demand greater independence from Western economic interference in their economies. The

focus then shifted from the politically relatively developed countries to the relatively backward and less democratic ones, and the keynote of policy shifted from economic development to political stability. Existing structures of power had to be preserved, even at the cost of economic development and modernisation. The bastions of the status quo in these societies were the professional middle classes linked with landed property, or a military oligarchy, or perhaps a charismatic autocrat. These were the sections which could be counted upon both to contain divisive movements arising within the country, and to remain allied to the West in their external relations. The new theory, as seen in Apter or Huntington, therefore, rationalised the new policy by granting these people the historical role of modernisers, modernisers who were nevertheless conservatives. These were, consequently, the people who would take the traditional society through a path of orderly modernisation and supervise a political development without revolution.

The wheel has thus come full circle. In a process which is strikingly similar to the course of development of liberal opinion in Britain regarding colonial policy from the beginning to the end of the nineteenth century, American social science has moved within a quarter of a century since the end of the Second World War from the liberal faith expressed by Lipset in economic progress and democracy to the realisation found in Huntington that it is against the interests of the world capitalist system for the underdeveloped countries to achieve any social state other than that of a stunted capitalist growth.

The modern bourgeois theory of political development is, therefore, in all its stages the "scientific" embodiment of the ideology of a new colonialism.

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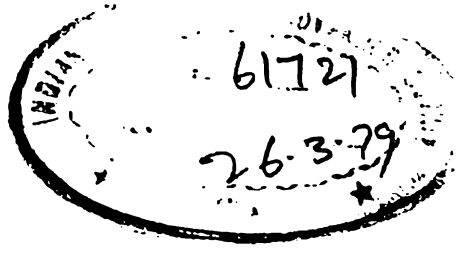
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