

The Reawakening of a Slumbering Tradition A Reply to Margareta Bertilsson

Liberalism is confronted with a glaring discrepancy between the end of self-government and the facts of the social structure. The real problem confronting the dictatorial areas of the Western world today in their domestic affairs is how to transfer a larger share of political control to the people. The liberal goal of self-government is far from realized under conditions in which vast accumulations of wealth and economic power leave their impact on the political structure (Easton 1949:37).

In her reply to my paper "Politics as Praxis", the sociologist Margareta Bertilsson asks whether political scientists are willing to adopt the fundamental political claim of the new politics, namely, that political theory can never be 'neutral' or 'innocent', because of its intimate connection with existing structures of domination, on the one side, and the transformative capacity of political action, on the other. Are we really prepared to accept that our theoretical frameworks form their own praxis and that this praxis will reflect our initial choice between the politics of the status quo and a politics dedicated to the task of expanding agents' autonomy of action?

I understand why Bertilsson raises this classical question of the Aristotelian philosophy of praxis. Seen in the light of the established theoretical perspectives of mainstream political science, a radical sociologist, operating within the boundaries of critical theory, is certainly justified in anticipating a negative answer. For more than two decades mainstream political science has persistently refused to acknowledge that our field is one of power rather than of norm or meaning. In this epoch of the domination of the notions of, first, solidarity in normative functionalism and, second, self-interest in rational choice theory, political action has continuously been treated as prompted either by a 'biological need' for normative integration 'out there' in the social structure or by a 'physical mechanism' in the individual actor for maximizing or satisficing an objective function. As a result the insight of our 'old' traditions into the logical connection between power and political action – the political capacity of doing otherwise – has totally disappeared from sight. The authority of the political system in the society has been translated into a medium for realizing the generalizable interests of the normative culture. The political influence of human beings in the political system has been converted into an instrument for realizing the reasons that leaders have for their strategic conduct.

However, as I see it, the crucial question is not whether political scientists today are prepared to acknowledge that "seen in terms of being filtered into the world they analyse, the practical ramifications of the

social sciences have been, and are, very profound indeed" (Giddens 1984:354, cf Bertilsson 1987). As my article indicated, there is now a rapidly growing awareness of the significance of connecting empirical political research to the analysis of the relation between power and autonomy of action. The puzzle is how mainstream political scientists could ever come to forget the relationship between authority and allocation which constituted the point of origin of their own traditions.

The Link between the New and the Old Politics

In 1953 David Easton introduced the gross orienting concept of *political system*, justifying its specificity by reference to its intricate connections with praxis. "The findings of psychology, sociology, or economics", he argued, "are less intimately connected with revealing the actual locus of power in the community or the channels whereby existing power formations struggle to influence social policy" (Easton 1953:50). Political research more easily creates its own practice than other kinds of social research, since "History has yet to show us empowered groups who welcomed investigation into the roots and distribution of their strength. Such knowledge is at least discomfiting, if not inherently dangerous; the underlying unifying myth concerning the location of power is seldom borne out by the facts" (ibid:51). It implicates "a potential danger to those who actually possess social power", revealing that "(b)y the very nature of its research interests, political science is in a particularly exposed position, hence its virtual extinction in dictatorial countries" (ibid:51).

In my view, one basic riddle of contemporary political theory and research is how our old perspective of BOTH political system AND praxis could come to escape the consciousness of BOTH mainstream political science AND the new politics as praxis. The crucial point made by our slumbering tradition was precisely (1) that a science of politics can be distinguished from a science of economics or culture by reference to its non-reducible relation to the ongoing *political process* in and through which policies are made and implemented for society; (2) that the theoretical practices of political scientists can be distinguished from the theoretical practices of economists or sociologists by reference to their non-reducible relation to the particular *political structure* that represents the actual way policies are made and implemented in a given political practice (praxis).

Rather than obstructing the new politics of praxis, our old political systems tradition provides it the theoretical pre-condition of turning its interest in popular sovereignty into a real organizational possibility. For unless we presuppose that the ability of the human subject to make a prudent decision has its point of origin in

the ability of the political system to make and implement binding decisions for society, we would stand little chance in demonstrating that political agents "could have done otherwise and in this way have realized the moment of freedom inherent to their action" (Bertilsson 1987). Then we would have to assume that the power of political doing manifests the causally efficient purposes IN the political system at any given moment in time. And this would in turn prevent us from understanding the prudent decision of the human being as afforded by the creative political decision-making POTENTIAL which all human beings, at all times and in all places, equally share in common in virtue of their membership of a self-transforming political system.

