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THE PRACTICAL IMPORT OF POLITICAL INQUIRY

Brian Caterino

Political Philosophy and Public Purpose

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Brian Caterino

The Practical Import of Political Inquiry

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Rochester, New York, USA

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This book is dedicated to
Angelina Caterino (1922–2015) who passed away as this book was being completed
And to Lori for all her support

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Series Editor's Foreword

The hegemony of analytic epistemology in mainstream social science and philosophy has been intensifying throughout the past two decades. Anyone perusing the flagship journals in sociology, political science, and economics knows all too well that the notion of social science increasingly makes pretenses to becoming a kind of natural science. As a result, abstruse mathematical and statistical models clog the mainstream journals. Behind this view is the basic assumption that human behavior can, and should, be conceived as operating under standard laws and patterns. There are innate tendencies that drive and shape our actions and, thus, our social reality. This has grown even more with the rise of cognitive scientific approaches to human behavior, and to the now pervasive view that the brain and behavioral science hold the key to any valid social–scientific approach to the realm of social and political reality. Marginalized now is the concept of critique: of the notion that social science should not simply be about understanding the mechanisms of behavior, but rather for the ethical enterprise of improving social life and enhancing social justice.

Ever since Hobbes' indictment of Aristotelianism, this tension between social science as an ethical–political enterprise on the one hand, and as a purely scientific endeavor on the other, has been a kind of intellectual battleground. Indeed, it was Max Weber who pushed this problem further by separating out the empirical and "scientific" aspects of social science from the practical, normative aspects of judgment with his neo-Kantian separation between "facts" and "values." According to Weber, it was only by restraining our practical and normative commitments that we would be able to reach any kind of rational and scientific understanding of human

social facts. The place for applying our normative value commitments about how society should be was now to be cast into the realm of philosophy. This separation between facts and values has been particularly important in understanding how critical social science has been marginalized and how the analytic, empirical mainstream approaches have been able to consolidate their influence.

With this in mind, Brian Caterino's important study should help those who favor the former, but who also see the importance of theoretical reason. Caterino urges us not to fall into either a purely phronetic and judgment-based approach—advocated by Ian Shapiro, Bent Flyvbjerg, and Sanford Schram, among others—which emphasizes practical reason and engagement at the expense of rational and theoretical rigor even as he also seeks to import practical concerns into a theoretical understanding of social reality. A critical social science, therefore, is one that sees social actors as engaged in a reflexive exchange of reasons that constitutes a crucial starting point for inquiry. Social science does not commence from some privileged position, outside of the power relations and interpretive assumptions of the society as a whole. We cannot look, as the positivist does, for deductive laws that can explain in some causal sense social facts and social reality. Instead, we must look for the ways that interpretive schemes give shape to empirical facts. Caterino advocates for a practical political theory that overcomes the differentiation between expert and layman, as well as between theoretical reflection and reflexive self-constitution.

With this in mind, we can begin to see that political inquiry need not sacrifice theoretical rigor in favor of engaged concern over social problems. Instead, the orientation of political inquiry should now be directed toward the problems generated by the inquirer who is also at the same time a social participant. The critique of power and domination therefore becomes a matter of making theory accountable to the kinds of relations and structures that frustrate our communicative freedom and competence. Caterino's approach to the idea of a practical even critical form of political inquiry holds open for us the possibility of moving out from the ponderous weight of positivism, as well as the post-modern obsession with endless forms of power and domination. Rationality embodied in the world can now reveal for us the kind of political inquiry that can serve to illuminate as well as overcome the social problems that derive from domination and power relations. It is not the virtuoso theorist or the austere empiricist that emerges as the locus of critical reason for Caterino, but the rationality inherent in everyday life and discourse. With this bold and enlightened

vision in view, Caterino's important book should help us reinvigorate the concept of critique as well as rethink the future of the social sciences and its role in serving as the handmaiden of emancipatory social progress.

Michael J. Thompson
Winter 2016 New York City

Introduction: The Practical Import of Political Inquiry

Abstract Chapter 1 introduces some of the major themes of the work, such as the practical nature of the participant's perspective, and delineates this perspective in relation to a number of approaches to the question of practical import put forward by participants in the Perestroika list: primarily realist, post-modern, Wittgenstein and phronetic approaches.

Keywords Phronetic social science • Unified science • Participants' perspective • Social practice and knowledge

> So let's switch off all the lights and light up all the Luckies, Crankin' up
> the afterglow Cause we're goin' out of business, everything must go.
>
> *Walter Becker and Donald Fagen*

This work discusses a basic problem in critical approaches to political and social inquiry: in what way is social inquiry animated by a practical intent. I argue that practical intent is not external to inquiry as an add-on or a choice by the inquirer, but is inherent to the process of inquiry. The practical intent in inquiry derives from the connection between social inquiry and the participant's perspective. The social inquirer, in order to grasp the sense of those who are the subject of inquiry, has to adopt the perspective of the participant in the social world. This conception

opposes the view that theory or research is an autonomous activity that is distinct from, or superior to, the participant's perspective of a layman. Conversely, since the inquirer is on the same level as that of the participant, all inquiry is ultimately a form of mutual critique in which those who are addressed by an inquirer have an equal right and an equal capacity to criticize addressors.

This conception of mutual critique is not widely recognized by political and social scientists. Even in reform movements like Perestroika, there has been a tendency to retreat to a defense of the autonomy of research, and in the reaction to Perestroika, this tendency has been even more prevalent. There seems to be a resurgence of neo-positivism in response to the Perestroikan challenge. Although Perestroika started out with good intentions, it ended without a clear notion of committed inquiry. John Gunnell also notes this issue in a recent symposium in *Perspectives on Political Science*. He argues correctly that, for the most part, the Perestroikan emphasis on the need for interpretive methods was vague and not well developed.[1] Hoping to fill this lacuna, in the first section I develop this theme through an analysis of some post-Perestroikan discussions of the role of inquiry. Social inquiry is an interpretive enterprise, which aims at mutual understanding. Thus, it is always tied to the participants' perspective. Explanations of action have to be intentional accounts, that is, they should explain the reasons why we act. However, explanations are also evaluations, and they inevitably imply a critical and normative stance.

Similar problems plague contemporary notions of critique. Some theorists following Foucault criticize what they see as an externalist notion of critique. They see critique as often addressed from the standpoint of an outsider or from the standpoint of a theorist seeking a truth that transcends the participants' perspective. From this superior perspective, critique asserts the authority to command and judge them. The inquirer or theorist knows best. The superiority of the critic is here associated with normative critique. To have a normative perspective, on this view, is to judge others as deficient from the transcendental and universal position.

Taking up this argument, a number of critics have held that any notion of critique has to be non-normative. This position is, however, difficult to defend. It conflicts with the normative character of practical reason in the participants' perspective. A notion of mutual critique that is derived from the participants' perspective does not require an outsider's perspective. It can be derived from the reflexivity of participants in the social world. Social action in the lifeworld is inherently normative, and stems

from the accountability of actors to one another in ordinary interaction. However, this mutual accountability does not place the theorist above the participant; rather, it reveals an internal connection between the theorists' and the participants' perspective. Thus, we can employ a conception of critique that is normative without the perspective of the external or dominating inquirer.

The conception of inquiry as a cooperative process has implications for the conception of the researcher as expert. The social researcher cannot take the stance of an outside observer, who is unaffected by meaning and mutual understanding, but neither can he or she take the position of an expert whose knowledge has a privileged access before discursive vindication. As a form of mutual critique, social inquiry requires the consent of those who are the subject of inquiry, not just the inquirer's own validation.

Social inquiry then is not primarily the search for causal mechanisms or empirical regularities in action. Such regularities are historically conditioned and contingent on conditions. There are no general ahistorical laws of social action. The individual's own understanding of such regularities is itself an element in action. Following the insight of Merton, we have to take into account that our knowledge of regularities could cause us to change our behavior.[2] Merton's original formation of the self-fulfilling prophecy drew on the work of symbolic interactionist notion of the definition of the situation. We do not behave reactively to stimuli, but act according to our own self-understanding of our condition and our understanding of the world. These shape our expectations. Believing something to be valid, Merton inferred whether it is true or not can bring a state of affairs about. Our actions are not guided by external causal forces, but by our own expectations about the world we inhabit. Later, social theorists like Karl-Otto Apel and Anthony Giddens took this insight in a different direction. Our knowledge of social science is part of our definition of the situation and shapes our expectations, but contra Merton they can also motivate us to act in a way that disconfirms these regularities. Since we can act according to our expectations of ourselves and others, we can modify our action in a way that limits any notion of permanent law like regularities.

The question of the practical import of inquiry was once again raised by the Perestroika movement in American Political Science. While this movement did raise important questions about the relevance of research to social and political life, for the most part, the discussion remained at best a reform movement within the discipline of political science that had

only a general programmatic content. Too many in Perestroika remain tied to the questions of rigor versus relevance.[3] This problematic situation is defined by a separation of experts (academics) from laymen. While I don't deny the role of expertise, this is a separation I want to overcome.

I hope to lay out a distinctive path to the questions of the practical import of social inquiry in relation to some of the claims and major theories associated with this movement. Undoubtedly, some of these are more detailed and less programmatic than those found in the Perestroikan discussion list. They all have limitations that in the end require a better formulation.

Some Proposed Alternatives

Ian Shapiro, one of the major figures in the Perestroika movement, is known for his critique of rational choice theory and advocacy of a problem-driven political science. His work, *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences,* addresses the connection of political and social inquiry to practical intent.[4] Being problem driven, political science is always concerned with practice. Shapiro's project is marred, however, by the attempt to rehabilitate the distinction between realism and idealism. This leads to a tendentious reading of interpretive social theory. He equates interpretive theory and idealism. Here, Shapiro's main interlocutor is the version of Wittgenstein developed by the Cambridge Historical School of Skinner, Pocock, and Dunn. From his "realist" perspective, interpretive social inquiry is no more than a form of linguistic idealism. It detaches the search for meaning from the causal explanation of social processes. I think this reading is flawed and overly selective. I want to show that interpretive social theories and critical theories are not idealist but based in practical action in the social world and not on an abstracted level of meaning.

One of the problems that arises with Shapiro's notion of realism is that its aim is to restore a scientific image of man by opposing it to idealism. Interpretive social theory sees forms of understanding to be a practical force that generates will and action, and thus needs no correction by realism. It does not exclude "causal" explanation in its broadest sense, but sees causal analysis as tied to reasons, not to observed variables—a point I will take up in the Conclusion. A different form of realism, which does not rest on the need to restore the integrity of causal explanatory science, is found in the work of Raymond Geuss, who, though his work is quite relevant to the issues raised here, was not, to my knowledge, a participant in the Perestroikan discussions. In *Real Politics*, Geuss relies

on the difference between realism and idealism, but interprets it more in terms of prudence than in terms of causal explanation.[5] He starts from the position that politics is implicitly and explicitly a normative exercise. However, he denies that the normative foundations can be developed through what he sees as a decontextualized universalism found in Rawls, and to a lesser extent in Habermas. Geuss' realism points in the direction of the phronetic approach developed by Flyvbjerg and Schram.

Anne Norton took a different path to a more activist policed science. She attempts to incorporate the material within the symbolic order. Practices cannot simply be observed or found independent of meaning, but are embedded in our frames of meaning. The nature of meaning, however, is holistic. In her work *95 Theses*, Norton develops a cultural-ist approach to politics.[6] Practices are not discrete objects but are always embedded in cultural frames of meaning. Individual meanings emerge against the context of other meanings in which it is difficult to isolate discreet elements. Meaning does not represent the world, but is disclosed in, and by, linguistic worlds. Norton employs a strong contextualist position: she holds that meaning is entirely internal to a culture. She also expands the symbolic reach of culture. The latter is composed not just of language but of material objects. Within culture, such material objects are also saturated with meaning. Here, culture is not so much an entity or an object, but a matrix or a network of culture. It is a medium of meaning through which individuals are linked. For her, it is the "between" that creates a field of relations. Thus, Norton tries to undercut the distinction between materialism, realism, and idealism.

Norton is skeptical of any model of social science that, like natural science, approaches inquiry as the construction of a relation between independent and dependent variables. Given her holism, she doubts the claims of social scientists that there are elements that can be isolated, and distinct variables that can be determined independent of culture. As she argues:

> The discourse of variables implicitly invests each variable with an abstract conceptual integrity and autonomy. The use of variables thus tends to diminish where it does not foreclose, the recognition of causal reciprocities and the imbucation of variables with one another[7]

Norton's view might be reformulated though hermeneutics. Interpretation is a circular process. It goes back and forth between elements in the network of meaning. The individual elements then do not

simply vary the way independent and dependent variables do. There is a mutual implication in which changes in one element may change the very character of all the terms in a field. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to identify an independent variable in this multi-causal context.

While Norton does not entirely reject the use of variables, she does not think that it ought to have a central role in social research. Instead, social researches ought to show "how a particular relation is allied with others" or "delineating systems (discursive and structural) in which meaning is embedded."[8]

While Norton's view is broadly consistent with interpretive social science, I think her over-reliance on holism leads to difficulties. She attributes all of the symbolic power to create meaning to acts of world disclosure and little or no force to the communicative power of individuals. Forms of authority are themselves given in world-disclosing practices. In this way, she sees theory as a literary act.[9] The cultural text that we interpret is more like a literary one than the one in which we make statements in assertions. "If language is political," she notes, "politics is linguistic." Norton contends that linguistic production establishes authority just as political practice does. In her reading, the authors of the constitution establish the authority of "we the people" through its own textual performance. Literature establishes authority just as much as overtly political works. This seems especially true in Norton's view of works written by colonial and post-colonial writers. Such works either establish or undermine social hierarchies or relationships of authority.

The problem with this view is that it slides over the distinction between disclosing order and justifying social order. Norton's view comes close to Althusser's notion of the interpolation of subjects, in that it confuses the question of the order of things within a social world with that of validity. Undoubtedly, language and literature illuminate meaning, and literary practices undermine and question authority and shape sensibilities, in part, by bringing to the fore dissonant experiences. In so doing, however, literary works draw not simply on symbolic order and the power of disclosure, but on the communicative capacity of participants to take up and interpret their world. The phrase "we the people" can be seen as a kind of founding act. It declares a new relation or order of things.[10] It is, however, also an assertion that the individuals of the United States form a distinct polity that seeks independence—and that the assertion is worthy of being recognized, as developed in the rest of the Declaration. While this performative element is no doubt necessary, it is not sufficient. After all, many manifestos

have failed to become manifest, and many declarations have turned out to be invalid. The legitimacy of the new authority has to be established. It has to be recognized and justified through reasons and taken up by the people of the USA and accepted by the nations of the world. Thus, orders of meaning also imply orders of justification. The declaration has to be valid or become valid. These relations of validity are found, however, not in the order of discourse, but on the mutual accountability of subjects.

John Gunnell, in contrast to Shapiro, recognizes in Wittgenstein's dictum that meaning is use,[11] and the attempt to locate meaning is not in an ideal realm of the mind but in the practical realm of social life. The notion that meaning is use is not meant instrumentally, but indicates the mastery of rules that are demonstrated in social life. One has mastered a rule according to Wittgenstein, not when one can explicate it, but when one shows that he or she knows how to employ the rule in practice. One understands how to play chess, to use one of Wittgenstein's favorite examples, when one can show that one can play the game. This means not simply a rote understanding of the rules, but the ability to respond to novel situations and create new moves. The understanding of the meaning of a rule is generative.

Gunnell has employed this neo-Wittgensteinian frame with profit in a series of works that develop an interpretive approach to social science.[12] He has opposed the idea that we should pursue a unified notion of social science rooted in logical positivism, empiricism, or naturalism. He opposes rigid forms of empiricism and logical positivism, but he is also critical of approaches to theory and method, which he sees as transcendental. He wants to maintain the primacy of practical reason against claims to a higher status. The main thrust of his critique, which allies it with the Perestroika movement, is the putative alienation of political theory and political inquiry from practice. This alienation leads to the distanciation of forms of political inquiry from politics. His post-metaphysical outlook rejects the idea that epistemology is constitutive of science as well as any notion that politics has some essential (i.e. transcendental) feature that guides practice from the outside. Gunnell thinks that political theory especially is an "elite" activity, which employs a manufactured idea of "the tradition." It limits our notions of political action. Similarly, Gunnell analyzes methodology in terms of metapractices, which try to Substitute a theoretical perspective, guiding practices for a discussion of political practice.

Gunnell's work is important for its emphasis on the practical roots of understanding. His approach encounters difficulties, however, due to its over-reliance on Wittgenstein's notion of mastery of language as a kind of

pre-reflexive understanding. This view denies, or at least downplays, the everyday character of reflexivity. Thus, he cannot completely grasp the relation between the background conditions of understanding and the reflexive capacities of participants in interaction. Wittgenstein's statement, "we don't agree in judgment, we agree in forms of life," implies that consensus such as it is, can only be inexplicit and pre-reflexive. This way of understanding meaning, however, underplays the reflexive character of the inter-subjective practices.

This problem comes to light in Gunnell's use of the notion of conventional objects. He argues that the primary elements of social life are conventions, which are constituted by rule-governed practices. These "objects" are meaningful and exhibited in action. He does not see interpretation as a primary feature of understanding, as do many hermeneutically inclined social theorists. Instead, he characterizes understanding as an unreflective form of action in which meaning is grasped practically. He reserves the term interpretation for those instances in which meaning is in question or needs to be clarified. He separates interpretation from meaningful conventional objects. While it is true that interpretation comes to the fore in situations of conflict over meaning, he sees interpretation as a rendering or conveyance that is logically distinct from its (conventional) object. I think this is fundamentally incorrect.

In order to follow a rule at least two people have to be involved. A's use of the rule has to be understood by B as a proper use of the rule, or conversely an improper one. In the latter case, B is able to criticize or correct A. Equally, B must be able to recognize or criticize A. In order to have this reciprocal relationship, we don't simply agree in behavior, but also in expectations. A must be able to anticipate the expectations of B that a rule is being followed and B must anticipate the expectations of A. If this account is correct, however, then following a rule is not entirely pre-reflexive. It requires more awareness of following a rule than Wittgenstein admits.[13]

Following a rule is a form of mutual recognition, not simply Wittgenstein's agreement in forms of life. The latter relies too much on the force of culture as the condition of understanding. Wittgenstein's position holds that individuals are constituted by and through these forms of life. To be sure, they can modify rules or find new ones. Practices can change and traditions can fade out of existence. However, the constitution of society is not produced by the anonymous activity of a form of life, but through the interaction of individuals who are mutually accountable. They

are simultaneous produced by and produce social order. Something similar can be said about the relation of ego and alter in mutual recognition. The alter is, at the same time, identical to, and radically non-identical to, ego. We can both agree and dissent from others using reasons.

If the notion of following a rule and mutual understanding are mutually implicative then it seems that understanding and interpretation are not so easily separated. We only have the ability to access the social world though our role as participants who are accountable to each other; as reflexive participants we are always already interpreting the world we live in. Thus, the model of the social world as made up of conventional objects, while not wrong, is in crucial respects incomplete.

In the end, Gunnell draws on Aristotle to elaborate the implications of his Wittgensteinian conception of the relations between theory and practice. He reads Aristotle as another philosopher who rejects explicit theory. The problems of relating theory to practice are impeded, rather than enabled, by the various metadiscourses, which attempt to interpret practice. However, as I will argue in the Conclusion, a strict use of Aristotelean phronesis falls short of the requirements of modern subjectivity. However, the suggestion of a phronetic social science has been developed by theorists like Sanford Schram and Bent Flyvbjerg.

Sanford Schram follows Gunnell in rejecting the objectifying view of social science modeled largely on natural scientific inquiry, which has, with a few interruptions, dominated political science in the past century.[14] Social and natural sciences do not share a unified method, nor can social science even have a unified method. The unified science approach adopts primarily an objectifying perspective that takes its distance from the understanding of participants in interaction and treats them as objects. For Schram, the unified science view sees forms of social inquiry as attempts to discover the *truth* about a domain of inquiry, that is, politics, through the accumulation of knowledge. This project entails constructing a general theory of politics that is, in large measure, explanatory and predictive. He thinks that such a theory has to be built on universal generalizations about human behavior and the accumulation of large bodies of data. Such knowledge is then meant to be useful in the formulation of policy that hopes to direct the course of society.[15]

Schram rejects the idea that political science ought to be regulated by a unified method. Qualitative studies that attempt to understand the lives of participants on their own terms or engage them as participants are left out either as non-science or as auxiliaries to empirical procedures. In contrast,

Schram looks to a social science that starts from the bottom of the social order. He advocates a social science that is driven by the problems of society, not by the demands of methods or system building. Thus, according to him, it should be a multi-method social science. Methods depend on the nature of the problems under consideration.

Along with Bent Flyvbjerg, Schram terms this approach *phronetic* social science. Phronesis, in Aristotle's work, referred to a kind of practical wisdom that was rooted in experience, and because it was concerned with changing human affairs, it was not capable of theoretical (apodictic) certainty. In Schram's interpretation, this is a practically oriented form of inquiry that is oriented to particulars and to individual explanations, but not to universal laws.

Phronesis originally referred not to social inquiry but to ethics. Like Aristotle's ethics, a phronetic social science has to be normative. For Schram, an alternative form of political science has to recognize that there is no disinterested knowledge, and that it is "tied to serving particular values."[16] There is no knowledge for its own sake. Instead, if pursuing what he sees as neutral methods, he proposes a problem-driven approach that uses a variety of approaches to create a dialogue with other actors in specific contexts. His dialogical political science involves engagement, especially with those at the bottom of the social order. The commitment to a pluralist political science with a practical intent has to avoid the charge of becoming just an empty pluralism. Commentators like John Dryzek and Keith Topper have argued for a critical pluralism which rejects an anything goes attitude toward inquiry.[17] While such a political science must retain a critical capacity, it does not derive from methods, according to Schram, but through the way it contributes to enriching political discourse.

The works of Bent Flyvbjerg in *Making Social Science Matter*[18] and of Flyvbjerg, Sanford Schram and Todd Landsman in *Real Social Science* present closely related approaches.[19] The point of social inquiry is inherently practical. It addresses questions of what we ought to do. However, the phonetic approach suffers from a couple of major flaws. It sees all theory along the lines of model of natural science, and correspondingly makes the field of practical action a space of Aristotelian prudence which focused on context and has a limited sphere of generality. I don't think the simple contrast between episteme and phronesis, as formulated by neo-Aristotelian social science, holds. For this view, contextual phronetic judgments are forms of *doxa* or opinion, which do not address conditions of validity. We still have to deal with questions of validity in social inquiry, though they take a different

form. Everyday social action is in fact organized in part around notions of validity. The question is whether questions of validity have merely a local or a broader context.

Here, we have to look to a weaker notion of context in which we can reach beyond local knowledge, without the necessity of a transcendental stance. Consider, for example, that Schram's own notion of a dialogical social science entails a "fusion of horizons" between participants, which broadens both the view of the participant and that of the inquirer. Our understanding is revised and extended. We encounter others with claims to validity, which may differ from ours, and with which we have to come to terms. Mutual understanding entails coming to understand and evaluate these claims. Thus, communicative action contains context-breaking and context-transcending capacities.

However, this ability to transcend one's perspective is more than just an expansion of contexts; it entails a universal feature of interaction or communicative action. Our sense of mutual recognition extends, in principle, to all participants even if in practice we fall short of this. This will be discussed at length in later chapters.

Schram's proposal, while suggestive, remains at the programmatic level. It does not fully explicate what a dialogical social science would be like. One problem, however, with the approaches of Gunnell and Schram, as well as all phronetic approaches, is the limited way they deal with the notion of context. These theorists set up an either/or argument, They all want to contrast the universal transcendental approach of natural science and philosophy, which takes the position of an external observer with the insider approach that is always, because it is contextual, inevitably local and limited. Starting from these premises, they oppose any universalistic approach to norms as a form or rationalism that judges from above. Thus, they equate the universalist approaches to justice, such as those developed by Rawls or Habermas, to scientific approaches to the natural world. Because they think that all universals stand outside of context, they reject them.

My version of the participant's perspective differs from the phronetic approach. Though all interpretive understanding is contextual, mundane understanding is theoretical to the extent that the participant has a conception of the social world, how it is structured, and how it operates. It does not imply a set of natural scientific rules that are universal and certain. Thus, the understanding of participants is not driven by prudent judgment alone, but by their reflexive understanding of the social world.

The participant is capable of critical judgment about society, not just prudence. I do not agree entirely with the phronetic use of Foucault's theory of power. I think it leads to a problematic notion of critique.

Although this book addresses the main disputes in political science, its intended audience are all those who work in the social sciences as well as those who are concerned with issues of social theory and the philosophy of social inquiry. For it addresses questions that all social inquiry needs to answer.

NOTES

1. John Gunnell "Pluralism and the Fate of Perestroika: An Historical Reflection" *Perspectives on Politics.* 13:2 2015 408–14.
2. Robert Merton. "The Self Fulfilling Prophecy", *Antioch Review* 8: 2 (Summer) 1948: 195.
   Also see Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure.* New York: Free Press 1968; Karl Otto Apel. *Understanding and Explanation*: *A Transcendental-Pragmatic Perspective.* Cambridge MA: MIT Press 1984; Anthony Giddens. *The Constitution of Society*: *Outline of the Theory of Structuration.* Berkeley: University of California Press 1986.
3. Michael Desch. Technique Trumps Relevance: The Professionalization of Political Science and the Marginalization of Security Studies in *Perspective on Politics* 13:2. 377–93 Erik Voeten "Rigor Is Not the Enemy of Relevance". *Perspectives on Politics*, 13:2 402–403.
4. Ian Shapiro, *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences* Princeton: Princeton University Press 2007.
5. Raymond Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics* Princeton: Princeton University Press 2008.
6. Anne Norton *95 Theses on Politics*, *Culture and Method* New Haven: Yale 2003.
7. Norton 6–7.
8. Norton 6.
9. Norton is making this claim largely in relation to Habermas' critique of Derrida "Excursus on Levelling the Genre Distinction between Literature and Philosophy" in *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge MIT Press, 1987 185–210. The argument I give here departs somewhat from Habermas', however.
10. I am referring, of course, to Derrida's article "Declarations of Independence" New Political Science 7:1 1986 7–15.
11. "For a large class of cases of the employment of the word 'meaning'—though not for all—this way can be explained in this way: the meaning of a word is its use in the language" Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations* Pearson 1974: 41.

12. Among the most important for my purposes include John Gunnell *Between Philosophy and Politics: The Alienation of Political Theory* Amherst University of Massachusetts Press, 1986; *The Orders of Political Theory: Philosophy, Social Science, Politics* Latham MD Rowman and Littlefield 1998 *Leaving Everything As It Is: Social Inquiry After Wittgenstein and Kuhn* New York: Columbia University Press 2014; *Political Theory and Social Science: Cutting Against the Grain* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

13. See Jurgen Habermas' critique of Wittgenstein in *On the Pragmatics of Social Interaction: Preliminary Studies in the Theory of Communicative Action* Cambridge MA: MIT Press 2002: 45–57; Karl-Otto Apel *Towards a Transformation of Philosophy* Routledge Kagan and Paul 1979.

14. Sanford Schram "Beyond Paradigm: Resisting the Assimilation of Phronetic Social Science: *Politics and Society* 32:3 2004 330–45. Return to Politics: Perestroika, Politics and Post-Paradigmatic Political Science in Brian Caterino and Sanford Schram eds Making Political Science Matter: Debating Knowledge Research and Method, New York: New York University Press 2006 "Political Science Research: From Theory to Practice" International Encyclopedia of Political Science.

15. Schram Beyond Paradigm 418–9.

16. Schram Beyond Paradigm 419.

17. John Dryzek "A Pox on Perestroika a Hex on Hegemony" in Kristen Renwick Monroe *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science* Yale University Press *2005 509–25*; Keith Topper *The Disorder of Political Inquiry.* Cambridge Harvard University Press 2005.

18. Bent Flyvbjerg *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How it can Succeed Again* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2001.

19. Bent Flyvbjerg, Todd Landman and Sanford Schram eds *Real Social Science: Applied Phronesis* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2012.

The Practical Import of Political Inquiry: Perestroika's Last Stand

Abstract Chapter 2 continues the discussion of the relevance of political science to politics. These include Perestroikan and post-Perestroikan discussions such as the American Political Science Association (APSA) task force and the Perestroika-lite. They defend the view of experts that separates it from lay knowledge in a strong way and want to defend rigor while trying to find a way to be relevant. Perestroikans developed some promising ideas, but they were more concerned with disciplinary reform than with political practice. After reviewing several other promising efforts to link theory to practical interest, I discuss the character of a critical theory based on the participants' perspective. In the latter, I argue that there is a reciprocal relation between the participant and the inquirer. The inquirer is on the same epistemological and ontological level as the participant. Inquiry is a matter of mutual critique. Any claims to expertise must be redeemed by mutual understanding.

Keywords Perestroika • Impact and relevance • Mutual critique • Critical theory • Participants' perspective • Public sociology • Political science • Quantitative versus qualitative approaches

Disciplinary disputes in political science have often, implicitly and explicitly, involved questions about the nature of social scientific knowledge.

However, they have not produced radical reformulations of the disciplines' ruling ideas of social inquiry. Examining some of these disputes shows the need for a deeper questioning of the nature of political inquiry and its relation to a critical social theory. This can be achieved by an analysis of the participants' perspective in social inquiry.

POLITICAL SCIENCE UNDER ATTACK POST-PERESTROIKA

In March 2013, the US Senate voted to approve an amendment, which defunded political science grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The amendment proposed by Senator Tom Coburn eliminated political science funding by NSF unless a project "is certified as promoting national security or the economic interests of the United States."[1] This amendment would have changed the accepted criteria of the NSF, which considers scholarly merit and impact as the prime criteria. Coburn, to be sure, had a neo-liberal agenda, which aimed more at "wasteful" government funding of research and delegitimizing government programs that were for the public good, than at academic political science. He followed in the wake of earlier Republican criticisms that accused the NSF of mismanagement.[2] Still, Coburn repeated some widely held criticism of political science research. He pointed to the seeming triviality of research, which presents common sense knowledge as scientific discoveries, such as a $251,000 study measuring public attitudes toward the Congress. A study such as this might yield little more than the layman's knowledge of the public's distaste for Congress.

While funding was restored for political science, the discipline reacted swiftly and aggressively to the threat to its treasured funding. It was clear that in the current political climate, the negative publicity was impacting the perception of political science. The American Political Science Association (APSA) criticized the politicization of research, which would undermine the neutrality of the scientific process: "Adoption of this amendment is a gross intrusion into the widely respected, independent scholarly agenda setting process at NSF that has supported our world-class national science enterprise for over sixty years."[3] Despite the fact that the NSF largely favored quantitative research based on an implicit natural science model, one that was widely contested in the discipline, the report rallied around the threat to the prestige and status (not to mention money) associated with an NSF grant. There was little debate on whether the kind of research NSF funds is really in the public interest or whether

it promotes discussion of vital public affairs. With this report, a second round of disciplinary reform came to a definitive end.

The 2014 APSA task force report, "Improving Public Perception of Political Science's Value,"[4] can be seen as the official response to the actions of the Senate (and in 2014, the House). Waiving aside any question regarding the merit of various approaches to political inquiry, the report sees the problem as one of communication and public relations. Both internal and external conflicts have generated a need to make political science more visible and to increase public awareness about the importance of political science research. Internally, conflict is built into the system of rewards, which full-time faculty encounter. Faculty get rewarded for inner-university achievements, such as research and instruction: "universities have developed an infrastructure to nurture and reward these activities [creating and disseminating knowledge to students]. This infrastructure gives scholars a direct personal stake in the creation of knowledge and rewards them for conveying knowledge to students and to groups of similarly situated colleagues."[5] Leaving aside, for the moment, the question of whether this white-bread description of the system of academic rewards bears much relation to the reality of the corporate-dominated university populated by low-paid adjuncts, faculty, according to the task force, are not rewarded for trying to engage a broader audience. The beleaguered professoriate is forced to "choose between actions that produce pay raises and promotions and actions that broaden the value of their expertise."

External challenges have also arisen. Faculty and university administrators are faced with the effects of new communication technologies, which have erased, or at least severely eroded, the traditional gatekeeping functions of academic experts. This erosion has led to challenges of the legitimation of the scholarly enterprise. On the one hand, the increasing costs of university education has led to criticism of the value of college education, and on the other hand, lay individuals are able to have their say on matters of public import using technologies like the Internet. The report notes that even children, and poor people (for heaven's sake), can use social media to give their views.[6] Given this situation, political scientists need to act aggressively to enter this new media world.

The report provides a number of rather bland solutions to this new situation. It hopes to change the reward structure of academia, in part, by making political science more visible. This includes hiring an outreach director and a science writer, creating a speaker's bureau, teaching communication skills, and creating "new and exciting" electronic journals.

These changes, however, are not meant to compromise academic excellence. Any work ought to retain its scholarly quality and be subject to peer review.

The report responds to public questions of legitimacy with new strategies, but not to a new conception of the relation of expert knowledge to layman's knowledge. It retains the veneer of scientific expertise, while venturing into the world of new media, and it takes for granted the separation of scholarly production from the rest of social life. Thus, it maintains the image of a scholar whose scientific expertise stands above and beyond the knowledge of a layman. In my view, the Task Force report seems regressive. It ignores several decades of criticism concerning the practical import of science research and its internal connection to practice.

Another recent indicator of a resurgent neo-positivism is the DA-RT (data access and research transparency) initiative. It also seems to be threatened by the recent acts of Congress and wants to provide a "scientific" basis for countering the claims of politicians and others who doubt its credibility. DA-RT is a set of recommendations, which, its creators claim, will increase the legitimacy, credibility, and accessibility of research. It includes access to data in public archives and specifications of analytic procedures. Emphasizing "evidence-based" research, DA-RT aims to improve the quality of research and its validity.[7]

Unfortunately, this initiative, which is heavily dependent on neo-positivist assumptions, does not address questions of what "evidence" consists of, or how validity in interpretation is tested. It postulates an independence of data and the methods in which they are analyzed and interpreted. Much work in the philosophy of science, however, indicates that data are not completely theory independent. It is also not clear how this program would treat interpretive and theoretical forms of social inquiry in which interpretation and evaluation are linked. It seems to harbinger a return of a value-neutral standpoint of inquiry. For example, how would an article on neo-liberalism and marketization of higher education be evaluated for validity? Its evidence is, in part, related to the evaluative framework, which is critical of neo-liberalism. Similarly, it is not clear how, under the DA-RT criteria, an article which takes issues with an interpretation of Max Weber's political theory (just to take a random example) would be evaluated. Other problems occur in qualitative research. How would one treat, for example, an informer in a participant-observer study, the outcome of which might put that person in danger or threaten his livelihood?

Could one even provide a satisfactory archive of qualitative research other than notes or tapes? The criterion proposed by DA-RT is more appropriate to natural science research in which the accumulation of knowledge through repeatable experiments and law, like generalizations, is the norm.

THE PERESTROIKAN MOVEMENT AND ITS ANTECEDENTS

This is not the first time the discipline has faced challenges to its scientific image. Two movements, in particular, from within the discipline challenged the assumptions of scientism in political science: the caucus for a New Political Science in the late 1960s, and the Perestroika movement in the first decade of this century.

In the midst of the social conflicts of the 1960s, the caucus for New Political Science was formed in 1967, and it challenged the then dominant behavioralist and pluralist conceptions of political science. The caucus raised both methodological and practical political issues. It rejected behaviorism with its natural scientific and value-free approach and sought a political science that was engaged with public issues. It urged the APSA to abandon its neutrality on public issues, take a stand against the Vietnam War, and speak out on other public issues.[8] The events of the 1960s had highlighted the sterility of much mainstream research. The dominant forms of pluralism uncritically celebrated American democracy as a post-ideological consensus, and neglected issues of power and domination, ideology, and poverty and inequality. In contrast, the caucus sought an engaged scholarship that "aimed at making the study of politics relevant to the struggle for a better world." While efforts to gain positions of power within the APSA were not successful, the caucus had a long-term effect on the direction of political science scholarship. As the behavioral model fell apart due to both internal and external shortcomings, there was room for a wider variety of approaches to political science, including interpretive, phenomenological, critical, post-modern, and feminist approaches.[9]

Several decades later, the situation changed. New forms of scientism had come once again to pre-dominate. A broad movement toward quantitative approaches to political science came to the fore, accompanied by the increasing dominance of rational choice theories. These approaches came to dominate publication in major journals in political science, and reduced qualitative, comparative, and historical approaches to a secondary role. Political science research was once again modeled more closely after

natural sciences and the discovery of invariant regularities. Rational choice research was characterized by a proliferation of formal models of action generated from axiomatic assumptions like neo-classical economics. It was often hard to see how these formal models bore much relation to practical political problems or even to generate empirical predictions that were not trivial. Further, these models failed to help us interpret cultural identities or practices that were not based on strategic action. The massive failure to understand Islamic cultures and the failure of US triumphalism stand out as examples of the failure to take more seriously interpretive and historical approach to other cultures.[10]

It was against the background of this new disciplinary constellation that the anonymous Mr. P. sent out a series of emails, which resulted in the Perestroika movement.[11] His criticisms of the dominance of formal models and quantitative research struck a broad chord among many political scientists. It triggered a wide-ranging discussion about approaches to both political science and its practical uses. The main focus of Perestroika's reform was the creation of methodological pluralism and greater diversity in the discipline. It wanted to change the way journal publishing was organized, the governing structure of the APSA, and the organization of graduate education. Though it was certainly concerned with the public use of political science, it was less explicitly concerned with engaged scholarships and with reform of the discipline from within, although many pushed Perestroika to take a broader role. This conflict was a major line of force in Perestroikan debate.

Perestroikans liked to use the language of rebellion and insurgency to characterize their project.[12] They wanted to storm the barricades and tear down the walls of a rigid bureaucracy that had kept them and their work subordinate. The lively wide-ranging discussion and activist spirit had an impact. Some journals changed their policies to incorporate a broader range of approaches, and a new journal was born to address the need for more relevant scholarship. Still, the extent of disciplinary hegemony and the sense of felt oppression by qualitative theorists should not be underestimated. Proficiency in statistical techniques had become a powerful sorting device for purging the discipline of "soft" thinkers.[13] A number of graduate students and young faculty who related experiences of pressure to qualitative work chose to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals. However, Perestroika had some internal problems, which led to its fragmentation. It had little or no structure. Organized around an email discussion list with an anonymous moderator, Perestroika took no official

position on anything. Certainly, there were Perestroikan panels and meetings at conferences and even Perestroikan candidates who ran for APSA offices, but they bore no official imprimatur. Perestroikan goals remained unclarified. In my view, Perestroika cohesion was organized primarily around the charismatic personality of Mr. P., and when he stepped down after several years, there was no real, permanent organization to routinize his charisma.

The challenge to the gatekeepers of the discipline, however, only went so far; according to me, this created unresolvable tensions in Perestroikan discussions. Even within Perestroika, the barricades were up for graduate students who went beyond criticism of methods and directly challenged the authority and wisdom of faculty mentors. Graduate students especially were subject to be dressed down by some members for the audacity of their suggestions. The same went for part-time faculty. Even though the decline in historically oriented scholarship bore a direct relation to devaluation of the humanistic knowledge and the use of low-paid adjuncts, many assiduously avoided these connections. The biggest tension remained between those who wanted a better deal in the profession and those who saw the problem of knowledge in broader terms.

The lively discussion of politics in the Perestroika list in the early years waned after Mr. P. stepped down. Various attempts were made to make Perestroika a no-politics zone. Apparently, the irony of a political science discussion group trying to ban political discussion escaped some, and discussion of any political issues often received a rebuke from more conservative types attacking "those liberals." Perestroika went from a lively and challenging discussion filled with excitement to a moribund list, with the occasional job announcement or news item. Perestroikans putting their careers in peril for reform, as anti-war critics in the caucus for a New Political Science did a generation earlier, seemed more and more unlikely. The internal reform of the discipline necessarily involved a change in the way it addressed the public world as well.

Perestroika's last stand came when Glenn Beck libeled well-known activists Richard Cloward (by then deceased) and Frances Fox Piven as treasonous conspirators.[14] I have detailed the demise in a bit more detail in my contribution to the symposium Perestroika at Ten,[15] so I will not repeat it here. Beck's attack on their activist scholarship illustrated the widening gap between those who thought Perestroika ought to take a stand and defend public intellectual activity and those who wanted it to be little more than a method group, which had now become unbridgeable.

After all, even the staid APSA council protested it, as had the American Sociological Association (ASA). Rather than tearing down the walls in the spirit of insurgency, it was putting up barriers to that very spirit. It had lost its *raison d'être*.

Perestroika's Legacy

Perestroika's legacy remains ambiguous. In his analysis of revolutionary movements in political science, John Dryzek, writing in 2006, considers Perestroika a potential revolutionary moment—one on which a final judgment cannot be rendered. He claims

> a successful revolution may be defined in terms of resetting the disciplines agenda, as validated by the recognition of practitioners, whether or not they shared the movement's commitments. Practitioners then have to position themselves in relation to the new understanding, even if they do not share it. Success must be recognized as such.[16]

I think, however, Dryzek is a bit loose with his use of the term revolution to describe disciplinary changes. His notions really represent changing disciplinary ruling groups, not a change of disciplinary structure. For example, behavioralism certainly made a change in how politics was studied, but not a radical change in how the "data" of political science were understood in relation to observers and participants. It may have changed the techniques of science, but retained its commitment to a scientistic approach. It was still what Horkheimer referred to as "traditional theory." David Easton, for example, says that "Most narrowly and most accurately the phrase ['behavioral sciences—BC'] refers to those bodies of knowledge, in whatever academic department they may be found, that provides or aspire to provide verified principles of human behavior through the use of methods of inquiry similar to those of the natural sciences."[17] Similar calls for objective science and rise of scientism in political science go back to the early twentieth century.[18] A real revolution would change the relation of expert knowledge to society.

In contrast to Dryzek, John Gunnell has argued that Perestroika was more of a reform movement within the discipline than a "raucous rebellion."[19] At least in its main branches if Perestroika simply aimed at the incorporation of interpretive, historical, or comparative case studies into the mainstream, then it would be just another candidate for regime change

in political science. It might even be considered a partial success, having some impact in reforming journal practices and raising awareness of the need for greater methodological diversity. However, it failed to address more fundamental challenges. While Perestroika originated in a methodological dispute, the disputes inevitably raised critical questions, both about the character of social science knowledge and its relation to critical social and political questions. There was extensive discussion on the practical implications of research but little about its participatory character. It did not produce a compelling account of the way that critical understanding and practical commitment are built into the structure of social inquiry. Others like Rabinow and Sullivan were more cognizant of this issue. They note that interpretative understanding represents not simply one method among many. "This view" [of method as central—BC] "Displaces the significance of the interpretive turn, and ultimately empties it of its capacity to challenges practices of knowing in our culture." What does the incorporation of interpretive and historical understanding in political science inquiry say about the dominant conceptions of disinterested inquiry?[20]

The postmortem on Perestroika published in the journal it helped create, *Perspectives on Political Science,* illustrates some of these unresolved tensions. Michael Desch in one of the main articles speaks of the tension between rigor and relevance.[21] For Desch, this tension is part of an ongoing one in American Political Science; it goes back to the quest by some of its major figures like Charles Merriam to combine technical rigor with policy relevance. Against the dominance of technique, for its own sake, Desch decries the decline of published articles with policy relevance in political science journals. As some of his critics point out, Desch employs a rather narrow notion of relevance, one that is measured by its impact on government and less on the everyday lives of social actors.[22] Moreover, the type of political science that Merriam championed, while it might be policy relevant, was already partly a technical one; the political scientists might make policy recommendations, but were not to express political views in their work. The type of policy relevance that Desch recommends, while laudable, stays within the traditional role of the academic as expert.

While Desch represents one view, perhaps dominant one, others still wanted to recover a more critical role for Perestroika. Some of the contributors to the symposium, like Anne Norton, John Gunnell, and Sanford Schram, discussed earlier in the text, advocated a wider notion of a practically oriented political science.[23] Several, including editor Jeffery Issac, Robert Keohane, and Sanford Schram, note a resurgent positivism and

political quietism in the discipline, and, like Norton, want to continue the effort to connect political science with politics. James Farr suggests a greater link between political science and the cultivation of citizenship, while for Kristen Monroe, this quest means getting beyond the jejune debates over qualitative versus quantitative method that characterized the discipline.[24] In contrast to the reservations about pluralism expressed by Gunnell, Dryzek, and others, she suggests that younger political scientists reject this division and employ multi-method approaches to inquiry. I think, however, whether this is expressed in terms of a post-positivist philosophy of science as done by Mary Hawkesworth[25] or, more pragmatically, by Monroe, this position misses the main issue. Even if we were to employ quantitative approaches to an inquiry, we still have to respect the priority of interpretive access to the social world. This leads us to consider how research methods must ultimately be subject to processes of mutual understanding.

There is a connection between the methodological imitations of political science and its practical failures. In and of themselves, quantitative inquiry and rational choice models shorn of interpretive frameworks tell us little about what we ought to do or how to employ political understanding in a productive way. They have not produced nor can they produce any invariant laws of social action; in practice, they have been largely misleading. Rational choice, in particular, suffers from what has been called "Model Platonism."[26] It tends to conflate what can be viewed as the logical structure of action with empirical content. We need to ask the additional question: What is the relation between political inquiry and political understanding in the public world and everyday life, and how does inquiry shape this direction? These questions, however, take Perestroika's debate out of the realm of academia purity to ask about the connection between academic knowledge and the everyday social world. I think, however, that the connection of methodological failure to practical political life was never sufficiently developed, and this was one major reason that the Perestroika movement failed to transform the discipline. The issue is not simply one of increased methodological awareness or increased practical utility. It is the inherent connection between social inquiry and everyday life that remains unanalyzed.

The report of the Task Force seems to me to illustrate this failure. It defends a traditional view of social science knowledge as produced by experts, and disseminated to the public without any awareness of the

limits of these models. We need to develop a model of inquiry that stresses the reciprocal relation between inquiry and social life.

At the risk of calling on the Owl of Minerva, I develop a few notes aimed at radically rethinking social inquiry in order to incorporate a more reciprocal relation between participants and inquirers. Perhaps, a new round of reform will someday take up these questions more seriously and provoke a real change in the way we understand social inquiry.

Taking the Participant's Perspective Seriously

After the members of the Frankfurt Institute fled Nazi Germany for New York City, Max Horkheimer published his seminal essay "Traditional and Critical Theory."[27] In his essay, Horkheimer defined critical theory in opposition to "Cartesianism." Whether it was rationalist or empiricist, traditional theory assumed the perspective of the external observer. Insofar as they sought a pure theory, Horkheimer's contemporaries, such as Husserl, took it to be "a systematically unified set of propositions taking the form of a systematically unified deduction."[28] Following the model of natural sciences, pure theory sought to subsume particular facts under causal laws, which, in the best scenario, could be expressed mathematically.

By contrast, Horkheimer drew on Marx's materialist critique of political economy. Here, according to Horkheimer, the facts are intrinsic or internal to material life processes within which social actors are always and already embedded as participants. Though contemporary critical theory does not accept this premise in that exact form, it still assumes that the theorist shares the standpoint of a participant and has an equal standing with other members of society. Horkheimer argued that, while it considers society as its object, critical theory changes the relation of the "subject" to the "object" of inquiry. Because it conceives facts not as "stand-alone" data that are external, but rather as intrinsic to the perspective of the participant, it maintains a reflexive relation to the social subjects who are at the same time the objects of the theory. It aims to overcome the separation of the supposedly detached theorist from the citizen. The theorist is both analyst and member of society. The aim of the theory is not the achievement of systematic purity, but the elucidation of the social process in its interconnections and developmental tendencies. Like subjects who engage in practical activity, theory seeks a better life. It is "not just a research hypothesis which shows its value in the ongoing business of men; it is an essential element in the historical effort to create a world

which satisfies the needs and powers of men."[29] Thus, critical theory is not concerned with the accumulation of knowledge by itself, but to promote freedom from unnecessary restraint and to empower the free development of human abilities. Horkheimer does not see this freedom as an abstract ought or imperative. It stemmed from the fundamental connection of theory and social involvement in the creation of knowledge.

Thirty years later, writing against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, Christian Bay raised a similar critique of the neutrality of inquiry. Bay argued that the conception of the scholar who could effectively separate public and private roles was an illusion. Like liberal political theory, which separates public and private, the scholar thinks he can separate his personal and scholarly roles. From nine in the morning to five in the evening, he is the detached neutral scholar. Afterward, he can engage in politics, but he should never politicize his work.[30] Bay, like Horkheimer, rejected this view. Far from being neutral in his work, the scholar who refrains from politics is, in fact, already taking a stand. He tacitly accepts the *status quo*. The neutral stance excludes critical discussion of current events and suppresses dissenting views. Bay's work was important for its impact on the caucus for a New Political Science, which advocated for a more committed conception of politics. Neither Horkheimer nor Bay rejected methods of social science research. They did, however, hold that research is not sufficient without critical reflection. It is not a neutral gathering of "facts." Horkheimer thought that the role of theory was to provide a diagnosis and analysis of historical conditions, which integrated the results of the more special sciences. However, he thought that much of the research of his time, especially "mathematical political economy," had lost contact with the fundamental situation of the times or with knowledge connected to historical reality.

While Perestroikans addressed some of the concerns raised by these dissenting thinkers, many did not follow this insight far enough. Rogers Smith, for example, concurs with critical theorists that scientific inquiry into human affairs, especially political affairs, is distinctive because propagation of the results necessarily affects both the studiers and the studied. Instead of extending this insight into a conception of the relation between researchers and participants, Smith focuses on the relative precision of knowledge and causal explanations, not on understanding of our social and historical situation. "I conclude," he notes, "that the main endeavor of political science should be to make roughly probable empirical and logical cases for and against claims about political questions that many people

can be persuaded to regard as substantively important."[31] This formulation tacitly reverts to the model of an expert who stands outside his audience and who provides useful information to them. He leaves out the reflexive and critical elements of social science inquiry that link the participant and the observer.

Even less can be said about what has been called the Perestroika "lite" debate. If the contributors to a symposium in *Political Studies* are any indication, the discussion of the relevance of political inquiry has fallen behind earlier movements.

Under the rubric of "Perestroika lite," a debate over the relevance of political science has taken place, primarily in Europe. According to Matthew Flinders and Peter John, political scientists increasingly feel pressure "to demonstrate the impact or relevance of their research and writing."[32] Unlike the American context, European political science is less informed by rational choice and quantitative approaches. Thus, the authors claim that the "lite" debate takes place primarily on the terrain of the institutional context of academic knowledge and does not contest questions of the nature of knowledge. This debate takes a sociological view of the creation of knowledge and its dissemination.

The analyses of an earlier generation of political scientists from the caucus for a New Political Science to Perestroika have rested on the thesis (according to Flinders) that the professionalization of political science and its ensconcement as an academic discipline has led to the isolation of knowledge from practical engagement. Academic work has failed to contribute much to improving democracy. Instead, it has led to a sense of irrelevance.

The contributors to a symposium in *Political Science Review* also express some hesitance about Perestroika's critique. Writing against the backdrop of the British Higher Education Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014, which attempts to specify criterion of impact, Peter John is skeptical of the evidence that the impact or relevance of political science has decreased. He decries the lack of empirical evidence that political science has less impact than in the past, and suggests that not only direct but also indirect influence is apparent in contemporary political science. The Internet and new social media can provide new opportunities to disseminate findings and create "impact."[33] Following him, Flinders argues that the issue is not really a decline in relevance, but is more a perception gap. Critical histories of political science, such as David Ricci's *The Tragedy of Political Science,* have emphasized a narrative of decline.[34] Since academic

political scientists have come to believe these narratives of decline or trag-
edy, they have come to inform the debate. Flinders' article implicitly trans-
figures this debate from one of the value of knowledge to one of the
translation of expert cultures to the public. Other contributors are even
more skeptical. They believe political science is already policy-relevant;
the problem is simply that politicians ignore this work. Still others see
the pressure to be relevant as indicative of a tyranny of relevance, which
threatens to "politicize" research or its integrity by demands for impact.
They want to make sure that an intact expert culture pursues its own
idea of good research.[35] According to Flinders, translating "pure research"
into a practical context often proves difficult and can negatively impact
research. Seeking a more nuanced notion of the relevance of political sci-
ence, Flinders calls for an "art of translation," which is sensitive to the
difficult task of mediating research to the public.[36]

While these critiques raise questions about the relation of experts to
their audience and challenge us to think more precisely about relevance
and impact, they are at one with the APSA Task Force in their need to
retain an intact expert culture, whose integrity is maintained through a
strong separation from the layman's world and the participants' perspec-
tive. In one sense, the criticism provided by Perestroika lite is in error:
Perestroikans did provide some studies showing that major journals had
become dominated by quantitative and rational choice approaches that
had questionable relevance or empirical content.[37] The second criticism
concerning the narrative of decline requires a different approach. Flinders
makes a faulty assumption here: such questions cannot be settled by more
data about impact but require an answer to the question: knowledge for
what? Questions of decline and tragedy are inherently historical and have
to do with the identity of the discipline. What use is a measurement of
impact unless we know why impact or what kind of impact is important?

The lite approach, however, suffers from a second more significant
weakness. In focusing on the question of transmission, it leaves both the
origins and the terminus of the process unchanged. Since, according to
its practitioners it is not concerned with questions of knowledge, it really
cannot address questions of whether types of knowledge might affect the
way in which questions of relevance or impact are defined. Transmission is
seen as the instrument of relevance. It seems to take for granted the exist-
ing practice of research and the current structure of the public, and tacitly
adopts the natural scientific model of the relation of research to the public.
More than mediating expert inquiry and public life which leaves them

intact, the question of the relation of knowledge to everyday requires both a transformation of inquiry and the reinvention of public life.

Certainly, Flinders is sympathetic to the more critically oriented attempts to increase the relevance of social inquiry. He cites Michael Burawoy's proposal for a public sociology as a primary example of the plurality of ways in which knowledge can be translated into public discourse. Burawoy develops a number of roles for critical sociological knowledge, which are not compatible with Flinders' notion of transmission.[38] Public sociology, in the sense employed by C. Wright Mills, is the translation of private troubles into public issues, a tradition of writing that also included works by Gunnar Myrdal, David Reisman, Mills himself, and more recently Robert Bellah, among others. This group advanced a view of a public sociology that addressed not only sociologists but also social and political publics on matters of social import. Burawoy notes

> They are written by sociologists, they are read beyond the academy, and they become the vehicle of a public discussion about the nature of U.S. society—the nature of its values, the gap between its promise and its reality, its malaise, its tendencies.[39]

Burawoy contrasts this with an organic public sociology that is connected more directly to social groups. Unlike the mediated relations of traditional public sociology, Burawoy posits a sociology that is connected to, and does research, for groups such as labor unions, oppressed minorities, and even NGOs. Both versions of public sociology and critical sociology are reflexive: they raise questions of sociology for whom and knowledge for what, and both reject the idea of sociology as puzzle solving or problem solving, and instead are oriented to dialogue about the value foundations of society. As dialogues, these are not simply expert judgments passively received by the public; rather, they require a dialogue in which these values are deliberated. A somewhat similar proposal, without the Gramschian overtones, has been made in political science around the idea of Participatory Action Research. Here, researchers more directly advocate participants in the groups they study. Burawoy's proposals as well as those of participatory research are quite different from the transmission/translation model proposed by Flinders. They cannot be easily accommodated into his model. Both Burawoy and participatory action researchers are not just looking to transmit knowledge but to transform the relation of participants and observers in research, and with it the relation between experts

and the public. The challenges participatory research pose to standard definitions of the relation between inquiry and those who are the subject of inquiry, make inquiry into a dialogical process more than a one-way investigation. Critical theories like Burawoy's and others aim at insight into social processes and problems and transformed self-understanding, and not just the collection of data or the solution of isolated problems.[40]

Independently of these debates, Bent Flyvbjerg developed a conception of social inquiry that was influential for many of the activist Perestroikans. In the first part of this work, *Making Social Science Matter*, Flyvbjerg developed a neo-Aristotelian approach to social inquiry, which was practically oriented.[41] His phronetic social science was based on the contrast between *epistemé* and *phronesis*. *Epistemé* in Aristotle's usage is a form of certain or exact knowledge based on the theoretical standpoint of an observer who seeks permanent universal and decontextualized truth. In contrast, *phronesis* is a skilled performance or wise judgment, which is internal to a community or context. Like Aristotle, Flyvbjerg conceives of actors in a concrete situation, who have to decide the right thing to do in an indeterminate and conflict-filled situation. Flyvbjerg equates episteme with an approach based on natural science models, asserting that:

> the study of social phenomena, is not, never has been and probably never can be scientific in the conventional sense of the word "science", that is in its epistemic meaning . . . it is therefore not meaningful to speak of "theory" in the study of social phenomena, at least in the sense that "theory" is used in the natural sciences.[42]

Phronesis develops practical insights rooted in experience and particular situations. For example, a comparative analysis may not just rely on generalization from many cases, but on a grasp of one case that generates a new insight. This insight into social patterns is not law-like, but, nonetheless, illuminates important elements of social practice. Such a practically oriented inquiry means the social researcher has to address questions of what we ought to do, and not just description of the way things are. Phronetic social inquiry never rises to the level of universal judgments, nor does it seek law like generalizations. It is also practical and normative, aimed at a good life. Phronetic research is evaluative and value oriented. It uses knowledge to discover the right thing to do or to challenge power relations. The phronetic inquirer does not stand outside or above practice. He is part of the same social world as the participant.

Flyvbjerg, however, employs a notion of skilled performances, which create some tensions with the model of mutual understanding of participants that neo-Aristotelians and interpretive theorists employ.[43] In doing so, he bypasses the idea of theory that is developed by critical theorists. He equates all theory with the natural scientific process; in replacing the external observer with the skilled practitioner, he holds that insight into the social world often requires the unique skills of the social inquirer in his or her role as a member of the social world. The social inquirer becomes a virtuoso performer. This formulation relies on a notion of practical know-how adapted from Hubert Dreyfus' analysis of learning skilled performances. Dreyfus developed an influential version of know-how based on an interpretation of the existential phenomenology of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. He conceives the acquisition of skills that is of practical know-how as independent of linguistic meaning ("semantically interpretable brain representation") and propositional content; it can be seen as a kind of perceptual learning. In Dreyfus' model of learning a skill, individuals move from a novice status of one who must be explicitly instructed in skill, to an expert or virtuoso who has mastered a skill and knows it intuitively. These expert skills are contextual responses that are not stored in "mental representations." The driver knows how to navigate the road without thought or calculation.[44] Dreyfus extends this type of know-how to social understanding. He thinks social scientists who are virtuosos can know situations and patterns without reflexive cognition. This formulation has been influential in phronetic approaches to social science, which rely on the distinction between (practical) judgment and (theoretical) reason. However, this argument comes up short. The problems with Dreyfus's formulation begin with his starting point: the individual mastering a skill. It bypasses consensual relations. Such mastery is already meaningful and reflexive, whether or not it is theoretical, because it is embedded in the context of social relations. The artist who creates new art and new meaning still has to communicate that meaning to the audience. The social scientist who grasps patterns that others miss, still grasps a meaningful pattern that has to be made more explicit and communicated to others. Insight and virtuoso skill, while embedded in practical know-how, are still not simply pre-reflexive. Even musical skill is a social skill—it requires a shared musical system in order to make sense, and requires an audience that recognizes the skill in the performance.

The standpoint of pre-reflexive subjectivity does not seem to provide the resources needed to formulate a critical theory. The latter is a form of

reflection on the nature of society and its pathologies. It seeks to account for the ways that organized relations of power, such as domination and oppression stand in the way of the realization of the good and just life. Although in the second part of MSSM, Flyvbjerg addresses questions of power via Foucault, his version of this dynamic still does not explain critical reflection. Thus, in order to get more fully at the relation between experts and participants, we have to explore its intersubjective roots.

Toward a Theory of the Participant's Perspective

Human beings are, in Charles Taylor's phrase, self-interpreting animals. We are concerned with understanding the meaning of our own existence. What we are is indistinguishable from how we understand ourselves.[45] As Taylor puts it, "our interpretation of ourselves and our experience is constitutive of what we are, and therefore cannot be considered as merely a view on reality, separable from reality, nor as an epiphenomenon, which can be by-passed in our understanding of reality."[46] The self is not a physical object independent of our understanding of meaning, but is an agent who acts on his or her own interpretations. Our interpretive capacity is a practical capacity, an internal element of the participants' perspective. Interpretation takes place in contexts of involvement, and engagement, with the world, with others, and with one's own inner world. Interpretive understanding (mutual understanding) is not another method. It is an original orientation toward our existence. We only make sense of things through interpretation. It is part of the world of involvements and commitments, which we inhabit and come to understand. This practical element is primary. It can never be replaced by a transcendental subject or an objectifying scientific theory. We are situated subjects who are active in the world. We only have experiences through our active engagement with the world, and through our own involvements, projects, and plans. Our knowledge of the social world is never simply imprinted on us through passive sensation or grasped by disengaged reason. It draws on the practical perspectives of subjects engaged in understanding and evaluating their lives. We carry out our plans and projects with a performative attitude.

The participant's basic attitude toward others is one of concern.[47] As practical actors we are involved in interaction, and we are concerned with how to act, what to do, and who we are. Things matter to us. They matter not simply because we want to achieve goals or find the most efficient instrumentalities to an end, but because our fellow humans, with whom

we share attachments and common fates, matter to us—and we have to take a position on the way we carry out these relationships. Our concern then also includes judgment on the rightness of norms or the goodness of life plans. It matters what kind of ethical or moral positions we take in relations to others.

Concern is essentially evaluative. We are involved with ourselves and others through bonds of morality and solidarity, and through mutual accountability. We have to be able to give reasons for our actions, including norms that justify our actions. Concern extends to what we can call moral emotions. They are not just feelings or irrational impulses, but have a rational content to the extent they are based in the fulfillment or violation of these mutual expectations. I might feel disgust if someone is treated with disrespect and subject to unfair treatment because it violates my sense of respect for others, or I might feel guilt or shame if I harm others. These are elements of our practical and evaluative orientation to the world. It signifies the way we take a stand toward things. We evaluate our lives from the viewpoint of humans' flourishing and well-being. Because humans are capable of not only achieving happiness and well-being but also suffering and failure, they have to evaluate their ongoing activity.

Interpretive understanding is also historical. We understand ourselves and others as historical beings who have future projects with roots in the past. Historical understanding has a narrative structure involving a life history, as well as a social and cultural one. For some like Gadamer, the weight of history and tradition often seems more central than the power of agency and initiation; he argues that our (historically effective) understanding is more being than consciousness. Ultimately, he emphasizes authority more than constrictive history. It is the unfolding of something already present.

In contrast, the conception of the participants' perspective constituted through mutual accountability stresses that the power of agency is as important as that of tradition. We can modify and break traditions and create new ones. Cultures and traditions cannot be viewed as holistic unities, but are themselves internally and externally contested.

Interpretive understanding is the basic medium of social life, and has an intersubjective or dialogical structure.[48] Understanding is mutual understanding; it takes place under the horizon of a shared social world. The self is a social entity, which is not an immediate unity of experience, but a synthesis of the perspectives of ego and other. These two aspects never merge into a complete whole; hence, the interpretive theoretical understanding

of subjects can facilitate critical reflection.[49] Self-understanding is social. We do not simply understand ourselves from the first-person perspective of a participant who understands and evaluates his or her own situation as an isolated consciousness or independent creator of meaning. We understand ourselves through the second-person perspective of a partner in interaction, who can be an addressor or addressee in an interaction that is linguistically mediated.

Being a participant in the social world means that our world is constituted through shared meanings, norms, and expectations. In order to have practical evaluations, we have to have some shared norms or expectations that are the basis of our evaluations. We cannot engage in such communication without acknowledging that others are beings capable of speech and action. We are linked in reciprocal perspectives, of I and you, in which I understand myself and you as beings capable of responsibility and accountability. These processes of making sense in concert include commonly held claims about what is true or valid. While in mundane settings, these are often more properly expressed as know-how, a context-dependent practical knowledge, they can always be made explicit when called into question. Linguistic intersubjectivity is closely linked to practical life as our way of getting by in the world. It always begins as a context-bound knowledge of the practical social world.

The participant's perspective is, thus, a performative one. While speaking, we say something to someone about something in the world. This is the basic form of communicative social action.[50] Once we engage in communicative action, we also involve in a consensual form of social action. Consensual action does not rest on the presumption of an achieved consensus that is fixed, final, or permanent. Whether or not we reach agreement, we are engaged in a consensual activity in which we can, and often do, agree on things. Our actions always have an element of contingency. We carry out our lives through these consensual relations: we reregulate our actions, and form our own plans of life only in, and through, this medium of linguistically mediated symbolic interaction. Understanding is practical. We do not simply describe a state of affairs, but say something about our relation to the world, about how things are, and about how we stand. If you tell me we ought to raise the minimum wage to a living standard, you are making a claim about the norms we should carry out if we have proper concern for human welfare and basic fairness. These are not just descriptions but are commitments. If you stand in favor of universal health care, you implicitly or explicitly express that you want people to be

treated with equal dignity. Our understanding is a way of getting on in the world. We do not simply have experiences or attitudes; we carry them out in the performative attitude from the standpoint of first- and second-person participants in a social world. Social interaction takes place through the reciprocity of perspective of speaker and hearer in language. In processes of mutual recognition, we can take the role of the other toward our own linguistic utterances. This form of interaction supposes that we understand ourselves through the response of the other to our meaningful actions, gestures, speech—in short, our overall comportment to the world. The participant takes a position on elements of the world. These commitments can be made only in the participants' perspective.

Consider the situation of moral actors as an example of the performative attitude. Moral sensibilities come to the fore in situations when we feel hurt or betrayed by the actions of others. Because we are vulnerable to the actions of others, we can be hurt when they treat us with disrespect or act deceptively. Hegel was one of the first to link this vulnerability to the sense of mutual respect and recognition in social interaction. Just as a criminal violates our sense of the common norms we hold to be important for social order, our moral sense is violated by acts of disrespect. Our sense of offense is indicative of the fact that the participants' perspective is a normative order, and we cannot understand these norms without reference to the participant's perspective.

Individuals are embedded in communicative experience, that is, in an interactive context in which subjects are linked though an intersubjectively constituted nexus by their participation in language. In this context, participants are oriented to mutual understanding and agreement. They only come to be individuals through interaction and forms of mutual accountability. We find ourselves in a world with other subjects connected though speech and action. Our perspectives are interwoven in our social roles and mutual understanding with a communicative social context. As communicative participants, we make up and renew the social world though our action and interaction in social life worlds.

Participants and The Lifeworld

Interpretive understanding is always contextual. We only understand meaning against a background of other meanings and social practices. The lifeworld can be understood as the totality of background conditions, such as practical attitudes, forms and stocks of knowledge, and social practices and abilities

that are shared by members of a culture.[51] They make up a set of taken-for-granted assumptions that constitute social worlds. The structures of the lifeworld serve a dual purpose. On the one hand, they are the tacit background condition of understanding; on the other, they contain the elements that we must take up and employ actively in interaction and mutual understanding.

My own perspectives on the lifeworld and those of others who share that world are built up through a multiplicity of reference points. These reference points are both horizontal and vertical. I live in a world of contemporaries that, nonetheless, encompasses the past and the future. My own life takes place within traditions and stocks of knowledge that have been handed down to me, and which I will pass on to others. I come to be a self through learning these traditions and taking them up in my own life plans and memories. In this process, participants share a stock of mutual knowledge that is largely implicit and taken for granted. It provides participants with interpretations of the world they inhabit, and with typical norms or prescriptions for what we can normally expect to happen in the social world and in nature. I have background knowledge of things, from the seemingly trivial, such as how to greet another person, to what to expect in from the objects of nature and the roles expected of me in society. The lifeworld represents the world of common sense, what "we" generally take for granted or expect to happen. It provides a repertoire of understandings and expectations that we can draw upon in order to carry out interaction. At the same time, the lifeworld sets the boundaries of possible projects and actions and provides the vocabulary of motives that individuals can employ. This stock of knowledge should be distributed differentially.[52] Not everyone knows everything in the same way or with the same depth. I may know a lot about the music of the 1960's, but very little about being a plumber.

Philosophical hermeneutics, especially the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, has stressed the way that our interpretive access to the social world is shaped by history and background. When we study history, we do not view it from the outside, but rather study a process in which we already participate. We would not have access to the world without being shaped by history, and we cannot analyze a history of which we are not always a part. This means, for Gadamer, we both belong to and are dependent upon society, something that is exemplified in our embeddedness in language. He stresses the way in which social inquiry like history has a

formative effect on the inquirer. History, for example, is not an objective study or pure research, but is a way of transmitting (or modifying) tradition. In the same way, social inquiry is also practical. It is always engaged in projects for interpreting our place in society; thus, social inquiry has a normative import. The inquirer can never withdraw from the social world to an objective observer's perspective. This would require the interpreter cut himself or herself off from the processes of interpretation. The interpreter cannot eliminate the concepts or pre-conceptions that he or she relies on and the access to the interpretations of others.

The arguments Gadamer develops in Truth and Method are important for a conception of the participants' perspective because they do not, as Wittgenstein's view implies and as Heidegger and most post-structuralists argue, that meaning is primarily a feature of world disclosure. The sematic conception of meaning has to be replaced by a practical dialogical relation between individuals or an author and interpreter. Gadamer argues that when we encounter another person whom we don't understand, the dialogue between the two parties leads, if successful, to a new wider horizon of understanding—what he calls the fusion of horizons. We have to encounter the other person or historical text and construct an interpretative framework broad enough to encompass both (or several perspectives). It encompasses, according to Gadamer, a higher level of generality. Both the limits of ego and alter are overcome. Here, we have an example of understanding that is contextual in a weak sense—the background conditions of understanding do not simply restrict our understanding to local conditions, but they allow us to expand our horizons and include their cultures or those that are different from our own culture.

My aim here is not to set the basis for a sanitized or idealized conception of history, for the encounters between cultures were often hostile and filled with war and conquest. It is only to show that understanding also took place. There is a more generalized ability—a communicative competence—that allows for the understanding of others. We may be born American or Italian or German, but we have the interpretive capacities to learn any of these languages. Thus, it seems to me there is a limit to strong contextualism. This conception of mutual understanding entails a context transforming and transcending power. It doesn't of course transcend context altogether, but shows the generative and transformative powers of intersubjective dialogue. Thus, Gadamer's conception also has some implications for social action. It illustrates the way in which social action

is a process of interpretation between an addressor and addressee, or ego and alter.

Despite its notable achievements, Gadamerian hermeneutics remains closely linked to its conception of a tradition. The latter does not fully develop he ideas of mutual accountabilty including he force of the better argument. Yet such such a postion is implied in a notion of fusion of horizons. Gadamer's theory holds the potential for reflexivity about the nature of validity. The structures of the lifeworld are our shared social world remains implicit, far from being passively received, it is also taken up by participants and accepted or rejected. Everyday life is constituted through interpretive accomplishments; individuals are agents who are capable of reflexively examining and accounting for their actions, since mundane social action is largely practical, based in the know-how of the individual and the stock of mutual knowledge. This aspect of mutual knowledge can become explicit when our actions, norms, or motives do not make sense to others, or even, at times, to ourselves. We can then be called on to give an account of our actions in terms of the reasons why we acted as we did. Social actors, in Anthony Giddens' felicitous phrase, engage in reflexive monitoring of action. They know what they do in the course of doing it.[53] "Actors—also routinely and for the most part without fuss—maintain a continuing 'theoretical understanding' of the grounds of their activity."[54] We are always knowledgeable subjects who make sense of the world through rational understanding, and we constantly monitor that understanding in the course of our interaction in order to reproduce or transform it. In this way, Merton's notion of the self-fulfilling prophecy is not just a principle of social inquiry, but is rooted in our very understanding of social action.

There is no sharp distinction between the unreflective form of ordinary interaction and critical reflection. Theory does not require a transcendental perspective or outsider's outlook. For this reason, mutual accountability is not a special form of action, but an element of ordinary interaction. In the course of interaction, we can and often are asked to give an account of our actions to others who do not necessarily understand it or question their own accounts. We constantly renew, repair, and transform our mutual understandings in the course of everyday life.

Albrecht Wellmer emphasizes the fragility and contingency of mutual understanding when he states:

The commonality (intersubjectivity) of linguistic meaning is therefore not something given once and for all, something "present-at-hand" [vorhandenes]; rather it is something precarious and discontinuous; it is fragile, it is never complete, it is always to be restored anew in the processes of linguistic communication, which is also the process of developing linguistic meaning.[55]

Historical and critical interpretations have to be viewed more as an ongoing achievement that involves a strong element of reflexivity.

The Status of Social Inquiry

The social researchers who take up the study of social life encounter participants who, like themselves, share social lifeworlds and have practical commitments and involvements. Both participants and researchers are entwined in relations of mutual understanding. The social inquirer has to understand those he or she studies as individuals capable of accounting for their action and has to see how and why subjects make sense of their world. The researchers have access to these elements only because of their own status as participants in social life.

Our interpretive access to the social world yields a fundamentally different conception of inquiry than does the model of naturalistic social science inquiry prevalent in social science. However, it is not, as some have recently argued, the result of two-world ontology.[56] On this view, the natural and the social sciences are separate and distinct worlds. Yet, the same body can be treated physiologically, that is, a natural entity, socially, or even psychologically without being a different entity in a different world. The distinction between types of inquiry is mainly epistemological. It is concerned with the type of knowledge that is sought, and the type of interpretive access it requires. While the natural science researcher encounters a world of physical objects that do not communicate, the social researcher encounters a world of other subjects who are engaged in interpretation.

Consideration like these are behind Anthony Giddens' notion of the double hermeneutic of social inquiry.[57] Not only is the researcher a member of a community of researchers who use language to formulate theories and research, the "object" of study is other human beings who are co-interpreters of social worlds. The researcher's access to this meaningful social world, which makes up this domain, relies on his or her participants' understanding. It is, thus, an element of the same social world it proposes

to study. The researcher has access only to the world of others because he or she takes a first- or second-person perspective toward meanings. They participate in a common world that is constituted by mutual understanding. The social world is that segment of the world that can be grasped and understood only through this double hermeneutic.

We are always part of a social environment and of history. We are formed by our history and background conditions as necessary features of understanding. We cannot objectify our history or social experience, and treat it like an object of nature that can be mastered and controlled. Thus, the social researcher always encounters a world of meaningful social action that is symbolically structured. The researcher is not only one for whom the scientific world is symbolic (as in the natural sciences) but the objects he or she studies are also participants for whom the social world is symbolically structured. He or she has to bring to bear his or her own ability to understand from his or her own participation in social life. There are no pure observers in social life. We can only assess the past and understand it in a more critical way, and can thus change our courses of action. The double hermeneutic implies that even inquirers are practical actors whose very inquiries are elements in the social world they inhabit.

The basic concepts used in social research then have to be of the same type that actors use in their ordinary life. This is not to say that the concepts have to be identical, but that the basic concepts are non-objectivating. They refer to the activities of subjects who are capable of mutual understanding. To view action from the outside as mere behavior is to lose sight of its performative aspect as a part of a social world.

Some researchers, in the manner of Max Weber (and later Alfred Schutz), accept the meaningful character of social action, yet maintain a distance between the participants and the role of the researcher as a non-participant. While the researcher must understand the meaning of actions, he or she need not be a participant in the social world or pass judgment on it. The researcher may, for example, view ideas of legitimacy *de facto* as claims that a certain social authority or government is obeyed. In such cases, however, the researcher takes a position superior to that of the participant. While he or she takes his or her own norms to be valid, he or she does not engage with the values of those he or she studies. He or she regards the norms of the social world as simply matters of opinion or taste without engaging participants in processes of mutual understanding.

This understanding of social research dissolves, however, once we incorporate elements of mutual understanding and mutual accountability

into our conception of meaning. We have to attribute to participants the same type of understanding as the researcher, that is, a social actor capable of communicative relations with others, and who can provide accounts that they can evaluate. Participants consider events in their world using notions of truth or validity. These may be more informal than the analytically precise conceptions of philosophy but they orient action nonetheless. Inquiry has to take seriously these claims if they want to make sense of those they study. An interpretive inquiry, which takes the claims seriously, does not stand above the everyday life because it employs the very same capacities as actors. There is no expert or virtuoso knowledge that is, in principle, inaccessible to others. If we fail to acknowledge these capacities, we are not taking others seriously as subjects in a social world.

The mutual accountability of participants and researchers provides a way of grasping the meaning of participants' actions. Understanding is inseparable from evaluation. In order to understand the meanings of participants in our social world, we have to be able to reconstruct the reasons for their actions. Consider the case of legitimacy again. The concept of legitimacy, for example, cannot be understood simply by the observance of conforming behavior, or a mere belief. In order to understand legitimacy, one has to understand it as a claim to validity in which a claim is recognized and justifications are given. We understand legitimacy in a specific situation only when we understand what that claim means in that society. Otherwise, we could not distinguish between someone who conforms to a standard without necessarily accepting it, one who accepts it out of convention, or one who accepts the reasons as valid. Nor can it explain why legitimacy might be rejected. All these might become important in interpreting and explaining a situation of conflict, for example. The researcher has to grasp the context of action and the appropriateness of action just as a participant might do in his or her life. Part of this background context includes notions of truth or falsehood, good or evil that participants employ, as well as their stance toward those social norms. In short, the inquirer has to have sense of the lifeworld background that participants share, and the specific responses of individuals to that background. For participants have to take up norms and practices, and accept, reject, or modify them. We also have to be able to take the social context in which these claims take place and grasp the reasons why they still make, or do not make, sense to us today. We cannot understand others or make sense of the meaning of culturally distant or historical meanings without engaging in these evaluations. The researcher has to maintain the performative attitude

toward language that he or she uses as a participant in mundane speech and action. It is this performative dimension of inquiry that Weber's value-neutral observer denies. Once we grasp that the participants are capable of providing reasons for their actions and must engage in mutual accountability, then we have to accept that the participant is on the same level as the researcher or theorist. This implies, however, the subject or subjects of inquiry are capable of assessing the researcher's reasoning too. They can assess the models employed, and the reasoning and the conclusions of the researcher, criticizing the aims of the research or the norms that the researcher or theorist employs in his or her own work. Social research is thus implicated in a form of mutual critique.

Social scientific theories are themselves practical. They "constitute moral interventions in the social life whose conditions they seek to clarify."[58] This insight takes two different directions. Since the social researcher is always a participant who takes a performative attitude toward communication, the results of inquiry have a practical dimension that affects not only the knowledge of the researcher but the researchers' understanding of himself or herself and his or her world. Second, the results of research are taken up into the lifeworlds of participants and become part of their everyday knowledge, thus changing their understanding of themselves. In both cases, participants have a reflexive relation to forms of knowledge. They are aware of what they do in the course of doing it and engaged in the ongoing evaluation of their plans projects and reflexively evaluating the norms they have employed.

It is this reflexive relation that provides a basis for critique. Participants have the potential to change their lives through insight and transformation. Critical theories link these interventions back to the understanding the participants have of their own world, but add a diagnostic analysis. They seek to initiate or facilitate reflection on the conditions preventing the realization of human flourishing.

These same structures also simultaneously provide the critical means to penetrate a given context, to burst it open from within, and to transcend it, and the means, if need be, to push beyond a *de facto* established consensus to revise errors, correct misunderstandings, and the like. Critique can go further and illuminate distortions that are systematically embedded in personality structures and power relations in society. The same structures that make it possible to reach an understanding also provide for the possibility of reflexive self-control of this process. It is this potential for critique built into communicative action itself that the social scientist, by

entering into contexts of everyday life as a virtual participant, can systematically exploit and bring into play outside these contexts and against their particularity.[59]

The notion that researchers and participants are on the same level, and hence part of a mutual critique, may be seen by some as a challenge to the integrity of the research or to the expert's necessary separation from the public. It might be seen as an example of the tyranny of relevance. However, the notion of reciprocal critique does not give the participant priority over the researcher. Both parties have an equal role and are equally able to argue positions in a discourse, but they have to use publically acceptable reasons. Still, it is a mistake to draw a large gap between researcher's experts and mundane social actors. Actors are knowledgeable about the conditions and contexts of their actions. Not only do they have extensive knowledge of local conditions and contexts, but, in modern societies, they are also aware of the results of scientific research and often have some knowledge of it. As Giddens remarks, the ordinary actor in modern society is already a sociologist. Actors have the abilities to engage in discussions and deliberations based on mutual understanding. Such discussions include questions of the logical, interpretive, and diagnostic or "empirical" adequacy of theories or of observations. However, they would also include normative and ethical considerations on the values inherent in research and society. Whether or not a layman can always grasp the subtleties of mathematical analyses (assuming that actually matters), they can quite capably engage in discussions about the normative implications of research. Conversely, experts and researchers must begin to treat participants as actors who are capable of criticism but also who regard others as equal beings and who are worthy of ethical regard.

The relation of expert knowledge to a layman and to the public is, however, not adequately understood by the transmission model. It is better conceived as what Gadamer termed the fusion of horizons. The major question is not how knowledge formed by experts is disseminated to the public, but how knowledge shapes us as actors. Social inquiry is an element of self-understanding. Also at stake are issues of democratic education and the self-understanding of social actors. Critical self-understanding puts one's own sense of oneself in relation to larger social process in which we are participants, and opens up possibilities for greater freedom through transformation of self and society.

The idea of a mutual critique means that research is not isolated but has a collaborative element to it. This idea has gained recognition in recent

work about participatory research. It also gives us a way to understand the position of critical theory. The critical theorist, though he or she might have specialized knowledge in an area of research, is still a co-participant in a process of mutual understanding. She has no privileged position in relation to emancipation or in the pursuit of a good, happy, or just life. The quest for a critical theory is a collaborative one.

If interpretive social science is to be more than just one method among many, and not just another tool in the methodological tool box, its role as explicating the basic relation of the inquirer to the "subjects" of inquiry has to be emphasized. Social inquiry begins (and ends) from the practical standpoint of a participant. The inquirer can only know and understand the meaningful statements of others or engage in meaningful social action because he or she shares a common social world, not just a community of scientific interpreters. Knowledge of the social world is valid because other members of the social world can assent to it. To understand the social world is not to observe it, but to interpret and evaluate it; to understand social action is to understand the (sometime unacknowledged) reasons why actions occur. Ultimately, knowledge of the social world has to become an element in the critical understanding of the participants and help to create the possibility of a better world.

NOTES

1. Mollie Reilly "Tom Coburn Amendment Limiting National Science Foundation Research Funding Passes Senate" *Huffington Post* March 21, 2013   http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/21/tom-coburn-national-science-foundation_n_2921081.html
2. Reilly "Tom Coburn Amendment".
3. Reilly "Tom Coburn Amendment".
4. Arthur Lupia, University of Michigan, Chair of the Task Force and John H. Aldrich, Duke University, APSA President *Improving Public Perceptions of Political Science's Value Report of the Task Force on Improving Public Perceptions of Political Science's Value* Washington D.C. American Political Science Association August 2014.
5. Improving Public Perception: 1.
6. Improving Public Perception: 8.
7. The DA-RT program is outlined at their web site http://www.dartstatement.org/
8. Clyde W. Barrow "The Intellectual Origins of New Political Science" *New Political Science* 30:2 215–244 free online access at DOI: 10.1080/07393140802082598.

9. See the essays in James Farr, John Dryzek and Stephen Leonard (1995) *Political Science in History: Research Programs and Political Traditions* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996.

10. On the explanatory weaknesses of rational choice models, see Donald Greene and Ian Shapiro *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

11. The Original email sent out to Political Scientists is reprinted as, Perestroika (pseud) "The Idea: The Opening of Debate" in Kristen Renwick Monroe *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science* Yale University Press, 2005 : 9–11.

12. See the Introduction to Perestroika by Kristen Monroe.

13. In addition to many stories recounted in the discipline, I was explicitly rejected for jobs which had absolutely no relation to statistical analyses for lacking sufficient coursework in the area.

14. For a summary of this attack, see the editorial "Glenn Beck Targets Frances Fox Piven" The Nation February 7, 2011.

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On the Concept of Non-normative Critique

Abstract Proponents of non-normative critique reject what they see as judgmental notions of critique. These pre-suppose a superior insight on the part of the theorist taking a paternalist and suspicious attitude toward others. Their alternative begins ith the understanding of participants, but they take a distance from that perspective in their view of critique. With Foucault, they see critique solely as the attempt to problematize situations showing their contingent nature, leaving the participant to decide. This position is not well founded. Social critique is immanent, but is inherently normative. Understanding is evaluation, if the social inquirer is to critically encounter the participants' perspective and not maintain the perspective of a descriptive sociologist. He or she must in fact be able to evaluate the norms and practices of the participants, otherwise the engagement is not on an equal level. This process is a reciprocal one. Critique is always mutual critique. The participants are equally able to critically evaluate the perspective of the inquirer just as the inquirer evaluates those of the participants he or she studies.

Keywords Critique • Non-normative • Foucault • Participants' perspective • Critical theory

The concept of critique plays a central role in a variety of social theories with a practical intent. However, the notion has become a subject of dispute. In the climate of post-modernism and post-structuralism, in which Hegelian and Kantian perspectives are seen as remnants of subjectivism, conceptions of emancipatory critique are met skeptically. These conceptions of critique, which are linked to Hegelian Marxism, are said to be based on a transcendental notion of subjectivity. Often, this version of critique is rejected for two related reasons. The first one presumes, according to critics, a notion of perfect freedom and liberation seemingly free from power. The second is that it implies a position outside or above society from which the critic gets to speak. Similar to the neo-Aristotelean criticism of scientific method, these critics hold that critique requires a transcendental position. I believe this characterization is incorrect. Given the pre-requisites of the participant's perspective, a notion of critique can be formulated to recognize the internal relation to the understanding of subjects. In contrast, some theorists, especially those who follow Foucault (whether or not he held this position in his later work), want to reformulate this to remake critique within a non-normative framework.

Proponents of non-normative critique begin with some of the same objections against theory, which we have seen in phonetic social science. They reject what they see as judgmental notions of critique that pre-suppose a superior insight on the part of the theorist, who takes a paternalist and suspicious attitude toward others. Their alternative notion of critique begins with the understanding of the participants, but with Foucault, they see critique as the attempt to problematize situations and showing their contingent nature, but with no evelution of these practices leaving the participant to decide. This position is not well founded. It still leaves the theorist in a position that is distanced from the dialogue between the critic and participants. Proponents of non-normative critique are right to argue that social critique is immanent, but wrong in failing to see that critique is inherently normative. In critique, understanding cannot be separated from evaluation. If the social inquirer is to critically encounter the participants' perspective and not maintain the perspective of a descriptive sociologist, he or she must, in fact, be able to evaluate the norms and practices of the participants, otherwise the engagement is not on an equal level. This process is a reciprocal one. Critique is always mutual critique. The participants are equally able to critically evaluate the perspective of the inquirer just as he or she is able to evaluate those of the participants he or she studies.

The Formation of Non-normative Critique

The idea of critique is a leading concept in social theory. Critique is generally linked to the analysis of domination and the possibilities for emancipation. Robert J. Antonio argued that critique, specifically immanent critique, is the method that characterizes critical theories, especially those of the Frankfurt School. It is this rather than any specific theory that defines its task.[1] Thus, the task of critique is to provide insight into relations of domination by supplying an account of their history, and a new sense of individual and historical possibilities that can overcome domination. It does not, in my view, rest on the assumption that domination will be once and for all overcome, but simply that it can be reduced. Critique is emancipatory because it is freedom enabling. It liberates us from structures of domination that keep us from acting to make a better life.

The formulation of an adequate idea of critique has become a topic of much discussion, controversy, and criticism in recent years. For some critics, the controversy stems from the connection of critique with the heritage of a Hegelian idea of total or final freedom. Here, freedom is liberation from all constraints of authority.[2] A second line of criticism stems from the notion that liberation is guided by a theorist or theory that takes an external standard of freedom that it imposes on participants.

Recently, a line of analysis has arisen in the literature that draws on the work of Foucault and (in one case) French pragmatic sociology to formulate a notion of non-normative critique. This version takes the second strain of criticism in a different direction. Advocates of this idea want to retain the notion of critique, but separate it from normative conceptions that take an external attitude toward subjects. Colin Koopman, for example, develops a reading of Foucault that gives place of pride to his conception of critique. Based on his reading, Foucault's genealogy is non-normative; it does not prescribe any goals or values, but provides an analysis of "problematization."[3] Similarly, Magnus Hansen has argued for a non-normative approach to critique. He contends that the grammar of critique, which normally poses a relation between a (pathological) state of affairs and healthy or desirable state, is inadequate. He thinks critique should avoid any notion of pathology and, by implication, any consideration of a good or healthy society. Hansen also stylizes the notion of problematization to develop a non-normative notion of the critique of everyday action.[4] Most importantly, Hansen argues that the stance of a normative critique is not only an ethical problem, but also a methodological one. It requires "methodological

sacrifices," which restrict the kind of critiques that normative theories can produce.[5]

The claim that normative theories are methodologically incapable of accounting for the participant's perspective cannot be sustained. While the criticisms leveled by Koopman and Hansen hold against some thinkers, they more often serve as straw man, especially when they are applied to contemporary critical theories. These criticisms are based on the assumption that normative critique always has to take an external or transcendent position in relation to a community. In contrast, I want to argue that critical theory rests on a form of immanent critique. Rather than setting up the notion of an external or transcendent critique, an imminent critique starts from the position of everyday subjects who experience conflicts and contradictions in their everyday life. This from of critique is inherently normative. The notion of critique proposed by non-normative theories is excessively narrow. It neglects the capacity of everyday subjects to engage in context-breaking reflection. Rejecting notion of the good or the just, a limited notion of domination and freedom emerges. Unfreedom consists largely a matter of imposed notions of the normal by theorists or experts, and liberation is the freedom to choose otherwise. This limited notion ultimately ends up raising problems. Moreover, the theory of critique offered by these theorists starts from the understanding of subjects, which is, by no means, non-normative. Developing critical norms is a reciprocal process, involving both participants and those engaged in social inquiry.

Precursors: Marxism and Non-normative Critique

Debates in Marxist social theory also raised the question of whether Marx's theory of society requires an ethical standpoint. Some Marxists have tried to interpret Marx as advocating a "science," which, like natural science, is non-normative. As George Brenkart argues, these views of "scientific" Marxism have been common: "Marx is supposed to have founded a science which sought in an objective, morally neutral manner to understand the origin, growth, and collapse of capitalism as well as the ultimate succession of communism." More recently, structuralist Marxism has raised the question of whether Marx's critical theory is normative in any significant way. Notably, Louis Althusser formulated a criticism of Marxist humanism in the early 1960s, which separated Marx's early humanist writings from his later scientific ones.[6] The latter, which represented Marx's true or

mature system, has no ethical or philosophical component. Any idea of an independent subject or human essence was excluded from this philosophy.

Even some of those who supported a more humanist version of Marxism were skeptical of a distinct ethical component in his thought. Bertell Ollman, while not denying an evaluative dimension of Marx's thought that Marx formulated no ethics, because it would have introduced false distinctions between fact and value.[7]

Analytical Marxists, while generally supporting normative perspectives, have, nonetheless, denied important components of normative theory that are central to the idea of critique. John Roemer, for example, downplayed the role of exploitation in Marx's theory. Since it is possible, according to Roemer, for the worker to exploit the owner under certain conditions, the notion of exploitation has no central role. Marxist theories ought to be concerned primarily with questions of inequality, rather than of domination and exploitation.[8]

Each of these approaches questions in a different way the notion of critique that is prevalent in critical theories, and tries to break the connection between self-reflection and insight into domination. The non-normative approach developed by Koopman and Hansen is not, however, driven primarily by Marxist historical materialism, though it is critical of what it sees as Marxist notions of the superior outlook of the theorist, nor does it oppose science to morality. It does, however, question notions of emancipation that are seen as typical of Marxist theories. Rather than disposing of questions of emancipation, it proposes to use Foucault's work to formulate an alternative non-normative notion of emancipation.

CRITIQUE AS PROBLEMATIZATION

For non-normative theorists, the problem with normative critique lies in its attitude of superiority toward its object of study. Hansen draws on Paul Ricoeur's notion of the hermeneutics of suspicion, which entails that the theorist devalues the understanding of those under analysis and subordinates their understanding to his or her superior insight: "this grammar involves a researcher with a rather paternal and suspicious attitude toward the actors he studies, where only he can access the deeper levels and he only can emancipate actors from their self-imbued false consciousness."[9] Koopman echoes a similar position when he argues that normative inquiry short-circuits problematizations, because normative inquiries require a fulfilled subject, and require a "purity (a perfection or finality) they cannot

attain."[10] Because such theories are based on a transcendental norm, they determine the answers to questions before the problems are fully articulated. They act as forms of expert knowledge that forecloses the action of participants. It discourages or eliminates contestation.

Non-normative theories develop a form of social research that "refuses to develop a framework of normative standards with which to evaluate the desirability of power relations, institutions, structures and thus it also refuses to take up the role of reform designer."[11] Here, critique entails research that "seeks to problematize modes of governing with the emancipatory aim of encouraging critical practices understood in the broadest possible way as related to pointing to the possibility of otherness."[12] It aims to depoliticize those relations that have become understood as non-political. We might interpret this as a way of returning critique to the participant's perspective. Here, politics is defined as the conflict or contestation over meaning. Both strategies of normalization and normative critique are seen as engaging in depoliticizing social life, the former by making them the domain of experts who say what is normal, and theorists who hold transcendent values.

The notion of a non-normative sociology, according to this line of argument, requires more than just rejecting the "ought to" structure of its goal states. It requires looking at the relation between social inquiry and the perspective of participants. It is not, then, simply an ethical relationship between the theorist and his or her audience that is at stake, but a methodological one.

In Hansen's reading, the theorist must maintain a relationship to those studied, which stays close to the world of participants. He or she must try to grasp the world as the participants do, by paying close attention to the conflicts that they experience and the interpretations they give of their situation. It should conform to the procedures they use in the situation, and its interpretations must be acceptable to participants in the situations as valid reconstructions of their views.

This way of looking at the problem is, according to Hansen, largely the same as ethnographic procedures. In staying close to the participants' sense of the situation, theorists avoid the temptation of relying on an unmasking critique. They do not then take an objectifying or dominating perspective, the perspective of one who knows a reality that is inaccessible to the participants, and who are in need of enlightenment by these theorists.[13] Despite some differences, both Hansen and Koopman agree this critique of the theorists' perspective derives from Foucault.

Foucault's genealogical researches, despite differences from "ethnological procedures," are seen to work in a similar way. In his historical researches, Foucault attempts to delineate the way in which domains of human activity come to be seen as problematic, that is, to be both constituted and contested. These include domains such as sexuality, criminality, and mental health. Speaking broadly, Foucault's post-archeological works are related to the question of governmentality. These works concern the way that domains of activity are regulated. Before an area can be regulated or subjected to governmentality, it has to be identified as relevant. For the genealogist, these domains, however, are not only forms of regulation, but also ways in which the self is shaped. These forms of shaping become constitutive of the ways that people act.

Both Hansen and Koopman see genealogical analysis as non-normative. Genaealogy simply describes or portrays the way in which these domains come into being and how areas become seen as problems needing regulation.[14] Genealogy does not attempt to tell participants what values to hold or even what they ought to do. Using this line of argument, genealogy liberates the participants from oppressive regulation. Foucault's work provides a "surface reading" that precludes the suspicious examination of whether "intentions and aims are sincere, or whether other more obscure intentions are the ones really driving a given political program."[15] They take as true what subjects say to be true. They do want to see the analyst through the model of the psychoanalyst who holds that a patient's resistance to the truth is a sign of a truth that is hidden. Thus, for example, a term like madness has no universal core or hidden essence that can be unearthed by theory. It can only be seen as a set of social practices.

Critique has to avoid judgments of good and bad, just or unjust. Since its goal is to show how social practices are both socially constructed and contested, it intends to show that the illusion of inevitability is mistaken. By viewing things as historically variable and changeable, we can see the possibility of doing things differently. It is this kind of self-reflection on the possibility of acting otherwise that is, according to Koopman, the nature of emancipation.[16] According to Hansen, it is reflective because it opens up new possibilities for action for individuals to contest values and determine their own fate.

Problematization is primarily a way of showing how things came into being historically; that is, how they are defined as problems. It also aims to unsettle or defamiliarize ordinary understanding or common sense. Thus, in one sense, problematization is a kind of genealogical diagnosis.

However, this kind of diagnosis is one that provides no picture of a good society or a preferred practice. Koopman, like Hansen, is keen to separate Nietzschean genealogy from that of Foucault. While the former is a kind of normative critique, which assumes some model of human flourishing, the latter abstains from it. Instead of making evaluations or passing judgment on practices, Foucauldian genealogy is content to show tension points. Such tension points indicate weaknesses in contemporary ideologies, which can be exploited to create change.[17]

Risky Business

Both Hansen and Koopman draw on Foucault's notion of the risky character of action in constructing their ideas of freedom. Foucault argues that we cannot take the risk out of action or find a perfect solution that will end all risks. While Foucault notes the invasive character of modern institutions such as medicine, psychiatry, law, penal institutions, and ethics, and is generally critical of them,[18] he refuses, according to non-normative theorists, to make final judgments about their worth. The modern regime of regulation is not a subject for evaluation. Nor does Foucault reject science or expert knowledge *per se*. These regimes of power are neither inherently good nor bad, but have to be seen as posing risks. If one is sick, one has to assess the merits of treatment versus the risks posed by medicine. Similarly, Foucault argues that what we need to know about modern forms of power is how they originated and how they make elements of a domain problematic. Once we have this knowledge, Foucault argues that subjects can experiment to find new ways to behave, either individually or in concert. [19]

The notion of freedom that is implied by Koopman and Hansen recalls the view of John Rajchman. He characterizes Foucault's theory of freedom as modernist.[20] By this he means that it formulates no determinate theory of the good life or transcendental value. It rejects any notion of a social whole or larger collective entity. For Rajchman, however, Foucault doesn't reject ethics. According to Rajchman, Foucault wants ethics to provide an understanding of how we have really been constituted, and what we might become. While this may reject transcendental perspectives, it does not entirely reject norms, but wants them to issue from the participants' perspective.

Similarly, Thomas Dumm argues that Foucault rejects any notion of a pure unsituated choice that he finds in Sartre, and instead opts for a notion of situated freedom, one that understands the interplay of freedom

and power. The notion of a situated freedom seems, for Dumm, to provide the link to the politics of freedom, which he sees in Foucault. Acting within a social context, which is constituted by both domination and freedom, the "practice of liberty" consists, following Foucault's essay "What is Enlightenment," of an experiment with the limits of the possible. It seeks to find alternatives through the proses of self-elaboration.

By adopting this notion of freedom, writers like Koopman and Hansen, along with others who are influenced by Foucault, believe they are avoiding notions of freedom as liberation from domination. The problem of freedom is not one of releasing us from constraints that repress us, but creating possibilities for freedom. The subject navigates the risks posed by these systems. As Dumm pointed out, Foucault poses this more positively as a theory of freedom as experimentation. One can choose to try to test the systems of dominating and find new ways to live, rather than to be governed by notions of normality and seemingly natural norms. However, I do not see how this notion of freedom is non-normative. Freedom, for Foucault, seems the highest value.

An Objective Conception of Norms?

There are two main lines of thought, which the non-normative critique wants to oppose. It is not always clear that they analytically separate them. The first is the idea that social science or philosophy can discover objective standards of normalcy or proper functioning that have scientific certainty and can be determined by the objective observer. The second is tied to the Kantian notion of a transcendental subjectivity. In the second form, the standards are not found in the objective world, but in the ineliminable conditions of cognition and morality of subjects that Kant thinks all humans share. In each of these, the non-normative critique that is formulated rejects the notion of the theorist who possesses a superior insight into the truth of social life or the rightness of norms. It rejects skepticism over the meanings that are not apparent.

I want to take these two positions, in turn, in this section. I want to take an example of an objectivist critical theory and show, through its flaws, how we can rework it through recognizing the interpretive character of human activity. However, this also shows the limits of a non-normative view that claims to eschew depth interpretation.

There have been some versions of critical theory, which take an objectivist slant to identify false needs. Christian Bay, for example, drew on the

work of psychologists like Maslow to contend that a hierarchy of human needs could be objectively determined by science.[21] Sometimes, Marcuse's theory of needs has been interpreted in this way. More recently, Martha Nussbaum employed a theory of basic human capacities that attempt to identify basic human needs.

The problem with Bay's theory and with similar approaches arises because they take needs out of the domain of interpretation and consider them naturalistically. The observer can determine these needs without reference to the participant's perspective. We have to consider needs as need interpretations, which are themselves intersubjective. They are not biological, but social. Need interpretations are elements of participants' perspective on their own lives, and they grow out of a cultural context.

As interpretations of our social and cultural life, needs are part of our personal and social identities, and elements of our conception of human flourishing. They represent the elements we believe to be important, even necessary, conditions for both living and flourishing in a good life.

However, once we grant that needs are interpreted and are, like all interpretation, accounts of our condition, then it is also possible that they are mistaken. Since needs are interpreted and are not a direct transmission of personal states, they can be mistaken or can be subject to change. Whether or not they are "false" needs, at least we can speak of them as wrong, invalid, or misinterpreted needs. We may think we really want to pursue a career in medicine. When I find out that we faint at the sight of blood, I might change our mind. In other cases, I might discover that something or someone I thought was important turns out to be less important than I thought. I might have, even in retrospect, found that I convinced myself something was important and was deceiving myself.

The non-normative perspective has trouble dealing with these issues. As we have seen, non-normative theories follow Foucault in eschewing any in-depth interpretation, or any sense that the understanding of participants needs to be corrected. This view has a point when we are looking at a detached perspective of the observer, but fails when we look as misinterpretation from the standpoint of the participant, or view the theorist as a co-participant, who only has access to the social world from the standpoint of a involved partner.

Thus, self-deception is not just something that the theorist perceives. It is an element of the participants' perspective in everyday life and their forms of self-understanding. We might provisionally characterize it as a situation in which our intentions and actions are incongruent, and not

the result of deliberate strategic or manipulative behavior. Sometimes, this means that our own feelings are split intra-psychically. We cannot consciously acknowledge our feelings or intentions that we have, which could cause conflict. Often our friends, or even acquaintances, can see better than we can that we are engaging in self-deception. As co-participants, they see the discrepancy between our actions and intentions. This form of reflection on the nature of our motives is a capacity of ordinary understanding, and not a privilege of the theorist.

These misinterpretations, whether they are superficial or real, become issues for the critical theorist; when they can be linked to organized social and political power, through forms of subordination, oppression, or domination. Then they can have an effect on the processes of mutual accountability and the self-understanding of individuals. Here, the theorist can link these problems to social processes and institutional arrangements in which power (i.e. forms of domination and oppression) is embedded.

What applies to need interpretations applies to norms as well. Our norms of action do not come from an extneral power.

The theorist too has access to the social world only through involvement. Thus, the idea that the theorist has access outside of this frame is not possible. Our interpretations take place against a background of shared understandings in social life in which we participate through structures of mutual understanding and accountability. Thus, the theorist who speaks of false needs might be referring to conflicts or tensions in the perspective of the participants. As a member of a society, the theorist too may have experienced these conflicts over needs and their significance.

Adorno's notion of the damaged life has often been seen as an example of the kind of theory that Foucault rejects as condescending. Adorno, according to some, thinks that everyone, except for a few great men, live a distorted life. I think we can argue otherwise. Adorno thinks that the classical notion of the good life is impossible to obtain in the current modern society, because of the forms of domination that he found in totalitarian societies but also in advanced capitalism with its bureaucratic and technocratic control of everyday life. Here, he refers to the participant's situation. He refers not simply to the inability of ordinary individuals to live well or to flourish, but to social conditions that prevent them from living a well-lived life. However, the claim that everyday life is damaged, whether one agrees with it or not, is not really a claim made from above the fray. It is a claim made from the view of a participant who experiences conflicts.

Because needs are interpreted and not directly perceived, they are subject to pathologies of interpretation. They are not raw feels. Thus, they can be misinterpreted, changed, or even be the result of self-deception. Such interpretations, however, may be influenced and shaped by social and political power, that is, by forms of oppression and domination.

On the contrary, some forms of misinterpretation and pathologies of identity can be created by power relationships. These are limits to mutual understanding that affect personal identities, and the kinds of reasons and accounts that can be given. These can include forms of public censorship or repression, and the condemnation of views as illegitimate or senseless. In other cases, individuals and topics are not allowed in public discourse. Thus, contrary to Foucault, while a topic like sexuality might be everywhere, its full expression in public may be suppressed or banned. This type of repression extends not only to state of affairs but also to the interpretive and self-formative processes of individuals through which they make sense of the world. These socially produced misinterpretations can sometimes be forms of ideology. Yet, ideologies are just not matters of false beliefs. They are embedded in attitudes toward the world, sensibilities, and identities.

Thus, it seems that there is a way to recover the notion of unmasking critique without falling back into the idea that the theorist is superior to the participant in social life. As participants, we do not always accept as fact what someone says about their own feelings and beliefs, but we can employ the participant's perspective to analyze their limited processes of mutual understanding and sometimes unmask distorted understanding. The individual's self-interpretation loses its absolute privilege. In doing so, we may also focus on relations of social power that shape our public and private modes of interpretation.

The second line of objection concerns the Kantian subject who begins from a transcendental standpoint. Here, normativity does not derive from the objective world, but from the conditions of subjectivity. Kant, as is well known, employs the notion of a solitary subject in whom these basic categories of thought reside and who can reflect on the conditions of equal moral treatment even if they cannot be known theoretically. However, as even Kant's sympathetic critics note, his ahistorical conception needs reformulation. Yet, it recognizes the agency of subjects in forming an understanding of the world. The process of detrancedentalizing the Kantian notion of subjectivity, which has taken place in fits and starts in philosophical discourse over the past 200 years, replaces the transcendental subject with one that is formed historically, culturally, and intersubjectively through forms of mutual understanding. This transformation also

changes the form of self-reflection that the theorist engages in. Instead of taking the position of a subject outside of history, the theorist, like the participant, reflects on his or her own activity within history and culture.

If the Kantian subject loses its transcendental basis and becomes rooted in intersubjectivity, then norms too lose any such basis. They become not a matter of reflection on a standpoint above or even prior to ordinary activity, but are embedded in them. Theorists don't stand above participants on the social ladder and command that they engage in a dialogue with them over a normatively based social order they both share.

Foucault's conception of the participants (or at least the interpretation developed by these commentators) vacillates between two positions. One the one hand, he treats the social world as constructed and interpreted. Thus, our understanding cannot be treated as basic. On the other hand, he treats interpretations as basic, and the meaning as basic that can't be interrogated any further. When Foucault argues that in modern societies power operates on this micro-level of governmentality, he claims that for the most part we are shaped by these definitions of what is normal and our needs are defined though activity. Need interpretations are not basic features of activity, but are derived. If, however, Foucault and the French sociologists take this position, then they also devalue the lifeworlds of participants. For participants in the lifeworld believe the norms they hold are valid and the facts of the world are true. They can give accounts of their actions, which can be contested.

Everyday Life

Hansen's discussion moves more in the direction of an analysis of everyday life. He cites the work of sociologists Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot who undertake an analysis of forms of everyday life. As noted earlier, these theorists follow an ethnographic method. We should begin methodologically from the interpretations that subjects give of their own activity. In reconstructing the world of the participants, Boltanski and Thévenot hold that the theorist should stay as close as possible to the reasons and justifications that participants give. Similarly, the accounts and justifications that inquirers propose have to be acceptable to those who are studied in inquiry. Here, it would seem that inquirers and the subjects of inquiry are on the same level.

While Hansen sees this procedure as opposed to critical theories, this argument bears a close relationship to Jürgen Habermas' discussion

of the methodology of the interpretive social sciences in Theory of Communicative Action, volume 1.[22] I will discuss this further in the next section. One important difference is the notion that justification for Boltanski follows orders of worth and status, rather than of truth.[23] Since they view action through status rather than justification, they don't engage the understanding of participants in a reflexive way as participants. The analyst remains an outsider who engages in description, not evaluation, and they do not see theorists as critically engaging the justifications given by participants.

THE NORMATIVE CONTENT OF PRACTICAL REASON

Hansen is uncomfortable with any notion of normative critique. He is dismayed by what he sees, as a certain amount of mission creep in Boltanski's later work, which moves toward a normative conception of critique. This is notably in play in a joint interview with Axel Honneth, which seems to point to other directions in his work.[24] Boltanski noted that there can be ways in which critique can find concealed meaning in some forms of understanding. Here, he establishes some connection between his work and an emancipatory critique similar to critical theory. In fact, in this interview, Boltanski takes an externalist position with regard to critique. He argues that in the end, we have to take a position outside of the common sense of the community in order to produce a critique. The perspective of the community is local. In order to engage in critique, we have to seek universal norms.[25] Of course, this is precisely what the non-normative theorist seeks to deny.

I do not think that either the non-normative critique or the externalist position can provide a convincing notion of critique. The social inquirer who encounters a social world that he or she seeks to understand has to take the norms of those he or she studies seriously if he or she hopes to understand them. He or she can't avoid taking a normative stance toward those he or she studies. The inquirer does not take an external stance toward the lifeworld of participants, but must take an internal perspective. This does not, however, imply a simple, local perspective, but draws on the context-forming and context-transcending powers of human understanding.

Participants in the social world have an inherent normative orientation to the world. Their basic attitude toward the world is one of concern.[26] Things matter to us not only as states of affairs, but also as normative commitments to others. We live in a world of involvements and commitments;

our own fate is shared with others. We act with concern because it is directed toward human flourishing. We are capable not only of success but also of failure. We are concurrently independent beings capable of our own plans, but vulnerable and dependent beings who have to depend on the physical world and the world of others in order to flourish.

As social beings we are bound to others through mutual accountability. We share norms, goals, sensibilities, commitments and involvements, and conceptions of the world that are intersubjectively constituted. While we go about our lives in an everyday that takes for granted a more or less agreement on features of this world, we can, when requested, provide accounts of our actions, and explain or justify why we do what we are doing. As actors, we monitor our own actions in the world so that we know what we do in the act of doing it.[27]

The social inquirer approaches the subjects of inquiry with the same interpretive capacities as the participant. He or she too is a participant in a social world who can understand others only because he or she is a co-participant in social life. Understanding others also means learning to understand the accounts they give of their actions, and their orientation to norms. This is not descriptive or value-free procedure. It is necessarily an evaluative one. Understanding and evaluating are not separate procedures. Understanding the meaning of an expression means necessarily that we know what makes it true, genuine, or valid. We are able to assess the reasons why someone says what they do. We have to be able to know what makes it true or false, valid or invalid, authentic or inauthentic. Only then can we know how another is using an expression, whether they are making a claim correctly or incorrectly, expressing skepticism toward a claim being deceived by another or taking some other attitude toward it. We cannot know, for example, how someone uses the notion of political legitimacy unless we know how this notion is considered valid by participants. In describing action, the social researcher has to understand how the subjects of study evaluate their actions through the reasons that they give to others.

In order to be able to evaluate the standards of another person or group under inquiry, the researchers have to draw on their own capacity to evaluate claims and provide reasons in order to make sense of truth claims and to grasp how others are making sense. They cannot help but employ their own standards of truth or validity in order to understand them. Thus, we cannot avoid critically evaluating the standards of those we study.

This process of critical evaluation might tend to reinforce the image of theorist as judge and jury for the validity of the norms of a culture or their conceptions of the world. However, the interpretive access of the social researcher pre-supposes a reciprocal relation to participants. Not only does the researcher have the capacity to critically evaluate the standards and reasoning of those studied, but even the general public has the capacity to understand and criticize the reasons that researchers use. Thus, the researcher and those whom he or she studies have to engage in a reciprocal critique. Some of these issues have been explored in participatory action research in which inquirers work with, and are often criticized by, those groups with whom they carry their research, For example, Corey Shdaimah and Roland Stahl provide an example of a study in which inquirers were criticized by subjects for not taking their concerns seriously.[28] This illustrates the way in which the participants have the capacity to evaluate the procedures and processes used by researchers.

These considerations suggest that critique need not suppose an external perspective on the part of the researcher or critic, but takes an internal or at least an intersubjective one. The process of developing and deploying critical standards is internal to ordinary rationality. Since we have the capacity to reflect on our own activity, our own self-understanding, and our grasp of the world we inhabit, we have the capacity to learn reflectively to gain insight into our own accounts and motivations and the ways that power relations can shape us. They can transform these forms of understanding though mutual criticism. All competent speakers have the capacity for reflection and self-understanding. They don't need guidance from above, but the chance to employ the possibilities for learning and employing capacities. This is doubly true for modern societies in which discursive forms of reason and mutual understanding are prevalent.

Social critique then is primarily immanent in form. Critique comes into play when the tensions in our everyday understanding of our lives can be translated into public problems. These public problems, which are also rooted in social institutions, often highlight the gap between what we believe society ought to be, what norms we avow, and the experience of violation of these expectations. If, for example, we believe that our society promises justice for all and discover either through personal experience or seeing the experience of others that our society fails to meet this norm, we may engage in reflection on this failure to meet expectations. This might include, over time, looking into our own history and social structural features of society in order to see the historical genesis of the problem and structural barriers

such as relations of power and domination that keep us from realizing these ideals. Thus, critique links the tensions in our everyday understanding to a diagnosis of the problem and its generative sources, and to relationships of power. This insight provides a way to free us from repressive practices or norms, and to revise or transform the norms we use.

Foucault Problematization and Normative Critique

In light of these considerations, can a Foucauldian perspective sustain an argument for a non-normative theory of critique? Foucault, like other critics, believes that the theorist cannot provide guidance to the proper norms that participants should hold. The theorist has no privileged position in relation to participants. Thus far, critical theorists, especially those influenced by interpretive social theory, would agree. Where Foucault differs here is in the assumption (or at least the assumption of his followers) that the project of critique is to free the individual from the sense of naturalness or inevitability of norms. Once that sense is eliminated, Foucault seems to say one is free to experiment on new ways of being free. One is not then determined by a pre-given sense of normalcy or naturalness. This position while it doesn't preclude collective action seems to apply in the first instance to individual subjects who choose from a variety of options.

The first and most obvious question is whether the notion of critique as freeing us from notions of naturalness is not in and of itself a species of unmasking critique. While it does not suggest any kind of sense of what ought to be, it still seems to be a kind of false consciousness where the participants believe that their options are limited. If the participants fail to see that they are governed by restrictive notions of normalcy, are they not deceived about their own possibilities for freedom?

A second issue concerns the notion that modern subjects actually see structures of normalcy as inevitable and unchangeable. To the extent that normalcy refers to norms that can be shown to be valid and invalid through argument, then critical theory and Foucault are in agreement. However, to the extent that it seems to imply a non-reflexive attitude of inevitably or nature-like order, I think Foucault is mistaken. In Anthony Giddens' notion of modernity, subjects are seen as reflexive, especially about the society they live in. They are aware for the most part that social standards are not ahistorical or rooted in nature. Take for example the recent change in American attitudes on same-sex marriage. Even questions of mental health and medicine are contested. Thus, while questions of normality

no doubt play a role in critique, they are not the sole or most important reasons. Expertise does not always carry the authority that Foucault sees. It is rather the case that the norms are challenged, and not simply the sense of inevitable or unchangeable reality. The larger point here is that individuals can take up the norms of the society they live in, and accept or reject them.

If this premise is questioned, then I think we also have to question the idea that forms of critique depoliticize by providing ideas that are unchallengeable. Nor do I think that politics is simply the existence of contestation. Things that can be contested are not political. To take an inconsequential example, we might argue whether Led Zeppelin or Black Sabbath is the first heavy metal band. This question which is not settled in music may have a cultural significance, but not much of a political one. On the contrary, if we think of politics as a form of authorization where citizens gather and deliberate to formulate norms and courses of action, then ideas of consensus seem an important part of politics. It is a form of communicative power. Once we decide on something in the realm of politics, it does not automatically become non-political, but still can be subject to evaluation and criticism. The problem here is with what one might call an externalist approach to truth. When conceptions of truth are seen as operating above and outside of everyday discourse, it is viewed as an ideology as something that stops discourse, deliberation, or questioning. Normative ideas are internal to discourse, not external, in everyday life. The idea of justice is one, for example, that is part of the everyday vocabulary of participants. Thus, the theorist who discusses notions of justice can engage the participants in a discourse about what is just. Because notions of justice are not objects, they are justified through structures of mutual understanding and accountability. They can be called into question at any time and participants can be asked to clarify and provide the reasons for action. Our normative notions are always contestable. Koopman and Hansen set up a false dichotomy— either norms are external or we must engage in non-normative critique. If the theorist is on the same level as the participant, then the kinds of accounts of justice that he or she gives are those that the participant have. Thus, while there are certainly discourses of normalization that attempt to presumptively state that is acceptable, these are not the same as normative critiques. Further discourses of inequality or disrespect focus on the ways that members of a society are subordinated point to different kinds of critiques.

Koopman and Hansen claim that Foucauldian notions of genealogy and problematization can be linked to critique in a non-normative manner. Problematizations seem to work in two distinct, but related, ways. On the one hand, problematizations are historical analyses, which show how a particular domain such as sexuality or punishment becomes seen as contested. In this, it might be seen as a diagnostic. On the other hand, problematization functions as critique to defamilarize our understanding and free us to think otherwise. It is not clear that these can be rendered non-normative and have a transforming effect on participants.

Foucault later abandoned some of the assumptions of the archeological period for some theoretical and practical reasons. It proved impossible to maintain the perspective of a pure outsider for one thing. It did not really explain the central conception of discourse that Foucault employed. Foucault was also struck by the phenomenon in the wake of the events of 1968 of the ability of dominant social power to respond to opposition. From now on, discourse would be forms of power. They are not simply orders of knowledge determined by linguistic rule; they are orders of power. Discourses are forms of knowledge that are formed by systems of power such that forms of knowledge strategically serve these ends. Genealogy is the form of inquiry most appropriate to this new type of analysis.

In focusing on the formation of subjects through power, Foucault shifts focus from linguistic structures to social action. He is dealing with formative processes of subject and institutions; however, it is still not clear that notion of formation that Foucault employs here leads up to the participants' perspective.

Essentially, Foucault's analysis begins with a consideration of the transformation of our notion of order in the modern era. While pre-modern forms of order and power drew on a sense of cosmic order, in which one has a place, modern notions of order and power work on the individual who, freed from cosmic order, pursues his or her own self-defined interests. The nature of the former is illustrated in the famous description of the execution in seventeenth-century France in which the execution serves to restore the cosmic order, the latter by the modern prison, which attempts to shape the individual. The latter also employs a different notion of the good. The human good deals more with the satisfaction of need and ending suffering of individuals, than the public good of the Greeks.

Modern power deals with the bios of ordinary life rather than the classical notion of the good life. Here, the locus of control changes. What has to be regulated is not just public life, but also ordinary life, once it

loses its anchor in a cosmic order in which it had a secondary role. These processes of ordinary life are controlled not only through the state, or from a condition of central command, but also through a number of sub-political processes. Foucault focuses especially on the rise of institutions like schools, hospitals, psychiatric institutions, and on the social sciences as ways that individual action is put under surveillance and controlled. These institutions and social sciences provide standards of normality. Foucault has come to see these genealogical problems under the notions of govern-mentality. The latter does not refer simply to the state or its functions, but to the regulations of spheres of action in the public and private realms in liberalism. Foucault thinks that in liberal societies, the creation of a sepa-rate non-governmental sphere of private life problematizes these questions of "governmentality," how we regulate conduct not specified by the state.

In a somewhat dense analysis in his essay *What is Critique,* Foucault argues that genealogy is a kind of singular causality, what Windelband once called ideographic explanation. It does not aim at a general law, but a spe-cific historical process. Thus, for Foucault, archeology is not simply rejected but is incorporated into a broader project. Archeology analyzes the way in which power and knowledge form structures of truth and validity. These are treated in a non-normative way without concern for their legitimacy. The second, genealogy traces the strategies through which these notions of truth are inscribed onto subjects, they are modes of subjectivization which through conflict and struggle, make individuals subjects of regimes of gov-ernmentality. To be sure, part of subjectivization involves the subject itself taking up these norms. It seems at this point, however, the theorist is still looking at the situation as an outsider, and doesn't enter into the world of the participants.

The problem can be seen when we look at the question of self-reflection. The modern subject does indeed engage in self-reflection, but only as a form of self-surveillance. As part of the regime of modern control, subjects learn to monitor their own actions, in accord with the norms instituted by power. Self-surveillance is a form of normalization. It individualizes and separates subjects and divides them so as to make them subject to control. Here, the question of accountability of action is short circuited as merely an effect of the strategic struggle for power. The communicative power of subjects to agree on norms is bypassed. Foucault still rejects the notion of subject-centered reason in which we can take up the world. He does not see the intersubjective view of the social world as providing a viable alterna-tive. This refusal however leaves his work in a dilemma. On the one hand,

Foucault portrays the social world as normative, that is, as constituted by forms of normalcy. On the other, he does not see these norms as having any independence from strategic power. Thus, he still looks at these processes from the outside as theorist examining the forms of power. Foucault does not clarify how the theorist can withdraw from the struggle for power methodically and view it from without, or, alternatively, how the theorist is a participant.

It is only in his last work that Foucault begins to address these issues. In a late interview, Foucault seeks to clarify the relations between these different levels of analysis.

> So that in these three areas—madness, delinquency, and sexuality—I emphasized a particular aspect each time: the establishment of a certain objectivity, the development of a politics and a government of the self, and the elaboration of an ethics and a practice in regard to oneself. But each time I also tried to point out the place occupied here by the other two components necessary for constituting a field of experience. It is basically a matter of different examples in which the three fundamental elements of any experience are implicated: a game of truth, relations of power, and forms of relation to oneself and to others. And if each of these examples emphasizes, in a certain way, one of these three aspects—since the experience of madness was recently organized as primarily a field of knowledge [savoir], that of crime as an area of political intervention, while that of sexuality was defined as an ethical position—each time I have tried to show how the two other elements were present, what role they played, and how each one was affected by the transformations in the other two.[29]

It is only with this third move that Foucault approaches the participant's perspective. He defines critique as the desire not to be governed, that is, as a concept of freedom.[30] Foucault seems to link this to a normative account at least in its historical genesis, it is the idea that a structure of authority is illegitimate or unjustified. He wants to rewrite this in his own terms as a politics of truth.[31] In critique, the subject gives himself or herself the right to question truth on its effects of power, and question power on its effects on discourses of truth.

He links freedom to truth telling: *parrhesia*. In ancient Greece, this was distinct from *aletheia*. It referred to speaking freely, or to an obligation to speak the truth for the sake of the public good. Thus, *parrhesia* seems to be a practice of freedom in which a truth is revealed, which has remained hidden. I am not sure, however, that Foucault's formulation as the ability

to dissent goes far enough. He would have to link the practice of truth telling with the practical activity of the participant and with their ability to engage in mutual critique. I don't think Foucault takes this step.

I have argued that in the ordinary attitude, people take for granted that what they believe to be true and right are valid. Foucault in arguing that the role of critique is merely to show that what seems natural and necessary is an effect of the social construction of the world by power interests misses a crucial point. It does not, however, address the question raised by other critical theories that these practices are wrong or harmful. The right to ask critical questions that Foucault notes stems from our reflexive relation to understanding. In being accountable, we can provide reasons for action and justifications when needed. It is a short-circuiting of such reflection when we limit it to reflecting on the way power or knowledge works without asking questions of legitimacy or justice, for example.

Foucault, in one of his recent interviews, takes the issue with theorists he considers as polemical and who try to assert their superiority by dismissing others. At the same time, he seems to be opposed to dogmatic Marxist theories that reduce everything to a base superstructure conception. In the same interview, in the brief discussion of the student movement of the 60s, he contrasts the students' introduction to new zones of conflicts, such as race and gender, through the political sphere, yet, he also sees a conflict in the way that these students tried to fit these new zones of conflict into a dogmatic Marxist theory. In contrast, Foucault argues that he wants to create a dialogue with others and try to create a collective sense of action, in short, a political will. Of course, such a dialogue would be similar to the idea of a mutual critique between participants and researchers. Even here, however, there is an ambiguity in Foucault's formulation. He thinks of this kind of questioning as a game, with a number of strategic rules and rights accorded to those involved in the game. Of course, discourse and dialogue are not games in any sense of the word, nor are they strategies. These discourses are basic forms of communicative action, and hence of interpretation in general.

Neither theories of critique offered as exemplars of non-normative critique offered by Koopman nor Hansen can do away with normative considerations. What they actually criticize are externalist notions of critique in which theorists attempt to provide an objectified or at transcendental notions of norms, which are not related to the participants' understanding. In contrast, notions of mutual critique implicate the researcher in the same web of understanding, which participants in everyday life share. Social

research bears an internal relation to this everyday lifeworld. In participating in mutual critique, researchers must always engage in evaluation and participate in discourse with those the researcher studies.

NOTES

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2. Ernesto Laclau "Beyond Emancipation" in *Emancipation*s London Verso 1996; 1–13.
3. Colin Koopman *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problem of Modernity* Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 2013.
4. Magnus Paulius Hansen, Non Normative Critique: Foucault and Pragmatic Sociology as Tactical Re-politicization *European Journal of Social Theory volume 19 no 6:127-45., first published on December 21, 2014 as doi:10.1177/1368431014562705.*
5. Hansen 1.
6. Louis Althusser, *For Marx* London Verso 1969.
7. Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Modern Society 2nd ed.*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1976 chapter 4.
8. John Roemer. *A General Theory of Exploitation and Class* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982 and *Theories of Distributive Justice* Cambridge Harvard University Press, 1998.
9. Hansen 128.
10. Koopman 91.
11. Hansen 129.
12. Hansen 129.
13. Hansen 130.
14. The notion that Foucault's notion of critique is non normative is not universally accepted. Contrast. Judith Butler, "What Is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue," in *The Political*, ed. David Ingram (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 212–26.
15. Hansen 131.
16. Koopman 47.
17. Koopman 94 The idea of tension points is also crucial to Bent Flyvbjerg's reading of Foucault see Why mass media matter, and how to work with them: phronesis and megaprojects in Real Social Science 95–120.
18. John O Neill, The Disciplinary Society: From Weber to Foucault. The British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Mar., 1986), pp. 42–60.

19. This stance is evoked in a number of Foucault's later works most notably "What is Enlightenment" in Paul Rabinow ed *The Foucault Reader* pp. 32–50 New York: Pantheon 1984.

20. John Rajchman *Michel Foucault and the Freedom of Philosophy* New York Columbia University Press, 1985.

21. Christian Bay, *Strategies of Political Emancipation* Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1981 also see "Human Needs and Political Education" in R Fitzgerald ed *Human Needs and Politics* Rushcutters Bay: Pergammon Press, 1977. For Marcuse see *One Dimensional Man* Boston: Beacon Press 1964.

22. Jurgen Habermas *Theory of Communicative Action Volume I: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* Boston: Beacon Press 1985: 102–39.

23. Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot *On Justification: Economies of Worth* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006; Luc Boltanski *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation* London Polity 2011Also see Axel Honneth's review "Dissolutions of the Social: On the Social Theory of Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot" *Constellations* 17:3 2010 376–89.

24. Hansen. also See the joint interview, Sociology of Critique or Critical Theory? Luc Boltanski and Axel Honneth in Conversation with Robin Celikates *The Spirit of Luc Boltanski. Essays on the 'Pragmatic Sociology of Critique'*, edited by Simon Susen and Bryan S. Turner, Anthem Press 2014.

25. Sociology of Critique or Critical Theory?

26. Andrew Sayer *Why Things Matter to People: Social Science Values and Ethical Life* Cambridge: Cambridge university Press 2011.

27. Giddens *New Rules of the Sociological Method 2nd ed.* London Polity 1993 and Constitution of Society Berkley University of California Press 1986.

28. Corey Shdaimah and Roland Stahl, "Power and Conflict in Collaborative Research" in Bent Flyvbjerg, Todd Landman and Sanford Schram *Real Social Science* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2012 as well as articles by Sandercock and Atilli. and Eubanks in the same volume.

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30. Michel Foucault What is Critique? In *The Politics of Truth 2nd* edition Sylvere Lotringer ed Los Angeles Semiotext(e) 2007 41–81.

31. What is Critique: 48.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion: Toward a Practical Political Theory

Abstract Chapter 4 introduces some further methodological issues in the context of post-positivism. Research should place interpretive concerns at the center of social inquiry, not at nomothetic inquiry. Instead, we should look for explanations that are historical in character. A critical theory, however, views research as a reciprocal relation between participants and observers. It redefines the relations between experts and laymen. I discuss some attempts and criticisms of the participatory research model. It promotes reflection on the part of both inquirers and participants on the social situation they live and addresses conditions of domination and oppression. This requires rethinking the relation between experts and laymen. This perspective illuminates a recurring problem in the phronetic model. It tends to rely on the virtuoso capacities of the inquirer to intervene to solve crises, not collective action. The neo-Aristotelian model, in addition, is not sufficient to theorize the nature of intersubjectivity in modern societies.

Keywords Post-positivism • Phronetic social science • Critical theory • Rational choice • Experts • Laymen

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Post-positivism and Social Inquiry

In opposition to the dominant forms of neo-positivism in political and social sciences, post-positivists have rejected the notion that there is an objective social world open to investigation by a disinterested observer. Science is a theory-laden activity; what counts as knowledge and data is itself conditioned by its background assumptions and cultural embeddedness.[1] Science is also a social practice. This social (and historical) dimension is especially salient in the social sciences, in which the subjects of inquiry are themselves subjects who construct the social world through their own activities. