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ON THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ANALYSIS

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I

The Development of Comparative Politics

After the Second World War, the comparative study of government and politics has undergone a methodological revolution. The development of the field has been characterized by the transformation of "comparative government" into "comparative politics". The former has been primarily concerned with the comparative study of the formal institutions of governments — particularly the governments of Western Europe. It has been in this sense not only parochial but also static, formalistic and descriptive. It is attempted in the latter to compare systematically the political systems of all kinds, using more dynamic, empirically interpreted, and truly comparative method of analysis. "From being a subject involving the study of 'foreign governments' for the better understanding of one's own, it became a study of any governments, or aspects of them, for the better understanding of politics in general."¹⁾ According to Roberts' argument, after the Second World War, comparative politics has developed through the following phases.

In the first phase, that is, in the 1950s, "a new self-consciousness about *strategies* and *method* of comparison"²⁾ appeared. This trend was the outcome of the introspection of various authors already in the area of the study of comparative government and politics. The earliest of these were Heckscher,

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1) G.K. Roberts, *What is Comparative Politics?* 1972, p. 12.

2) *Ibid.*

Macridis, Beer and Ulam.³⁾ "These authors were concerned with the various strategies of comparison — area studies, the configurative approach, institutional and functional comparison, a problem-based orientation — and with various methodological problems — conceptualisation, the establishment of agreed categories for comparison, validity as a problem, cross-cultural difficulties and the availability of date. However, though many of these topics continue to interest theorists of the comparative method today, there is a distinction between the relatively gross formulation of these topics in the 1950s, and the more sophisticated and rigorous consideration given to them in recent years. It has taken those fifteen or more years to find out how to ask the important questions so that some answers can perhaps be found."⁴⁾

The epitome of the works in 1950s was Almond's *The Politics of the Developing Areas* (1960), later and more fully in *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (1966). Since Almond's work in 1960, the second phase of development begins. However, the second phase really occurred outside the area of comparative politics, at least in so far as the major contributions come in work within such areas as political analysis, political sociology, political modernisation and even in international politics. This can be described as being the increased sophistication of comparative analysis in terms of conceptualisation, methods, models and theories associated with the "behaviouralist revolution". With some exceptions (such as the work of Almond mentioned earlier), this interest in greater rigour and empirical theorising was undertaken for the general purpose of refining and improving "political science" rather than as a deliberate contribution to the improvement of comparative politics. Comparative analysis was seen as central to the process of political explanation. In improving comparative analysis, political science was improved; in developing the concepts, frameworks, methods and strategies of political science in particular sub-fields of the discipline, comparison was facilitated. The "spillover" to comparative politics was accentuated inasmuch as the practitioners of comparative politics laid claim to "the comparative method" as part of their specialism.⁵⁾

3) Heckscher, *The Study of Comparative Government and Politics*, 1957; R. Macridis, *The Study of Comparative Government*, 1955; S. Beer and A. Ulam (eds.) *Patterns of Government*, 1958.

4) Roberts, op. cit., pp. 12-3.

5) Ibid, p. 13.

The first, in importance, contributions to this development are the conceptual frameworks of Easton, Almond and Deutsch.⁶⁾ They made a revolution with their explorations of the notion of "system" as the macro-unit for comparative analysis. Adopting the concept of the political system, the scope of comparative analysis was now much wider. The concept permitted not just the comparison of societal systems (empires, republics, colonies, federations, city-states) but also the incorporation of *any* political unit that could be defined as a differentiated set of interrelated components performing the functions of a political system (however such functions were defined in particular). The range of "the comparative imagination" had increased.⁷⁾ Almond says, "This new terminology reflects a new way of looking at political phenomena. It includes some new names for old things, and some new terms to refer to activities and processes which were not formerly recognized as being parts or aspects of politics." And he also states, "A political system is a system of *action*. What this means is that the student of political system is concerned with empirically observable behavior." Thus, he argues that "the introduction of the system concept represents a genuinely important step in the direction of science."⁸⁾

The second contribution of these American political scientists was to proffer an interrelated set of concepts that could be used for comparative purposes. Easton talks of inputs, outputs, demands, gatekeepers, support, stresses, environment, feedback and critical ranges; Almond offers a set of input and output functions; Deutsch borrows a cybernetic language which applies to political systems the concepts of feedback of various types, autonomy, memory, load, receptors, communication, and so on. The repertoire of methods and research strategies, and the catalogue of hypotheses and middle-range theories available to the researcher in comparative politics, have expanded owing to the work of the increasingly large numbers of political scientists. We should not ignore the contributions to the discipline made by those who broadened its territorial scope to take in the developing area, the third world. The development

6) D. Easton, *A System Analysis of Political Life*, 1965; G. Almond and G. Powell, *Comparative Politics*, 1966; K. Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government*, 1963.

7) Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-4.