As I see it, the distinctly political problem in the philosophy of praxis, as formulated by, for example, Nietzsche and Heidegger, is its tendency to convert the power of political doing into a human GOAL of accumulating power for the sake of accumulation as such or in itself. In my view, the new politics as praxis bears witness to this tendency when rooting the analysis of the capacity of the political system to make a difference in the society in the capacity of human actors to make a difference in the political system. It links the power of political doing to human purposiveness as "any act which an agent knows (believes) can be expected to manifest a particular quality or outcome, and in which this knowledge is made use of by the actor in order to produce this quality or outcome" (Giddens 1976:76). Hence, it cannot escape the conclusion that "(t)he reflexive elaboration of frames of meaning is characteristically imbalanced in relation to the possession of power, whether this be a result of the superior linguistic or dialectical skills of one person in conversation with another; the possession of relevant types of 'technical knowledge'; the mobilization of authority or 'force', etc." (ibid:113). However, if all there is to the power of political doing is a goal of appropriating 'dominion' or 'Herrschaft' over others, how could we then ever do otherwise in praxis? Then all there *could* be to political power is the attempt to restore an equilibrium of imbalanced powers which lies there 'in' the political system as its 'steady-state' from the very moment of its inception in the society.

The essential relevance of political analysis, as a non-reducible conceptual field of power relations, I will hold, is that it provides us a way of transcending this classical paradox of the philosophy of praxis. It can help us to show that 'things' really could be different, since the property of a social act that informs it with a political aspect is to be sought, not in the prudent decision-making of the human subject, but in the "act's RELATION TO the authoritative allocation of values for a society. In seeking to understand all social activities influencing this kind of

allocation, POLITICAL SCIENCE achieves its minimal homogeneity and cohesion" (Easton 1953:134, capital letters added).

The Hole of Political Power in Mainstream Political Science

In the original conception of the political system, political difference is supposed to reveal our common interest in understanding the CAPACITY to *allocate* values for society and to get these allocations accepted as *authoritative* by most members of the society most of the time. Today, as a result of the influence of normative functionalism and rational choice theory upon our discipline, authorization is generally thought of in terms of a non-rationalized belief in legitimacy whereas allocation is mostly identified with the rationality of belief and action. There simply is a hole in our actual research of political socialization and the strategic actions of leaders in which our original definition of politics, by reference to the 'can' of political action, is situated.

However, as I see it, this hole – which can also be localized in Easton's own research (with Jack Dennis 1969, 1973) – has not emerged because of a lack of *insight* into the difference between prudence and other kinds of knowledgeability, as Bertilsson seems to argue. My traditions do acknowledge the different kinds of knowledgeability that underlie our capacities for using artifacts (technology), speaking a language (ethics) and making decisions (prudence). The heated discussions of reason and morality between our scientists and philosophers, for example (Barry 1965, Gewirth 1978, Hare 1981, Rawls 1971), seem to call attention to the fact that our knowledge of how to go on in a diversity of social contexts (technical competence) does not in and of itself help us to feel and know what it is to be alive (aesthetic-moral competence). Tacitly, at least, they carry the insight that the subject can *explain* her feelings by reference to the 'know how' that derives from her observations, but that she cannot use this 'know how' to *understand* the feelings she experiences (cf Fodor 1981, Laszlo 1971).

But in addition most political scientists, like myself, are aware that one may be able to explain and understand one's feelings towards a variety of things and yet lack the 'soundness' required for choosing between all those things. Our connections with the 'scheming' and 'plotting' political agent have made us conscious that our 'knowing how' and 'feeling as' cannot release us from the burden of reflecting critically upon 'what to do and when'. This insight into the relation between political decision-making and the agent's anticipation of outcomes formed the basis of our 'old' power approach, 'Politics: Who Gets What, When, How?' (Lasswell

1932), having the struggle of wills and, hence, the way in which one individual or collectivity influences the activity of another, as its unit of analysis (Catlin 1930). It also formed a constituent element in Dahl's 'modern' power pluralism, in which the adoption of a strategy is said to be "a little bit like deciding how to look for a fuse box in a strange house on a dark night after all the lights have blown" (1961:96). Neither tradition can meaningfully be said to neglect the intrinsic relation of *spacing* ('what') and *timing* ('when') to *POLITICKING* – to the ability to guess or intuit what is relevant and decisive, and to make a rapid estimate of the sum of a large number of factors that have not been (and in principle never can be) accurately determined.

No! The puzzle of political power in political science does not lie on the level of insight but on the level of truth. It emerges from the peculiar bond of political scientists to a modern science of culture and economics which ipso facto denies that the political decision-making process can have a logic and interests of its own not equivalent to, or fused with, the logic of possessive individualism on the market place or the interests of the full set of member groups in the normative culture.

From Power to Norm and Meaning

When it comes to the problem of truth, traditional political science's insight into the relation between prudence and the ability of the political agent to make a difference in the world imperceptibly turns into a theory of the relation between individual wants (motives) and collective needs. We meet this non-politics in normative functionalism's perception of the problem of control of political power as "above all the problem of *integration*, of building the power of individuals and sub-collectivities into a coherent system of legitimized authority where power is fused with collective responsibility" (Parsons 1951:127). On this view, political action acquires power and reality only as a medium for maintaining or restoring 'society's' need for normative order. We also meet it in rational choice theory's general statement that "truth is what it is rational (in ideal conditions) to believe, and that principles of justice are what it is rational (in ideal conditions) to adopt" (Barry and Hardin 1982:368). On this view, political gains reality and power only in and through its instantiation as a rational choice by individuals' acting exclusively in the name of their own subjective interests.

