

# CONTEMPORARY ANALYTICAL THEORY

edited by  
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# FOREWORD

Presenting this volume and the syllabus designed to accompany it requires us to indicate some of the criteria of selection employed by the editors. Our starting assumption is that contemporary social science theory is becoming less and less organized around substantive fields like political science, sociology, anthropology, or history, and becoming more organized around analytical approaches. Such analytical approaches include very basic models which set a frame for the treatment of variables such as stimulus-response or input-output models, neither of which has a specific content as such. More pertinent for our purposes are the substantive approaches—structural analysis or structural-functional studies, or Marxism—all of which are designed to articulate specific categories of variables for empirical analysis. In our concern to identify those articles in which a particular analytical approach is either discussed or exemplified, however, we selected materials which represent the model types suggested, and met the criterion of continuing substantive relevance.

The unifying theme deals with the problem of choice. We consider choice to be the central and critical concern of all the social sciences. The parameters of choice involve the physical setting and its resources. This aspect, although important, was omitted even though attention to geographical and ecological matters is undergoing a renaissance in the literature. We prefer to concern ourselves with the normative or priority setting aspects of choice (and the problem of “meaning” they embody), the structural relationships embodied in roles and their interaction (including the functional bases of their interaction), and the behavioral aspects of choice involving motivation and perception. The first two we consider social and the third more individual. Although they represent different aspects of the same activity, each

has its own theoretical qualities. We want to show the kind of theory germane to each.

However, both the treatment of theory *qua* theory, as well as the various specific styles or modes germane to the normative, the structural, and the behavioral imply still another assumption. We reject the concepts of "multi-disciplinarity" or "inter-disciplinarity," long the catchwords of modernity in the social sciences. We reject them because they are really misleading. They assume in the first instance a kind of eclecticism more likely to result in a smattering of ignorance in a number of subject matter fields than good substantive knowledge and intellectual control. In the second instance the assumption is made that a single, synthetic theory is what is needed to "solve" the problem of the social sciences. But the social sciences are not like a puzzle or a mystery with a specific solution. There are many layers of reality each of which defines a different universe. Use of alternative strategies requires a knowledge of the rules of theory and a knowledge of different types in order to construct solutions that are partial rather than universal. That is why we feel that a reader of this nature, which concentrates entirely on various theoretical emphases, is likely to be both timely and useful in the social sciences generally. What is needed to go along with it is a companion volume on specific research design and techniques of data-processing. Ours is rather an intellectual frame for such technical matters.

One final point. Both editors are political scientists. The volume is designed for a broader intellectual clientele than political scientists. Readers perhaps will pardon our parochialism if we say that we see the problem of choice as above all political. The relations between norms, structures, and behaviors are a general way of stating the political problem, which takes an infinity of actual forms in all the fields of social science endeavor.

The volume itself was prepared under the auspices of the Politics of Modernization Project, Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley. Assistance was also provided by the Department of Political Science, Yale University.

D. A.

C. A.

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# INTRODUCTION

## *THE NEED FOR A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE*

Despite all the efforts of the past few years, the social sciences still lack the ability to use contemporary theory as both an intellectual focus and a tool. Although the tradition of theory going back to Plato and Aristotle gives them a pedigree, a moral center, and a feeling of continuity, the accumulation of new knowledge creates ambiguity in purpose and application. Formally constituted boundaries of the social science disciplines disguise, rather than reveal, the proper formulation of theoretically significant questions. Distinctions remain between the subject matters of economics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and political science, but increasingly their theories overlap. It is our assumption that overlap contains more general unity, based on common methods for selecting analytic problems, units for investigation, and techniques of understanding. If this is correct, we want to make explicit a paradigm which locates dimensions of meaning and alternatives in method.

That there is a sudden increase in new knowledge can hardly be denied. Students trained in the various social science disciplines now work with highly exotic materials. But they often find this a narrowing rather than broadening experience because they are victims of a habitual and accidental paring of the data of human experience, according to disciplines which have become administrative rather than intellectual. To that extent the expansion of professional education becomes self-limiting rather than personally expanding. How can such limitations be overcome? Attempts to merely refurbish the social science disciplines will not work. They arouse only bitterness and confusion. New topics for study help. For example, the study of new nations

has produced some innovations, but not enough and not in a major theoretical way.

Such matters are a general concern in the social sciences, but they are most acute in the field of political science. Because relevant theories in this field come from elsewhere, political scientists have shown a particular concern for new theory as it might help their work. The field of politics was not always so derivative. It had two concerns: ethical and practical. The ethical concern revolved around attaining civic virtue for all, with theory directed toward defining an ideal relationship between people and their governors. The practical concern was to realize the ideal in the actual, to locate mechanisms capable of achieving civic virtue. There was no gap between the normative and the empirical, the ethical and the practical. Because of the scope of its concern, politics was superordinate over other sciences and was a branch of ethics.

Political science has not lost its architectonic impulse, but more and more contemporary social scientists now consider the political system a coordinate part of the wider social system. If anything, sociology has become the new omnibus social science. In political science consensus on the nature of civic virtue has declined. Even the philosophers show greater concern for linguistic analysis than for ethical truths. Doubt about the appropriateness of certain mechanisms for realizing civic virtue has stimulated new forms of analysis, like functionalism, which separates function from form.

But even here the era of the grand integration theorist able to integrate the discipline is declining. In sociology the influence of Talcott Parsons is on the wane, despite his current popularity among some political scientists interested in comparative politics. Anthropologists have gone well beyond the structural models employed by Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown. Certainly, American economists long ago abandoned (if they ever took up) interest in the Marxian framework of analysis. In contrast to Marx, who felt compelled to draw upon sociology, history, philosophy, religion, and political science, as well as economics, today's economists are quite cautious. Similarly, in psychology the all-encompassing theories of Freud, Lewin, and Hull have become passé. Theories in psychology are specialized rather than general, complex rather than simple. Hence new information is accompanied by a trend toward greater specialization and complexity, and can be seen in concrete society as well as in the analytic social science disciplines. But isn't such specialization inevitable? After all, as societies develop they too become more specialized (differentiated) and complex. If social scientists study complex "social systems" by assuming that all the parts of the system are related, then everything is "relevant." A social scientist would then need to know everything to know anything. Specialization is one answer if we are not to be overwhelmed by what there is to be known. But this is not the whole story. Despite the trend to specialization at one level, at another certain unities in theory and method are making their appearance. The "unities" each establish some criteria of relevance and a basis for

selecting crucial variables, data, and methods. This collection of readings is designed to identify these, not according to some standard of orthodoxy, but according to a simple scheme.

We have said that the movement toward growing differentiation and complexity represents one trend in the social sciences. Another is the search for new unities. This last is very important because without it there develops a growing separation between pure and applied research. In sociology the fields of social welfare and criminology have been split off from the "societal" research to become more applied. A similar development has occurred in psychology, where the main applied fields are industrial "human relations" and clinical psychology. In political science, public administration is in bad odor, the equivalent of social welfare and human relations.

There are two dangers growing out of the gap between pure and applied research. One is the danger of "irrelevance." In particular, students interested in normative concerns complain, rightly in our view, that research which seeks knowledge as an end in itself is a form of escapism. The theories so produced are so highly abstract that they bear little relationship to the moral, as well as the political, problems convulsing the larger society. This in turn provides opportunities for a crude technocratism with those carrying out applied research rarely questioning the context of their work. Contemporary theories should be able to help avert the dangers of either irrelevant or narrow professionalization. One vital, reasonable, and proper emphasis for a scholar is the enlargement of meaning in both its moral and its intellectual sense. Only then can we avoid a technocratic type of professionalization.

The problem is inherent in the growth of specialization and the acquisition of new knowledge. Moreover, the rising influence of mathematics, economics, and psychology in the study of politics has led in recent years to an expansion in the number and variety of techniques used to collect and analyze the data. A cursory perusal of recent issues of professional political science journals will uncover frequent references to factor analysis, multiple regression, stepwise discriminant analysis, canonical correlation analysis, analysis of variance, robot data screening, and hierarchical decomposition computer programs (HIDECS). Add to these various statistical measures, like  $t$  scores,  $F$  ratios, gammas, lamdas, thetas, tau betas, and the mind fairly boggles. A knowledge of mathematics (as well as Greek) would seem necessary to contemporary research. At one major graduate university, the sociology department requires its Ph.D. majors to take five required methodology courses, including work in multivariate analysis, axiomatic theory, and quantitative research design. Political science majors at this same university take several of these courses in sociological methodology. Indeed, much of the faculty, even those who call themselves "behaviorists," find it difficult to understand their graduate students' research papers. Obsolescence threatens even the most technically advanced and increases the dangers of narrowness.

These technical advances should in themselves represent no cause for complaint. After all, computers and computer programs make it possible to store, retrieve, and analyze large quantities of data. More cases can be studied, more variables analyzed. Statistical techniques can be used to uncover complex relationships never before really understood. The dangers lie not so much in the techniques themselves but in their elevation in status to theory. Too often the researcher confuses theory with techniques. At present, quantitative techniques and theory have best been combined in those fields, like psychology and economics, where elaborate analytical models already exist. In political science and sociology, for example, such techniques have in the main been descriptively rather than theoretically applied. The cataloging of data and the elaboration of simple relationships have importance. But for the time being, our large theoretical needs must take priority over the narrower technical questions. If we simply expand our technique while retaining the present descriptive categories, we will hardly advance our understanding of social problems.

Hence social scientists face a problem hitherto limited to the natural and physical sciences, the danger that the current stock of theories face technical obsolescence. They have the additional problem of being inundated by data. The computer revolution in the social sciences has created an information crisis which is not likely to be solved by recourse to more sophisticated informational retrieval systems unless these are combined with conceptual systems capable of codifying, sorting, and making significant theoretical generalizations.

All these problems in social science—the influence of specialization, the gap between pure and applied research, the development of new techniques, and the flood of new data—have made the task of the social scientist extremely difficult. His concrete concerns include the relationships within a society and between its component parts. His theoretical interests in one field must encompass at least sufficient understanding of the other social sciences so that he can appropriate their findings and use them in his own work. He must be proficient in modern methods of collecting data, using techniques, and forming analytical models appropriate to the complexity that he studies.

In trying to confront these problems squarely, our effort is to make explicit the types of analysis which seem to have wide application in the several fields or disciplines which are concerned with contemporary society. To accomplish this task requires that we first take a step away from the immediate, often bewildering array of theories in the various disciplines which individuals seize upon as points of entry into their own particular research questions. We need to ask ourselves something about the more general analytical modes which are common to all the disciplines, just as in field research we look for patterns behind the behaviors and customs found in the real world. In other words, we must treat the proliferation of theoretical approaches as items of experience to see what patterns they form. By articulating a more explicit and general theoretical paradigm than has been

heretofore developed, we hope to impose some pattern on the data and techniques. The following framework which focuses on the dimensions of choice is designed to serve several functions: to organize and classify variables, to generate hypotheses which when verified emerge as generalizations, and to explain the relationships among the generalizations. Thus in an ascending analytic hierarchy, variables point to particular aspects of data, hypotheses indicate relationships among variables, and theories suggest relationships among hypotheses or generalizations. It is with the linkage between variables, hypotheses, and theory that this paradigm is concerned.

### THE DIMENSIONS OF CHOICE

The common core of all social science theory deals with the problem of choice. Comprising the human predicament is a series of changing alternatives in which each succeeding situation is contingent on preceding choices. Disciplines simply segregate some piece of the choice problem. For example, economists study the allocation of scarce goods and services. Anthropologists deal with the cultural aspects of choice. Sociologists confront societal elements. Psychologists concentrate on the bases on which choices are made by individuals and small groups; motivation and perception are particular concerns. Political scientists are concerned with choice in terms of power and responsibility, rulers and ruled. If choice is the focus, it can be divided into several components—normative, structural, and behavioral. The *normative* deals with values and norms influencing the choices which ought to be made. The *structural* considers the patterns of social action, the relationships among individuals. Like values and norms, social structures are “outside” the individual and place limitations on his choices. The *behavioral* analyzes the choices individuals in fact do make and the reasons for their selection of particular options. In short, the normative and structural dimensions define what choices are available; the behavioral dimension involves the selection among alternatives presented by the other two dimensions. Normative theories have been preoccupied with the general study of values and the more explicit study of norms and ideologies, particularly those expressing the moral basis of power and the proprieties of rulership in terms of abstract principles of rights, especially as these affect changing relationships between ruler and ruled. Structural theories pertain to class and status relations, as well as to group properties and their organizational consequences. Behavioral theories have shown a concern for learning, adaptation, socialization, motivation, and perception.

In a sense, these three categories of theory are predisposed toward different modes of analysis. The normative component has been most directly the concern of political philosophy and the sociology of law and values. It assumed an evolutionary moral-intellectual development. The goal was not only to create new theories but also to interpret, evaluate, and criticize past theories in terms of their logic, internal consistency, and correspondence



with "reality." Some of the most important normative ideas have been translated into ideologies, religions, and political myths.

The structural component came into fashion in the nineteenth century as a result of a utilitarian interest in reform. Welfare, representation, bureaucracy, political parties, courts, all were the subjects of descriptive study and combined with historical-evolutionary normative emphases. Beginning with the Greek city-states and progressing through feudalism, the "medieval synthesis," the "rise" of the nation-state, "civilization" and "enlightenment" were normative and structural "periods." Increasing differentiation meant linear progress—in political terms, the growth toward representative government, in economic terms, industrial development by means of the market system. It is not surprising then that until the twentieth century structural and normative analysis centered about Western Europe and North America. It was only with the breakup of colonial empires, first in Eastern Europe, later in Asia, the Near East, and Africa, and the emergence of the problems of "post-industrial" society that the evolutionary concept of normative-structural analysis came to an end. The world neither begins in the West nor with industrialism (although it well might end there). What is the result of such changed emphases? Political scientists now study segmentary lineage systems, stateless societies, unilineal descent groups, castes—as well as political parties, bureaucracies, legislatures, and courts. Anthropologists are working away at new structural typologies.

Work on the behavioral dimension is just beginning. Whereas normative and structural analysts find historical analysis quite compatible with their research interests, behavioral analysts have recourse to longitudinal or "panel" designs which take a short-term time perspective. Those interested in voting behavior and experimental situations most often employ the panel design. Through surveys taken over a four-year period among the same sample of voters, political scientists have tried to assess changes in voter sentiments as new political events occur. Similarly, those researchers concerned with attitude change in experimental situations have used the panel to ascertain the effects of certain stimuli in causing attitude change. Even here there are exceptions. Witness the efforts of Erik Erikson and others to analyze historical figures at a distance. Of course it is difficult to apply behavioral techniques to historical situations. Dead men cannot submit to psychotherapy or experimental investigation, and child-rearing practices cannot be best understood from parental reports. This is one reason why historical behavioral studies have lagged behind normative and structural ones.

The initial behavioral studies took place in the United States and Western Europe. With the exception of a few sample surveys taken in societies outside of Europe and North America, few behavioral projects have been conducted in non-Western societies. In these areas, as compared with the West, the structural and normative variables are not so well known. Therefore, the social scientist experiences difficulties in accounting for behavior. However, future developments in the behavioral field will no doubt see