8) G. Almond and G. Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*, 1966, p. 16; G. Almond, "Comparative Political Systems", *Political Development: Essays in Heuristic Theory*, 1970, p. 32; G. Almond, "Political Theory and Political Science", *Political Development: Essays in Heuristic Theory*, 1970, p. 249.

of comparative politics owes a great debt to scholars such as Apter, Rustow, Pye and the various authors of the "Princeton" volumes on "political development". The notion of "development," which was elaborated by them, contributed greatly to the progress in comparative politics.⁹⁾

The third phase of development in comparative politics dates only from about 1969. It may be characterised as the attempt to identify and order the logical and scientific foundations of comparative analysis and, in doing so, to provide a firm base for comparative politics that is reasonably well defined in terms of its subject-matter, its methods, concepts and strategies. Three major contributions to this trend are the papers of the International Political Science Association Turin Round Table in 1969, especially the paper by Sartori, the volume of essays edited by Holt and Turner, and the book by Przeworski and Teune.¹⁰⁾ A number of other contributions of a critical and polemic style also belong to this new period. Roberts calls this stage of the development of comparative politics that of "meta-politics".¹¹⁾

The purpose of this paper is to examine the recent trend, particularly the meta-theoretical problems in comparative politics through considering the arguments of Holt, Richardson, and Sartori who are called the "school of neo-comparison" by Roberts.

II

Logical Perfectionism of Holt and Richardson

Holt and Richardson propose to examine the theoretical problems in comparative politics from the point of view of a scientific paradigm as this concept has been developed by Thomas Kuhn. They assert: Although Kuhn's ideas developed largely from an examination of the historical development of theory in the natural sciences, his ideas provide an interesting and useful perspective

9) Roberts, op. cit., pp. 14-5.

10) G. Sartori, "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics", *American Political Science Review*, LXIV (December, 1970), pp. 1033-53; R. Holt and J.E. Turner (eds.), *The Methodology of Comparative Research*, 1970; A. Przeworski and H. Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*, 1970.

11) Roberts, op. cit., pp. 16-7.

from which one can look at theories in the social sciences.¹²⁾

According to what they say, a paradigm in its simplest terms is just "a pattern or framework which gives organization and direction to a given area of scientific investigation." But, to use paradigmatic concept to examine various approaches in the field of comparative politics, it is necessary to identify explicitly the following elements of a paradigm: the conceptual element; the theoretical element; the rules of interpretation; the puzzle-identifying element; the criteria of admissibility; and the ontologic-predictive element. These provide a set of dimensions on the basis of which the various competing paradigms in the field can be compared and evaluated. The five major approaches examined by this set of evaluative criteria are structural-functionalism, general systems analysis, psychological approach, rational formal model, and atheoretical approach. These approaches are analysed by systematically identifying how each of the six elements of a paradigm is treated.¹³⁾

The structural-functionalism, for one, is analyzed as follows. The most widely heralded and best known structural-functional paradigm in political science is that developed by G.A. Almond. One cannot examine the state of theory in comparative politics without devoting considerable attention to analyzing Almond's point of view. On two of the six aspects of a paradigm, Almond is very explicit. First, he has provided a rich and relatively exhaustive set of concepts in terms of which one can describe the political system. *Political system, political structure, political function, political culture, political socialization, capability*, and many other terms provide a rich conceptual basis for his paradigm. Second, Almond's paradigm is explicit in its theoretical element.¹⁴⁾ In *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, Almond stated: "The functional theory of the polity which we have elaborated above does specify the elements of the polity in such a way as may ultimately make possible statistical and perhaps mathematical formulation. What we have done is to separate political function from political structure. In other words, we have specified the elements of the two sets, one of functions and the other of structures, and have suggested that political systems may be compared in the terms of the pro-

12) R. Holt and J.M. Richardson, Jr., "Competing Paradigms in Comparative Politics" in R. Holt and J.E. Turner (eds), *The Methodology of Comparative Research*, 1970, p. 23.

13) Ibid., pp. 23-8.

14) Ibid., pp. 33-4.

babilities of the performance of the specified functions by the specified structures. In addition, we have specified styles of performance of function by structure which makes it possible for us at least to think of a state of knowledge of political systems in which we could make precise comparisons relating the elements of the three sets — functions, structures and styles — in the form of a series of probability statements.”¹⁵⁾ A probabilistic theory of the polity is a highly commendable goal. However, as Holt and Richardson puts, considerable refinements will have to be made in the formulation before this laudable goal can be achieved. The major problems are the lack of rigorous definition of *structure* and *function* in general and the absence of rigorous definitions of the political structures in particular. The lack of clarity in the definition of basic concepts and a certain confusion in their logical interrelationships make it very difficult to determine the theoretical aspects of Almond’s paradigm. That is, we cannot identify clearly which propositions are theoretical, and thus are empirically testable, and which are logical and true by definition. As the result, we cannot identify any puzzles in Almond’s paradigm. Hence, Holt and Richardson conclude as follows. Conceptual element in Almond’s paradigm is rich, but logically confused. This confusion makes it virtually impossible to identify the theoretical element, the puzzles, the rules of interpretation, and the criteria of admissibility.¹⁶⁾

Examining the other approaches in the same way, Holt and Richardson argue that the science of comparative politics is presently in a preparadigmatic stage. There are a number of competing paradigms in the field, ranging from those that are conceptually rich but tend to be devoid of puzzles and criteria of admissibility, to those that concentrate largely on data and data analysis and are conceptually quite empty. All of the different types, however, suffer from a major shortcoming — they have virtually no deductive power; that is, there is no set of propositions from which one can deduce in a logically tight manner a wide range of additional propositions, some of which can be empirically verified.¹⁷⁾

The term *theory* has a variety of uses in the social sciences. A theory,

15) G.A. Almond and J.S. Coleman (eds.), *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, 1960, p. 59.

16) Holt and Richardson, op. cit., pp. 34–7.

17) Ibid., pp. 27 and 69–70.

according to Holt and Richardson, is a deductively connected set of propositions, which are, depending on their logical position with respect to one another, either axioms or theorems. The axioms of a theory are a limited number of independent and consistent propositions that are logically prior to a much larger set of propositions, the theorems. In a sense we might say that the axioms are empirical laws whose truth is taken for granted (at least temporarily). Theorems are deduced from the axioms and as the theorems are verified, the axioms tend to be confirmed.¹⁸⁾

If the "scientific theory" is defined so, most of the approaches in the field of comparative politics are not theoretic formulations in the strict sense, but nontheoretic formulations. So to speak, they are conceptual frameworks or conceptual schemata for comparative analysis. Accordingly, Holt and Richardson state: "The grand paradigms of Almond, Deutsch, Easton (and for the matter, Holt and Turner) are little more than heuristic schema. They present an interesting way of looking at political phenomena, but do little more." "What is needed is clear." First, a small group of theoretical primitives must be established. Second, additional concepts must be defined, using only these theoretical primitives and some specifically identified logical (or mathematical) operations. Third, a set of axioms must be developed using only the concepts and operations defined. Fourth, a set of propositions must be deduced from these axioms for empirical testing. Fifth, criteria of admissibility and rules of interpretation must be developed. "None of these steps except the first can be taken satisfactorily without the use of some body of rules that establish the principles for deduction. Our suggestion is that political scientists must turn to mathematics for these rules for logic and that until this is done, the grand schemata will remain essentially heuristic. We do not make this suggestion lightly. Political scientists are not known for their mathematical skills or interests, but we can see no other way to introduce the necessary deductive power into a paradigm". Furthermore, "the problem may be more difficult than that of simply learning certain bodies of existing mathematics." Newton's theoretical formulation required an invention of a new mathematics, the calculus. Progress in mathematical economics was blocked at the end of the nineteenth century because there was no mathematical way known of solving

18) Ibid., p. 24.

the equations that have been formulated. Not until further advances had been made in pure mathematics was the way cleared for real progress. "It is not unlikely that the mathematics that presently exists is unsuitable for handling our problems, in which case the development of theory in comparative politics may depend upon innovative work in pure mathematics," And moreover, "The kind of commitment to sophistication cannot be made easily in political science. It is not only the formidability of mathematics that is a roadblock. The kind of paradigm of which we conceive is a 'pure scientific' paradigm." From the point of view of "logical perfectionism", Holt and Richardson assert, "the models that are presently being employed seem to have inherent limitations that restrict future elaboration."¹⁹⁾

III

The Problem of Conceptualization in Comparative Politics

G. Sartori points out that political science oscillates between two unsound extremes concerning the theoretical and methodological problem. "At the one end a large majority of political scientists qualify as pure and simple unconscious thinkers. At the other end a sophisticated minority qualify as overconscious thinkers, in the sense that their standards of method and theory are drawn from the physical, 'paradigmatic' sciences." Moreover, "The wide gap between the unconscious and the overconscious thinker is concealed by the growing sophistication of statistical and research techniques. Most of the literature introduced by the title 'Method' (in the social, behavioral or political sciences) actually deals with survey techniques and social statistics, and has little if anything to share with the crucial concern of 'methodology', which is a concern with the logical structure and procedure of scientific enquiry." Sartori stresses that there is no methodology without *logos*, without thinking about thinking, in a very crucial sense. Methodology must be distinguished from technique. The latter is no substitute for the former. One may be a wonderful researcher and manipulator of data, and yet remain an unconscious thinker. According to Sartori, "the profession as a whole is grievously impaired by methodological unaware-

19) Ibid., pp. 70-71.

ness." The more we advance technically, the more we leave a vast, uncharted territory behind our backs. The field of comparative politics is particularly vulnerable to, and illustrative of, this unfelicitous state of affairs.²⁰⁾

1. The Travelling Problem

Traditional type of political science — as Sartori puts it — inherited a vast array of concepts which had been previously defined and refined by generations of political theorists. To some extent, therefore, the traditional political scientist could afford to be an "unconscious thinker." This is even more the case with the country-by-country legalistic institutional approach. "However, the new political science engages in reconceptualization. And this is even more the case, necessarily, with new comparative expansion of the discipline." There are many reasons for "this *renovatio ab imis*." One is the very "expansion on politics." To some extent politics results *objectively* bigger on account of the fact that the world is becoming more and more politicized (more participation, more mobilization, and in any case more state intervention in formerly non-governmental spheres). In no small measure, however, politics is *subjectively* bigger in that we have shifted the focus of attention both toward the periphery of politics (vis-a-vis the governmental process), and toward its input side. By now we study everything that is "potentially political." Aside from the expansion of politics, a more specific source of conceptual and methodological challenge for comparative politics is the "lengthening spectrum of political systems." We are now engaged in world-wide, cross-area comparisons. And while there is an end to geographical size, there is apparently no end to the proliferation of political units. "Now, the wider the world under investigation, the more we need conceptual tools that are able to travel." In spite of bold attempts at drastic terminological innovation, it is hard to see how Western scholars could radically depart from the political experience of the West, i.e., from the vocabulary of politics which has been developed over millennia on the basis of such experience. "Therefore, the first question is: how far, and how, can we travel with the help of the available vocabulary of politics?"²¹⁾

Sartori charges that "we have followed (more or less unwittingly) the line of least resistance: broadening the meaning — and thereby the range of application

20) G. Sartori, "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics", *American Political Science Review*, LXIV (December, 1970), p. 1033.

21) *Ibid.*, pp. 1033-4.

— of the conceptualizations at hand.” That is to say, the larger the world, the more we have resorted to *conceptual stretching*, or conceptual straining, i.e., to vague amorphous conceptualizations. It may be said that conceptual stretching represents a deliberate attempt to make our conceptualizations value free, and that conceptual straining is largely a “boomerang effect” of the developing area, i.e., a feedback on the Western categories of the diffuse politics of the Third World. “These considerations notwithstanding, conceptual stretching does represent, in comparative politics, the line of least resistance. And the net result of conceptual straining is that our gains in extensional coverage tend to be matched by losses in connotative precision. It appears that we can cover more — in travelling terms — only by saying less in a far less precise manner.” A disciplined methodology of comparison depends on the provision of precise conceptualization. However, conceptual stretching would produce indefiniteness and elusiveness. “A major drawback of the comparative expansion of the discipline is, then, that it has been conducive to indefiniteness, to undelimited and largely undefined conceptualizations.” The point is that the travelling problem of comparative politics has been met with the poor remedy of “conceptual stretching” instead of being squarely confronted.²²⁾

2. Quantification and Classification

Sartori points: What is very confusing in this matter is the abuse of a quantitative idiom which is nothing but an idiom. All too often, that is, we speak of degrees and of measurement not only without any actual measurements having been performed, but without any being projected, and even without any apparent awareness of what must be done before such measurements can be carried out. For instance, in most standard textbooks one finds that nominal scales are spoken of as “scales of measurement.” But a nominal scale is nothing else than a qualitative classification. To be sure classes can be given numbers; but this is simply a coding device for identifying items and has nothing to do with quantification. In a similar vein we speak more and more of “variables” which are not variables in any proper sense, for they are not attributes permitting gradations and implying measurability. No harm necessarily follows if it pleases us to use the word variable as a synonym for the word concept; but we are only deluding ourselves if we really believe that by *saying* variable we *have* a

22) Ibid., pp. 1034–6.

variable.²³⁾

Sartori asserts that coquetting with a quantitative idiom grossly exaggerates the extent to which political science is currently amenable to quantification, and, still worse, obfuscates the very notion of quantification. To understand the multifaceted complexities of the notion, as he states, is "a far less simple matter." "Nevertheless one may usefully distinguish — in spite of the close interconnections — among three broad areas of meaning and application, that is, between quantification as i) measurement, ii) statistical manipulation and, iii) formal mathematical treatment." Generally the quantification in the first meaning is spoken of in political science. Its quantification consists of (a) attaching numerical values to items (pure and simple measurement), (b) using numbers to indicate the rank order of items (ordinal scales) and (c) measuring differences or distances among items (interval scales). The quantification in the second meaning, that is, statistical manipulation enters the scene only when sufficient numbers have been pinned on sufficient items, and becomes central to the discipline only when we dispose of variables which measure things that are worth measuring. Both conditions — and especially the latter — are hard to meet. As for the ultimate stage of quantification, i.e., formal mathematical treatment, it is a fact that we seldom, if ever, obtain isomorphic correspondences between empirical relations among things and formal relations among numbers. "We may well disagree about future prospects, or as to whether it makes sense to construct formalized systems of quantitatively well defined relationships (mathematical models) so long as we wander in a mist of qualitatively ill-defined concepts." "It is for a very good reason that the progress of quantification should lag — in whatever discipline — behind its qualitative and conceptual progress." "Concept formation stands prior to quantification." In other words, "the major premise is that quantification enters the scene after, and only after, having formed the concept. The minor premise is that the 'stuff' of quantification — the things underpinned by the numbers — cannot be provided by quantification itself. Hence the rules of concept formation are independent of, and cannot be derived from, the rules which govern the treatment of quantities and quantitative relations."²⁴⁾

23) Ibid., pp. 1036-7.

24) Ibid., pp. 1037-8.

The above bears reference to the relationship between the logic of either-or and the logic of more-and-less, or between categoric concepts of the either-or type and gradation concepts of the more-than-less-than type. "What is usually lost sight of is that the either-or type of logic is the very logic of classification building. Classes are required to be mutually exclusive, i.e., class concepts represent characteristics which the object under consideration must either have or lack. Two items being compared must belong first to the same class, and either have or not have an attribute; and only if they have it, the two items can be matched in terms of which has it more or less. Hence the logic of gradation belongs to the logic of classification." Proper classification offers clear categorization and thereby the basis for collecting adequately precise information. That is to say, the taxonomical exercise is a necessary step in the process of not only concept formation but also scientific inquiry. While "impatience with classification is totally unjustified", as Sartori puts it, "we often confuse a mere enumeration (or checklist) with a classification, and many so called classification fail to meet the minimal requirements for what they claim to be."²⁵

3. Levels of Abstraction of Concepts

Conceptualization is served by recognition of the need for "levels of abstraction" of concepts, and thereby the distinctions among levels. Sartori distinguishes three levels of abstraction of concepts: high-level categories, medium-level categories, and low-level, configurative categories. "High level categorizations obtain universal conceptualizations: whatever connotation is sacrificed to the requirement of global denotation — either in space, time, or even both. HL concepts can also be visualized as the ultimate genus which cancels all its species. Descending a step, medium level categorizations fall short of universality and thus can be said to obtain general classes: at this level not all differentiae are sacrificed to extensional requirements. Nonetheless, ML concepts are intended to stress similarities at the expense of uniqueness, for at this level of abstraction we are typically dealing with generalizations. Finally, low level categories obtain specific, indeed configurative conceptualizations: here denotation is sacrificed to accuracy of connotation. One may equally say that with LL categories the differentiae of individual settings are stressed above their similarities: so much so that at this level definitions are often contextual." For example,

25) *Ibid.*, pp. 1038-40.

in the field of comparative public administration, "staff" is the high level universal category. "Administration" is still a good travelling category, but falls short of universal applicability in that it retains some of the attributes associated with the more specific notion of "bureaucracy." Descending the ladder of abstraction further we then find "civil service," which is qualified by its associations with the modern State. Finally, and to pursue the argument all the way down to the low level of abstraction, a comparative study of, say, French and English state employees will discover their unique and distinguishing traits and would thus provide contextual definitions. "Clearly, there is no hard and fast dividing line between levels of abstraction. Borders can only be drawn very loosely; and the number of slices into which the ladder is divided largely depends on how fine one's analysis needs to be. Three slices are sufficient, however, for the purpose of logical analysis." According to Sartori, three levels of abstraction of concepts are recapitulated in the following table with respect to its bearing on the problems of comparative politics.²⁶⁾

LADDER OF ABSTRACTION²⁷⁾

Levels of Abstraction	Major Comparative Scope and Purpose	Logical and Empirical Properties of Concepts
High Level Categories Universal conceptualization	Cross-area comparisons among heterogeneous contexts (global theory)	Maximal extension, Minimal intension, Definition by negation
Medium Level Categories, General conceptualizations and taxonomies	Intra-area comparisons among relatively homogeneous contexts (middle range theory)	Balance of denotation with connotation, Definition by analysis, i.e. per genus et differentiam
Low Level Categories Configurative conceptualizations	Country by country analysis (narrow-gauge theory)	Maximal intension, Minimal extension, Contextual definition

Sartori asserts that "the ladder of abstraction scheme brings out the snares and the faults of our current way of handling the travelling problem of comparative politics." For example, he takes up the conceptualization of structural-functionalism. In *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, Almond argued: "What we have done is to separate political function from political structure."²⁸⁾

26) Ibid., pp. 1041-3.

27) Ibid., p. 1044.

28) G. Almond and J.S. Coleman (eds.), *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, 1960, p. 59.

This separation is indeed crucial. But ten years have gone by and the assignment remains largely unfulfilled. Indeed, the structural-functional school is still grappling — with clear symptoms of frustration — with the preliminary difficulty of defining “function” — both taken by itself and in its relation to “structure”. Generally, the structural and functional categories lack adequate underpinning. And moreover, Sartori points out that “the stalemate and the mishandlings of the structural-functional approach have a lot to do with the ladder of abstraction.” On the functional side of the coin we are encumbered by a wealth of haphazard functional categories which are merely enumerated, and definitely provide no clues as to the level and type of analysis to which they apply. As a result the global functional argument developed by a number of structural-functionalists remains suspended in mid-air — for lack of a coordinated medium level taxonomic support — and is left to play with overstretched, if not contentless, functional universals. On the structural side of the coin we are confronted, instead, with little more than nothing. Structures qualified on their own right hardly exist — at least in the Almond line of thinking. This is all the more regrettable in view of the fact that while functions are meant to be (at least in global comparative politics) broad explanatory categories which do not require a low level specification, structures bear, instead, a closer relation to observables, and definitely need under-pinning all the way down the ladder. With structures understood as organizational structures we are required, in fact, to descend the ladder all the way down to low level configurative-descriptive accounts. In summing up, “not only has the structural-functional scholar ignored the ladder of abstraction, but he has inadvertently destroyed, during his reckless climbing, his own ladder. So much so that the approach encounters exactly the same perplexity as, say, general systems theory, namely, ‘Why has no scholar succeeded in presenting a structural-functional formulation which meets the requirements of empirical analysis.’ Now, it is hardly surprising that the general systems theorist should encounter great difficulties in deriving testable propositions about politics, since he is required to proceed deductively on the basis of theoretical primitives. But this is not the case with the structural-functional approach, which is not necessarily committed to whole systems analysis and enjoys the distinctive empirical advantage of leaning extensively — especially with segmented systems analysis — on observational terms. So, why should the structural-functional scholar remain tied to “a level of analysis

which [does] not permit empirical testing?" According to Sartori's diagnosis, "there is no intrinsic reason for this. Quite to the contrary, we may expect very rewarding returns, and the empirical promise (and distinctiveness) of the approach may well near fulfillment, if we only learn how to maneuver along a ladder of abstraction."²⁹⁾

Hence Sartori claims: Rearranging the conceptual framework of comparative analysis, we should confront squarely, tackle in earnest and solve — on adequate understanding of the ladder (and levels) of abstraction — the problems of re-conceptualization instead of following the line of least resistance such as "conceptual stretching." What is needed, for him, is (1) to develop the discipline along a medium level of abstraction with better intermediate categories, and (2) to maneuver, both upwards and downwards, along a ladder of abstraction in such a way as to bring together assimilation and differentiation, a relatively high explanatory power and a relatively precise descriptive content, macro-theory and empirical testing. So Sartori is against the view of logical perfectionism that is argued by Holt and Richardson. He states: "I have taken the more sober, and indeed counter-perfectionistic view that we should not encourage the 'overconscious thinker' paralyzed by overly ambitious standards. But surely we cannot expect an unconscious thinker lacking elementary logical training and discipline to meet the intricate new problems arising from global comparison." Accordingly, he calls upon "the conscious thinker to steer a middle cause between crude logical mishandling on the one hand, and logical perfectionism (and paralysis) on the other hand."³⁰⁾

IV

The Scientific Foundations of Comparative Analysis

The claim for rearranging the conceptual device in comparative politics gives rise to not only the need for overall re-conceptualization but also the necessity of re-examining the methodological foundations of the discipline. The importance and difficulty of these problems facing the field, as Yoshinori Ide

29) G. Sartori, *op. cit.*, pp. 1046–50.

30) *Ibid.*, pp. 1052–3 and 1033.

points out,³¹⁾ lies in the paradoxical character. While contemporary students of comparative politics have poured most of their energies into establishing the positive and scientific method of comparative political analysis, it is said today that the established method is non-positive, non-scientific, and thereby non-comparative. Here we find the paradoxical character of current matters in the field. However, that is not all. As we have more strongly the methodological orientation toward "pure scientific precision" by coming to be conscious of theoretical and methodological matters, we encounter the other — contextually distinct — paradoxical and problematic aspects which are relevant to the meaning of the theory and method. Then we have the following problems. (1) The better we arrange conceptual tools for comparative analysis and refine the theoretical models, the larger the distance between objects (or substance) and theoretical models becomes. Thus, the necessity for re-considering fundamentally the meaning of "positive character" of the positive approach and theoretical models have arisen. The problem is what we call "alienating from substance." (2) There is the problem relevant to re-discovering the normative values. (3) In relation to the above, the problems have arisen as to renewing our understanding of present situations of Western states. So an interest in the Western has been recalled by rising of comparative political development, and thereby an attempt to bridge the gap between the Western and the non-Western has appeared. Hence, it has been claimed that we should consider renewedly the conditions and issues confronting Western countries. Moreover, we have had arguments of attempting comparative studies of "the third world" rather *within* than *without* the Western. It is generally said that comparative government functions for the better understanding not only of foreign governments but also of one's own. Accordingly, it is considered that the recent trend wherein we are converging our interest upon the "within" is a natural result of such working of comparative political studies. The trend, however, comes to raise the complicated problem concerning the relevance of comparative political analysis. That is to say, the above, in the deeper context, bears reference to the philosophical and methodological foundations of comparative analysis. Thus, things have come to a serious pass. We have to establish speedily the

31) Yoshinori Ide, "Comparative Politics and Administration: Movement, Development and Paradox", *Nihon Seiji Gakkai Nenpō* (The Annual of The Japanese Political Science Association), 1971.

scientific method of comparative political analysis, but, on the other hand, we should re-consider the relevance of comparative method, and re-examine the philosophical foundations of the scientific method. Here appears concentratively the paradoxical character of the methodological issue which the field of comparative politics is confronting with.³²⁾

Furthermore, we can find the same paradox in the contemporary political science as a whole. This relates to the recent issue in American political science concerning the behavioralism and post-behavioralism.³³⁾ On the essential character of the issue facing the discipline, E.F. Miller³⁴⁾ insists: "Recent controversy in American political science about the nature of political inquiry reflects an older and deeper conflict at the level of epistemology between rival theories of knowledge." Nevertheless, D. Easton sees the difference between behavioralism and the viewpoint of its most recent critics as one more of mood or emphasis than of principle. So Easton seems to argue that it will be possible to harmonize behavioralism with post-behavioralism. However, according to Miller, "the recent antibehavioral protest stands in fundamental opposition not only to the approach that behavioralism takes to political inquiry but also to its basic assumptions about the nature of human knowledge." Post-behavioralism represents "something deeper and more durable than a desire for greater attention to practical issues or a commitment to radical politics." The post-behavioral revolution "gains depth and signification from its repudiation of the positivistic theory of knowledge on which behavioralism rests and its attachment to epistemological principles that have gained ascendancy over positivism in contemporary thought. Easton sees that 'postbehavioralism' is quite different in nature from the currents of opposition to behavioralism that had developed in the decade or so before 1965, which he calls 'classicism' and 'tradionalism.' He fails to recognize, however, that it rests on distinctive epistemological presuppositions which place it in fundamental opposition not only to behavioralism's earlier opponents but also to behavioralism itself."³⁵⁾

32) Ibid., pp. 244-8.

33) See David Easton, "The New Revolution in Political Science", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXIII (December, 1969), pp. 1051-1061.

34) E.F. Miller, "Positivism, Historicism, and Political Inquiry", and "Rejoinder to 'Comments' by David Braybrooke and Alexander Rosenberg, Richard S. Rudner and Martin Landau", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXI (September, 1972), pp. 796-817, and 857-73.

35) Ibid., pp. 796 and 857.

Miller points out that the recent challenge called "post-behavioral revolution" is under the influence of "historicism"³⁶⁾ which, as a theory of knowledge, typically contradicts positivism. Thus, Miller proposes to examine the recent debate about the nature of political inquiry in light of the deeper conflict in epistemology, now almost a century old, between positivism and its principal foe, namely, historicism. According to Miller, there are four sources of historicist influence which seem particularly important in the point of their impact on American political science: (1) antipositivist writings in the philosophy and history of science; (2) writings in the sociology of knowledge that adopt the position of Karl Mannheim; (3) recent work in existential phenomenology; and (4) the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche.³⁷⁾

Here I consider the problems raised by the political scientist who stands on the first, i.e., antipositivist position which is directly relevant to the above-mentioned context of this section. Agreeing generally with the epistemological view of such antipositivists as T. Kuhn and N.R. Hanson, John Gunnell questions several features of the positivist conception of science, particularly its deductive model of explanation. First of all, he points out, "there is a significant intellectual lag or gulf between political science and contemporary work in the philosophy of science." Generally speaking, social sciences of today have the same relations with the philosophy of the social sciences. "The current relationship between social science and the philosophy of science (or the philosophy of the social sciences) is a curious one. Despite the emergence of considerable body of literature in philosophy which is pertinent to the methodological problems of social science, there has been a lack of ostensive ties between the

36) The term "historicism" has been given a variety of meanings. Miller uses the term in the wide sense, i.e., in an epistemological sense to the view that all human knowledge is essentially relative to time and place. He states: This seems to have been the principal meaning of the term since the great debate about historicism in Germany in the early decades of the twentieth century. (Ibid., p. 797.)

37) Ibid., pp. 797, 806. Miller sees that the following writings stand on the first position: J. Gunnell, "Deduction, Explanation, and Social Scientific Inquiry", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXIII (December, 1969); S. Wolin, "Political Theory as a Vocation", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXIII (December, 1969). About the second position: W.E. Connolly, *Political Science and Ideology*, 1967. About the third position: M. Surkin, "Sense and Non-sense in Politics" in *An End to Political Science*, ed. M. Surkin and A. Wolfe, 1970; H.Y. Jung, "The Political Relevance of Existential Phenomenology", *Review of Politics*, 33 (October, 1971). And about the fourth position: H. Kariel, "Nietzsche's Preface to Constitutionalism", *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 25 (May, 1963).

two areas." Especially, it is considered that the situation of political science is a serious pass. Contemporary political scientists, or political behavioralists have turned to the philosophy of science for guidance in the area of substantive research. However, the ideas on which they draw have been obsolete or obsolescent within the discipline of the philosophy of science itself, both as descriptions and standards of scientific inquiry. They have, to a large extent, derived their conception of science and their notion of the procedural rules of empirical inquiry from a restricted body of literature in the philosophy of science, namely, "traditional logical empiricism" which is now being soundly attacked within the philosophy of science itself. Thus, they are faced with the problem of a form of cultural lag.³⁸⁾

Concerning the lag between current work in the philosophy of science and political scientists' perceptions of that field, Miller also states: "In justifying their particular conception of science, advocates of behavioral approach have commonly invoked the authority of the philosophy of science. They have assumed — and a generation of political scientists has been taught to believe — that there exists within the philosophy of science a consensus favoring a positivistic conception of scientific inquiry. We have seen, however, that there is a basic conflict about the nature of science within the philosophy of science itself, arising from the broader dispute at the level of epistemology about the character of human knowledge. Ironically, a revolt against positivism was beginning in the philosophy of science at about the time that political scientists were adopting the positivistic model of scientific inquiry as the basis for their own revolution. By the time the behavioral revolution had reached its objective, the shape of things in the philosophy of science had changed dramatically. Nevertheless, the methodological literature in political science continues to treat the positivistic model as though it enjoyed the full endorsement of philosophers of science. The writing of such men as Kuhn and Hanson are, in fact, often cited in support of the behavioralist's program, with little apparent recognition of the extent to which their views jeopardize the very foundations of behavioralism."³⁹⁾

38) J. Gunnel, "Deduction, Explanation, and Social Scientific Inquiry"; "Science and the Philosophy of Science: A Rejoinder to Professors Goldberg and Gregor", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXIII (December, 1969), pp. 1233 and 1259. See also J. Gunnel, "The Idea of the Conceptual Framework: A Philosophical Critique", *Journal of Comparative Administration*, 1 (August 1969), p. 142.

39) E.F. Miller, op. cit., p. 807.

Aside from the problem of the cultural lag, Gunnell analyzes critically the postivist conception of science and its deductive model of explanation. "Much of the theoretical literature in political and social science, as well as attempts to explicate the epistemic features of social scientific investigation, rest on a belief that the activity of the natural scientist is an appropriate model for understanding and prescribing the role of the social scientist. Although it may be granted that social and natural science must be distinguished in terms of such characteristics as technique and subject matter, this is often understood as explaining certain inherent or temporary limitations of social science. Generally it has been assumed that with regard to the logic of explanation, social science must be fundamentally symmetrical with natural science if it is to count as science." And moreover, it has been argued that the Hempelian model of scientific explanation is "an authoritative representation of the nature of science in general, a guide to substantive empirical inquiry in social science, and a formal measure of adequate explanation." That is to say, the thesis of the Hempelian deductivism or logical empiricism is most fundamentally "an argument for the "methodological unity of all empirical science since it attempts to reduce the criteria of scientific explanation to one universal logical pattern."⁴⁰⁾

The deductive model, Gunnell charges, does not actually reflect the character of scientific explanation. "What must be clearly understood is that the deductive model is expressly not intended to reflect the manner in which working scientists actually formulate their explanatory accounts. Although it is offered as an explication of the logical structure and rationale of various ways in which empirical science answers explanation-seeking why-questions, it is a philosophical thesis and not an empirical claim." "The model principally provides a set of formal logical criteria which are timeless and placeless and state what any explanation must include to truly count as a scientific explanation, i.e., a philosophic demand is being put upon explanation — a demand that the cohesion of its components should not depend upon the background of the person who asks for the explanation, nor upon the context in which it is given, but upon the relations which are, so to speaking, intrinsic to explanation. And the essence of the demand is simply that what is to be explained must be strictly deducible from a law to count as a fully adequate explanation. Whether the

40) J. Gunnell, "Deduction, Explanation, and Social Science Inquiry", pp. 1233, 1236, and 1259.

content of explanations in any branch of science in fact does, or conceivably can, coincide with this meta-scientific reconstruction is considered irrelevant as far as judging the validity of the model, and there is no claim whatever concerning the extent to which scientific explanations can actually be achieved for the phenomena studied in different branches of scientific inquiry. In other words, there is no necessary coincidence between science and scientific explanation." In short, the model has been "the artifact of the philosopher of science rather than the actual practice of scientists." From this viewpoint, the deductive model is not considered as an accurate representation of the actual logic of inquiry in natural science. And even if this logic were accurate insofar as natural science is concerned, as Gunnell puts it, there would be no basis for insisting that social science should conform to it. The canons of scientific inquiry for a particular field must be determined by scientists who work in that field and not by some outside authority. It is science and not philosophy which establishes the criteria for adequate explanation and rules for developing such criteria. Gunnell emphasizes that "the specification of the criteria of acceptable social scientific explanation belongs to social science." That is to say, the formal or substantive meaning of explanation and the objective or inter-subjective standards in science are always relative to particular scientific contexts (or paradigms). Neither the meaning nor the standards can be discussed apart from particular contexts. The adequate standards in any field at any time is contextually determined. So he advocates the "contextualist approach" as an approach to the philosophy of science (and the philosophy of the social sciences). And regarding the proper approach to political inquiry, he asserts to replace the behavioral approach with one that draws from the insights of Max Weber, the later Wittgenstein, and phenomenologists such as Alfred Schuz. ⁴¹⁾

Thus, as Gunnell puts it, "consideration of the deductive model" provides "a vehicle for examining certain more general problems about explanation and the relationship between social science and the philosophy of science. Since social scientists and especially political scientists, have been influenced either directly or indirectly, by the deductive model and other aspects of the philosophy of logical empiricism from which it emanates, there is not only the obvious

41) Ibid., pp. 1234, 1237-8, 1246, and 1259-60. Also Gunnell, "Social Science and Political Reality: The Problem of Explanation", *Social Research*, 35 (Spring, 1968), p. 180.

question whether social scientists have correctly understood this construct and this school of thought but the question of the validity of logical empiricism, even if correctly understood, as an approach to the philosophy of science (and social science).” As Gunnell notes, it is necessary to realize that “logical empiricism has been concerned with developing formal representations or reconstructions of the logical structure of scientific explanation and with a meta-logical analysis of the language applied to science.” Being engrossed in the abstract and formalistic work of logical analysis, that is, in the formalism isolated with actual scientific practice, logical empiricism as an approach to the philosophy of science has been challenged severely by recent works of antipositivists within the field. Furthermore, “this recent literature is marked by its empirical orientation, i.e., its attention to actual scientific practice and especially the history of science.”⁴²⁾

What Gunnell has argued above suggests that there is not only the new trend against positivism in the philosophy of science but also the trend of re-examining radically philosophical foundations of the theory and method in political science, from the antipositivist position.

V

Conclusion

In regard to a catalytic role of comparative politics, Almond proudly says: “It has been the great privilege of the sub-discipline of comparative politics to have acted as a catalyst in this process of professional development.” “Confronted by the exotic and unstable phenomena of the new and modernizing nations, it was uniquely challenged by the problems of comparison, classification, and change, and led in the search for analytical frameworks and categories suitable for coping with these intellectual problems. It is not accidental that it fell to comparative politics to be particularly active in reestablishing the relationship between the analysis of individual political systems and their classes and varieties with general political theory, and that it dramatized the necessity of reforging the links between historical political theory, empirical political

42) Gunnell, “Deduction, Explanation, and Social Science Inquiry”, pp. 1234 and 1238.

theory, and normative political theory.” And he furthermore states as follows. “Comparison” is “the very essence of the scientific method.” Accordingly, “it makes no sense to speak of a comparative politics in political science, since if it is a science, it goes without saying that it is comparative in its approach.”⁴³⁾

Ironically, at this time that comparative politics has grown into such great ones, the field has come to confront the serious problems of re-considering the meaning of comparative analysis and of re-examining the philosophical foundations of the scientific method. So it can be said that whether comparative politics as a sub-discipline in contemporary political science will play the catalytic role hereafter depends upon the extent to which the problems may be re-considered and re-examined thoroughly.

43) G. Almond, “Political Theory and Political Science” in *Political Development: Essays in Heuristic Theory*, 1970, pp. 253-4.