The puzzle of power raised by this collective/individual opposition is not simply that the latter tends to make power operate against an unexamined institutional backdrop whereas the former tends to disregard domination as relating to the active accomplishments of leaders

(cf Giddens 1982:28–39). The puzzle rather is why they identify the power OF political doing with "the greater power", that is with 'Leviathan's' "power *over* the lesser, not merely *more* power *than* the lesser" (Parsons 1951:126). For 'Leviathan's' power OVER his subjects does not manifest the power OF political doing as such but the actual WAY in which it is put to use by political agents in their structuration of the political system as a regularized practice. Therefore, to identify an authoritative allocation with its sanctioning as a 'valid' norm or meaning is actually to obstruct our attempt to demonstrate that we can do something with an authoritative allocation substantially different from what could be done without it.

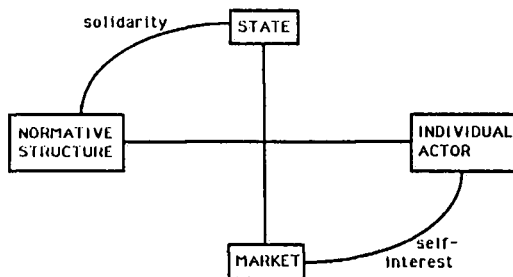
If the allocation of values can manifest nothing but the power of a rationally acting leadership over its subjects, then, obviously, the non-rationalized yet purposive 'politicking' of lay-actors in the political community cannot be said to make any real difference in the allocative process. If, on the other hand, the one necessary and consequential function of authority is to attain the generalizable interests of the 'civic' society 'outside', then, self-evidently, this authority cannot be said to make any real difference in that society at all. It follows that if we are to justify our own non-reducible existence in the social scientific field, we must somehow try to transcend the tendency in our discipline to identify the reproduction of the political decision-making process with the reproduction of the material or symbolic values which it serves to allocate authoritatively for society. This, I will hold, first of all calls for us to acknowledge that the problem in both normative functionalism and rational choice theory is that they tend to confer on the *members* of the political system (individuals and groups) an ontological primacy over their INTERRELATIONS as a *whole* (cf Wilden 1971).

Because normative functionalism and rational choice theory begin their political analyses from the question of how the requirements of the normative culture or the liberal economy are to be met, they both tend to neglect that their concepts of socialization and rationalization do not identify the non-reducible kind of social activities of making and implementing decisions that go on in the political system through times of both structural stability and change. They precisely identify the particular way these activities are PERFORMED by the members of the political system in their structuration of that system as a regularized practice situated in time and space.

Political action points to the persistence of the relation of the political system to the society as a whole. Political performance, in contrast, points to the maintenance (or change) of the relations between the members of the political system. Mistaking the former for the latter,

mainstream political science actually undermines the logic of political relations, saying, that the political system cannot be a member of itself, nor can one of the members BE the political system, because the term used for the political system is of a different level of abstraction from the terms used for the members of the political system (cf Wilden 1971:117). This in turn makes it translate the theoretical question of how values are allocated authoritatively for society in and through its political subsystem into the practical question of whether liberal democracy serves to fulfill either the wants of self-interested agents on the market place or the generalizable interest in solidarity of the civic culture (cf, for example Kaufmann et al 1986):

Figur 1: Politics as a phenomenon of solidarity or self-interest



The oscillation in mainstream political science between solidarity and self-interest is most explicitly felt in liberalism's definition of the modern state as a plurality of competing elites acting upon a general consensus on cultural values and norms (cf Bilton et al 1981). The modern, liberal-democratic (or capitalist) state is not equivalent to the political system, since the former is but one of the many non-reducible forms in which the latter has occurred in the course of its history. It does not identify the ongoing process of allocating values authoritatively for society. It identifies the particular structures and practices through which the outputs of the political system are influenced, formulated, and implemented and that thereby determine the actual way in which the valued things of the society are allocated at a given moment in time (time-space) (cf Easton 1965B:474).

The actual operative problem in mainstream political science, therefore, is its tendency to mistake the persistence of the political system in the society, as an invariant *type* of social organization-in-itself, for the maintenance of liberal democracy in the political system, as a temporal *form* of political organization-for-itself. It hereby provides us a false image of the historically specific in-

sulation of polity and economy in liberal democracy as something which can be taken as naturally given. Far from being 'natural', the insulation is the concrete outcome of a particular, given process through which commitment of freedom of contract, part of a wider set of claims to human liberty fought for by the bourgeoisie, became institutionally distinguished from legitimate domination, bolstered by monopoly of the means of violence (cf Giddens 1981; chapter 7-8). Neglecting this fact, mainstream political science binds us to discussing whether the new form of 'politicking' and political decision-making represented by the liberal-democratic state are concerned "primarily with the conditions of action" or principally "have to do with "non-rational" factors, that is, those involved in the operation of *internalized* values and norms" (Parsons 1961:39). As a result it prevents us from even raising the question of how the new and the old mode of making and implementing political decisions for society made its presence felt upon the emerging capitalist economy or civic culture.

I will, of course, not deny that the emergence of the liberal-democratic state is significantly related to solidarity and self-interest. I will merely insist that mainstream political science, in focusing exclusively on these issues, ipso facto excludes such crucial POLITICAL phenomena from their analyses, as (1) the relation between the absolutist state, the nation-state and nationalism; (2) the relation between the new liberal-democratic state's monopoly on violence and its replacing of the city as a 'power-container', playing a significant part in the formation of the capitalist economy; (3) the achievement of an effective 'management' of labor in liberal democracy through the handing over of the right to govern and delegate work to capitalists, thus implicitly extending political surveillance into the work-place; (4) the achievement of 'citizen rights' through the active interventions of labor movements in the political 'arena'; (5) the achievement of adequate steering via a leadership having the courage and the inclination to act AGAINST possessive individualism and the prevailing normative consensus; (6) the achievement of control of public steering via a citizenry possessing the will to resistance and action (cf, for example, Badie and Birnbaum 1983, Crozier 1982, Frankel 1983, Giddens 1981 and 1984, Held (ed) 1983, Jessop 1982, Lundquist 1987, Offe 1985, Olsen 1983). As it stands, mainstream political science tends to leave the impression that the 'politicking' of leaders and lay-actors is brought about mechanically by social forces and interests outside the political system as such or in itself. Rather than examining their 'politicking', it examines how the occurrence of a new group interest in the civic culture brings about a new interest

group or political party in the 'political arena', and how this new interest group or party 'manages' or 'represents' the new interest in its private competition with others in order to secure that it is not significantly compromised or subverted.

From Meaning and Norm and Back to Power

The puzzle in mainstream political science is its tendency to conceal its own insight into practical 'politicking' behind a culturally or economically oriented theory. In the former theory, prudent decision-making is made a phenomenon of the "process by which individuals come to develop a sense of *common* political identity; an identity that implies common affective commitment to the political system, as well as a sense of identity with one's fellow citizens" (Almond and Verba 1965:371). In the latter theory, it is made the property of publicly selected leaders, who, in order to "achieve their own goals, secure the services of subleaders, and obtain outside support from constituents", usually "find it a useful strategy to commit themselves (or appear to commit themselves) to certain choices they will make under specified conditions" (Dahl 1961:96). On these views, neither the political system nor its lay-actors can be said to be able to make a difference in the world. The prudent decisions of the latter are concealed behind the argument that "conflicts over democratic *norms* are resolved among the professionals, with perhaps some involvement by parts of the political stratum but little or no involvement by most citizens" (Dahl:324). The authoritative allocations of the former are made an epiphenomenon of the "mixture of attitudes found in the civic culture" which "fits" the democratic political system" (Almond and Verba:360), by acting "as a buffer between the individual and the political system" and by reducing "the availability /---/ of the ordinary citizen for involvement in unstabilizing mass movements" (ibid:357).

In fact, the institutionalization of the perspectives of modern science in our discipline, has turned political energy and information, the identifying criteria of our field of study, into inherently non-cumulative and 'diffuse' phenomena which only come into being when being 'exercised'. They have come to appear as gaining reality and power only in combination with a conflict of interest, a will to be subdued. Yet, the beginning development of modern society into the 'planning and information' society highlights the pressing demand for analyses of how political power is 'stored up' as energy for future use and as information for future survival. On the one side the actual development indicates that the power of public decision-making is as imminently present in times of integration as in times of conflict. On the

other side it reveals that this power carries a non-reducible political issue of domination and freedom, manifesting BOTH the leadership's attempt to control and supervise the political conduct of lay-actors AND lay-actors' attempt to control and supervise the public decision-making and implementing of leaders.

My 'Politics as Praxis' was about scholars recognizing this demand and, hence, the fact that public consumption has taken on unthought-of dimensions, which call for more and more public decisions and implementing actions, on the level of steering, and for a more and more active control of public decision-making and implementation, on the level of the huge network or community in which lay-actors are engaged in their day-to-day political life. Their new political theories and modes of research all reflect the fact that the power of political decision-making has become imminently visible in the society. Actually, few can today escape being affected by it. Not only have its institutions become larger, considerably more complex and resourceful, but many more citizens have become directly dependent on the values it serves to allocate authoritatively for society. No wonder, therefore, that the new generation of political scientists and sociologists ask why mainstream political scientists do not feel the urgent need for "assessing alternative political institutions in a society committed to popular sovereignty" (March and Olsen 1986:1), in order not to reduce the study of politics, as a "process involving the exercise of control, constraint and coercion in society" (Bilton et al 1981:172), to an analysis of what politicians say and do.

Despite its many new contributions on the levels of philosophy and metascience, I will postulate, the new politics is actually a move BACK to the traditional power perspective of the political traditions which, as the 'young' Easton recognized, displayed a profound interest in the duality of political structure as both medium and outcome of the political activities it recursively organizes. Our old traditions examined political power as a matter of BOTH "how our values affect the distribution of power" AND "how our location and use of power act on the distribution of values" (Easton 1953:120). And they did so in order to assess how power and domination manifest BOTH "the effect of psychology *on* the situation" AND "the psychological effect *of* the situation" (ibid:211). They did acknowledge that "although institutions may themselves mold to their own requirements the personalities of their participants, this does not thereby deny the contribution of personality to the nature of an institutionalized pattern of activity" (ibid:217).

Like the 'new' traditions, these 'old' traditions realized that political structuration has its basis in

neither solidarity nor self-interest but in an ongoing series of 'practical activities', manifesting the actual or contemplated interventions of corporeal beings in the political decision-making process. They knew that leaders CAN "exert an enormous impact on war and peace and major questions of domestic policy" (Lasswell 1948:235). But they also knew that democratic participation COULD not be "extinguished unless a community-wide basis of selection and responsibility is done away with" (ibid).

In fact, they demonstrated that politics goes far beyond what politicians say and do, on the level of formal steering, to a vast, more or less spontaneously functioning community of power relations. They provided us the reasons to assume that "We have a political situation whenever activity arises over the authoritative allocation of values, however indirectly this activity may be related to policy" (Easton 1953:192). They showed us how leaders' giving of reasons (which is closely associated with the accountability of their actions and, hence, with the input of support) is inevitably caught up in, and expressive of, the conflicts entailed by the process in and through which demands are (or are *not*) converted into issues, policies and implementing actions. They formed the foundation of a politics in which just "Two citizens disputing over the foreign policy of the United States create a political situation" (ibid). They revealed the 'macro-problem' of mutual autonomy and dependence between leaders and lay-actors inherent to such a 'micro-dispute', since "(t)his is one step in the direction of influencing the whole political process and one part, of the whole political system. It is a form of political activity as contrasted with the limiting case of utter apathy" (ibid). They knew that an agent who does not partake actively and constructively in the constitution of the political decision-making process is simply no political agent, since power relations are always two-way, even if the power of one actor or party in a political relation is minimal compared to another.

From Support and Outputs to Demands and Outcomes

The 'old' and the 'new' traditions derive some unity from their common insight into the fact that just as the making and the implementation of public decisions are intrinsically related to power, so the reciprocity of power is built into the very nature of the political system, via the facilities that leaders and lay-actors bring to and mobilize as elements of the production of their political interaction, thereby influencing its future course. They both insist, to put it in Eastonian terms, that political authorities, the political regime, and the political community have to be viewed, not simply as *objects of support*, but

also, and in particular, as *targets of demands*, linking the mobilization of cognitively acknowledged and normatively sanctioned RESOURCES within the institutional ordering of the society to the production of definite political outcomes. This is why the new perspectives of, say, 'economy of negotiation and mixed administration' (Hernes 1978), 'New Institutionalism' (March and Olsen 1984) and 'hierarchy and anarchy' (Lundquist 1987) in liberal political science together with those of, say, 'the colonialization of the life-world' (Habermas 1981), 'the dialectic of control' (Giddens 1981), and 'the rules of right implemented by relations of power in the production of discourses of truth' (Foucault 1979) in radical sociology to a certain extent, at least, should be met with a 'welcome back' rather than with opposition in our discipline. For as we can read from the new critique of mainstream political science below, they do reflect the old politics of authoritative allocations above:

"First, politics is not the residual category of an economic system. /---/. An alternative would be to picture markets and other social institutions as technical adjustments justifiable only when there are imperfections in politics" (1986:39-40)

"Second, although the ability of an institution to find Pareto-optimal solutions is an important asset, it is not an adequate basis for choice among institutions. Assessing the appropriateness of different institutions in a society committed to popular sovereignty involves an assortment of criteria associated with both aggregative and integrative processes" (ibid:40).

"Third, the issues of institutional design or evaluation are not routinely decomposable into separable problems. As we have seen, the institutions and ideologies of aggregation and integration affect each other in ways that make it impossible to consider the solution of the problems of one without considering the other" (ibid).

"Fourth, a society is probably better served by continual contradiction among contending concerns, demands, and values than by procedures requiring a permanent resolution of them. Conceptions of values and identity are elaborated through enduring tensions among values and models that recur and transform and recur again" (ibid:41).

"Fifth, many western democracies and theories of them might appropriately be nudged somewhat in the direction of greater concern for integrative functions and institutions, and toward a greater differentiation of institutions. /---/. In order to certify the appropriateness of more integration, we may have to persuade ourselves of the degeneracy of aggregative institutions and the glories of rights, reasoned debate, and administrative autonomy, while at the same time recognizing that within a few decades we will re-discover the evils of integration and will once again embrace exchange in the

name of self-interest. We may have to recognize not only the advantages that lie in that seemingly endless oscillation but the desirability of decisive action in a world without decisive consequences" (ibid:42–43).

Although this critique does in no way underestimate the significance of integrative (solidarity) and aggregative (self-interest) politics, it does explicitly reject the tendency to reduce politics to either the one or the other. It hereby forms a fundamental break with the framework of mainstream political science. It claims that the continuity of form in the political system, as a historically situated order of power and sense relations, is contingent upon integration and conflict, in the one dimension, and upon self-interest and a sense of community or common faith in established conventions, in the other dimension. Thus the axis in this new theory of structuration is neither the plane of political authorities (rational choice theory) nor the plane of political regime (normative functionalism) in the political system. Rather it is the plane of political community, comprising, as it does, the reproduced relations of interdependence between individuals or collectivities in terms of which that system is constituted as a set of regularized practices. Like the old politics, therefore, the new politics can be said to acknowledge that neither authorities (actor) nor regime (structure) should be regarded as having primacy, since each is constituted in and through the community, seen as recurrent practices. Hence, explication of their relation comprises the core of an account of how the structuration of the political system as recurrent practices actually takes place in time and space.

The Prudence of the Human Actor and the Social Policy of the Political System

In her reply to my paper, Margareta Bertilsson approaches the new theory of structuration 'from above', providing us information of some of the major philosophical and metatheoretical issues involved. I have here approached it 'from below', in order to provide information of some of the major theoretical and practical issues that identify political analysis as a non-reducible field of research. I am not doing so in order to undermine the significance of Bertilsson's analysis. Both kinds of analysis, I think, are called for in order to solve the riddle as to where the theory of structuration may be leading the social sciences. I am merely trying to point up the fact that what sociologists (and mainstream political scientists) say are the accepted canons of the political discipline are not necessarily those actually employed by its members in their theoretical practices (cf Bluhm (ed) 1982).

The issue of interest to me, as a student of politics, is

how non-politics could become the dominant trend in mainstream political science, and how the new, practically oriented structuration theorists could come to neglect the traditions of prudent decision-making and authoritative allocation in our 'pre-history'. For instance, most interpreters, whether in the mainstream or not, meet Easton's systems politics with the argument that there is no more to his politics than the Parsonian problem of compliance – of how individuals come to adhere to the normative demands of the political system of which they are members (for example, Anckar 1973, Dahlkvist 1982, Green 1984, Lane 1978, Leslie 1972, Narr 1967 – one exception is Bryder 1976). Yet, even in his most 'mature' and 'mainstream' period, Easton explicitly stresses that political action has to be defined, not by reference to norm but by reference to power.

Whatever the special nature of the temporal form of political system we may be considering in history – totalitarian, democratic, bureaucratic, imperial, etc, in one or another 'mixture' – he maintains, "its characteristic mode of behaving as a political system, as contrasted, say, with an economic or religious system, will depend upon the capacity of the system to allocate values for the society and assure their acceptance. It is these two major variables or sets of variables – the behaviour related to the capacity to make decisions for the society and the probability of their frequent acceptance by most members as authoritative – that are the essential variables and that therefore distinguish political systems from all other types of social systems" (Easton 1965A:96). It is through the activities, comprised by these variables, "that a society can commit the resources and energies of its members in the settlement of differences that cannot be autonomously resolved" (ibid).

I shall be the first to admit that Easton's definition of the essential variables of political life raises a range of non-answered puzzles. Nevertheless, it does explicitly point up the intrinsic difference between political order, and the normative and rational order of mainstream political science. It communicates that the prudent decision of the human subject has to be viewed as intrinsically related to the CAPACITY of the political system to allocate values for society and assure their acceptance. Hence, it simultaneously rejects that the 'can' of political behavior, the capacity of doing otherwise, can be understood by reference to norm or meaning. Politics, he shows us, is essentially about the relation between social authority and political action, not about the connection of values standards with the motives prompting political action, or vice versa. Its language is one of power, that is of probability, flexibility, variability, or autonomy and dependence, not one of integration or aggregation.

I see the 'case' of the political system's disappearance

from our self-consciousness as a sign of the existence of an unsound tendency in the social sciences at large to throw all their babies out with the bathwater. For example, it seems curious that normative functionalism's and Marxist structuralism's critique of methodological individualism and action theory lost their communicative powers in the same moment as new liberalism with its monetarism and privatization really began to make its presence felt in praxis. Today, with the beginning breakdown of Reaganomics, one is tempted to conclude that the attempt to exorcise this critique from the vocabulary of social thought (Giddens 1976, 79, 81) was somewhat misplaced.

Both the old and the new traditions of political analysis provide us a potential for avoiding to duplicate the tendency in the future. They indicate the relevance of trying to construe a political theory that is at once aware of its own origins and capable of investigating the political system in all its various forms and (highly unequal) phases of development. They furthermore illuminate that social relevance means that we are prepared to demonstrate the reality and power of our thinking in praxis by dedicating ourselves to the practical task of furthering popular sovereignty (cf Bernstein 1983). However, in addition, I will hold, the 'old' politics can be applied to demonstrate that the new politics has to complement its theory of praxis with a theory of the political system in order to 'cash' its goal of popular sovereignty: the political system manifests the essential political variables that make it possible for human agents to orient their prudent decision-making to the institutionalization of this alternative, non-submissive form of political organization in the first place.

Puzzles of Political System and Praxis

In identifying systems persistence with systems structuration the new politics actually converts a science of society's political life functions into a hermeneutics of the many divergent structural forms that represent them in time and space. One cannot answer the question of how political form occurs in social relations in time and space BEFORE having identified that which makes social relations POLITICAL, rather than economic or cultural in nature: the fact that they are significantly connected with the sociopolitical problem of how to allocate values authoritatively for society. To seek to identify political form in isolation from a theoretically discovered political invariance, specified as the 'type', would simply be to put the cart of praxis BEFORE a non-existent political horse.

Political life, as a type of social (not physical, biological or personal) life, I will postulate, raises two intrinsically different puzzles of power which derive their

non-reducible significance from their real and necessary interdependence:

- (1) Can the political system have any real autonomy in the society, as an invariant TYPE of social organization?
- (2) Can popular sovereignty have any real autonomy in the political system, as a temporal FORM of political organization?

The puzzle of political power in normative functionalism and rational choice theory, I have tried to explicate, emerges from their negative answer to (1). They deny that the political system can have any real specificity in the society: political analysis has no conceptual field of its own, since it deals with a 'synthetic' field of legitimate domination in which power is always the greater power over the smaller power. As a result they simultaneously deny (2): popular sovereignty can have no real specificity in the political field, since this field can never be organized otherwise than in the shape of a pyramid with the few (relatively) 'wise' and 'powerful' at the top and the many (relatively) 'unwise' and 'powerless' at the bottom.

The argument that the power OF political decision-making and implementing *ipso facto* provides the few effective power OVER the many does not ring true. As a subject to authority, one can accept that political authorities are equipped with the power OF doing that which has to be done for the society in and through the political system, without simultaneously accepting their attempt to use this power for the PURPOSE of appropriating control OVER oneself and others.

Distinguishing the power OF political doing, which is a property of the political system as a whole, from the few's power OVER the many, which is a property of the way political power is put to use by leaders and lay-actors in a particular, given political praxis of domination and subordination, we would be able to transcend the elitist perspective of mainstream political science without in any way neglecting the fundamental significance of the political leadership in the political system. We could conceive of the political relation of leaders to lay-actors as one of mutual autonomy and dependence: leaders *could* not make and implement political decisions for the society unless lay-actors *would* accept their decisions and consider themselves bound by them. That is to say, we would be able to demonstrate, logically as well as empirically, that the ability of the political system to make a difference in the society is born out in praxis by the ability of leaders and lay-actors to make a difference in the political system: Leaders could always have done otherwise and lay-actors would have

done otherwise, had leaders not drawn on the authority provided them by the political system in their making and implementing of binding decisions and implementing actions for the society as a whole.

The new politics, I will postulate, does not in and of itself grant us such an alternative outlook. For in tending to oppose itself to a science of politics, it actually ends up with a historical framework copying the tendency of mainstream political science to neglect the power of the political system, thus neglecting the essential political conditions that make the emergence of popular sovereignty a real organizational possibility. Actually, it rejects both (1) and (2) above in viewing the primary tasks of political analysis as "(1) The hermeneutic explication and mediation of divergent forms of life within descriptive metalanguages of social science; (2) Explication of the production and reproduction of society as the accomplished outcome of human agency" (Giddens 1976:162). (1) denies us the possibility of discovering the invariant political type of social organization that makes the emergence and, hence, explication and mediation of, divergent forms of political organization possible in the first place. (2) deprives us of the hope of popular sovereignty in tending to identify the authority OF political allocations in society with those who possess the highest abilities to produce definite outcomes, that is with "capabilities which generate command OVER persons" (Giddens 1979:100, capital letters mine). In combination, I think, these two puzzles in the theory structuration explicate why there can be no general theory of the political system without praxis and no special praxis of popular sovereignty without a general political theory.

Political Persistence Through Structuration

Our slumbering traditions offer us an escape route from the theory-praxis paradox of contemporary political thought. "At the minimum", they communicate, "political scientists have implicitly developed a common interest through the fact that they have been exploring the way in which values are authoritatively allocated for a society. Concretely, this means that *it is possible to identify a broad variety of structures and practices which are closely associated with the authoritative allocation of values for a society*" (1953:318, italics mine). In political analysis, therefore, concepts "may identify two fundamentally but analytically distinguishable parts of political life. One reflects the kinds of activities that go on in a political system, what we might at other times and places have called the political functions, if this concept itself had not become virtually unusable because of the enormous variety of slippery meanings currently attached. The other refers to the way these activities are

performed; that is, it deals with the structure and processes of political life as particular modes for expressing these activities" (Easton 1965B:13).

The political life functions of society must be separated analytically from the structures and practices that represent them in time and space, if we are not to mistake these functions for the particular goals of the members of the political system (individuals and groups). Political functions manifest no goals as such or in themselves, only the reproduced political system-society RELATIONSHIP that makes the emergence of goals possible IN the political system in time and space (cf Laszlo 1972, Wilden 1972). They do not dictate what political agents must or ought to do. They merely inform them about what they cannot do and, hence, what they could possibly do. This explicates why we cannot ipso facto exclude the goal of popular sovereignty from the vocabulary of political thought. The political system could always be organized otherwise than in terms of a goal of domination, since its persistence is contingent on the maintenance or the change of a variety of goal-states ranging from government by one to government by all.

Therefore, in distinguishing political hermeneutics from political science, 'political values' from 'political facts', we can relate the analysis of the structuration of the political system, as a set of regularized practices, to the analysis of the continued persistence of that system in the society, as a set of functionally ordered levels of relations and relations between levels. This we can do without neglecting the crucial relation of interdependence between theory and praxis, the Real and the Symbolic. When studying the structuration of the political system as a temporal form of political organization, we can say, we raise practical questions like: "How are decisions made? Who influences whom about the kinds of inputs that are made or the outputs that are produced? How is power distributed and put to work in selecting policies and implementing them? How are optimal strategies for attaining objectives assigned and pursued? Who shares in the benefits derived from political activities? *What are the conditions under which POPULAR CONTROL OF RULERS may be maximized?*" (Easton 1965B:474, italics and capital letters mine). However, "what these allocative theories take for granted – the actual and continued existence of some kind of political system" – is precisely what has to be "questioned and subjected to theoretical examination", when studying the persistence of the political system, as an invariant type of social organization: "How is it that a political system *as such* is *ABLE TO* persist through time. What is there in the nature of the system itself and the conditions under which it may typically find itself that

would stand as a possible threat to its continued existence, *whether in one FORM or another*. Persistence and change of systems, or rather, persistence through change as is more often the case, has seemed to be the most inclusive kind of question that one might ask about a political system" (ibid:475).

Hence, our traditions of both political system and praxis hold out the possibility of establishing a general political theory, straining toward being bold, innovating, yet always retaining a radical skepticism toward those of its findings that at any time appear most firmly established. And it simultaneously stresses that the development of such a theory depends crucially on the institutionalization of a theoretical practice, dedicated to the task of making human agents aware of their distinctly political potential for realizing the kind of participation, mutual control, and prudent decision-making, which underlie the constitution of the political system as a regularized praxis. The general political trend, they indicate, is toward progressive political differentiation, expanding agents' autonomy of action, notwithstanding partial and temporary reversals, uneven political development, and immense differences in structural expression. This trend is brought about historically by knowledgeable political agents and their capacity to form the processes in and through which values are allocated authoritatively for society. But it is afforded by the persistence of these political processes in society in themselves as such, that is, by the political system and its capacity to make and implement binding decisions for the society as a whole.

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Brittiska valen den 11 juni 1987;

Bakgrund, resultat och valsystem

Margaret Thatcher har sedan sitt makttillträde som brittisk premiärminister 1979 målmedvetet sökt förändra Storbritannien efter sina ideal oberoende av om dessa förändringar skapat spänningar och klyftor i nationen. Mycket kort har förändringarna inneburit att procentandelen hushåll som äger sin bostad har stigit från 52 till 66 % huvudsakligen genom försäljning av 750 000 "council houses". Aktieägandet har breddats från 7 till 19 % medan anslutningen till fackföreningar har sjunkit från att omfatta 30 till 23 % av befolkningen. Medelklassen har ökat från 33 till 40 % medan antalet arbetslösa steg från 1,2 milj 1979 till 3 milj 1983. Arbetslösheten har varit stabil mellan 1983-87 med en mindre nedgång första halvåret 1987. (Siffrorna från Times 13 juni 1987 samt ITN, Election Factbook, 1987.) Inkomstskatterna har sänkts överlag, kraftigast dock för höginkomstgrupperna.

Dessa förändringar är i huvudsak mycket positiva för de konservativas 43 % av de röstande och har i allmänhet ansetts vara den främsta orsaken till stabiliteten i Mrs Thatchers väljarbas. Till detta skall läggas en real inkomstökning för dem som har jobb, inte är färgade och som bor söder om M62 (Liverpool-Hull) i England. Effekten av detta uttrycks väl i ITN, Election Factbook: "Possessions, even cheque books, do not necessarily change opinions, but they are very liable to help" (p 6).

Under mellanvalsperioden pekade opinionsundersökningarna emellertid inte på någon stabil väljarbas för de konservativa. Partiet var mellan juli och september 1985 samt januari och mars 1986 till och med tredje största parti. Ett klart mönster utvecklades där missnöjda konservativa väljare 1983 skiftade till Alliansen. Alliansen var till och med största parti i fyra opinionsundersökningar 1985 (ITN Election Factbook s 31). Kommentarererna i massmedia diskuterade "the TBW or 'That Bloody Woman' effect" (ITN s 16).

Aktiviteten från den konservativa regeringen från hösten 1986 är nästan rutinmässig i sin enkelhet men ändå förödande effektiv. Hösten 1986 kommer ett stort offentligt utgiftspaket som förmodligen bidrar till en marginell men dock sänkning av arbetslösheten våren 1987. I budgeten i mars 1987 sänker Lawson skatten med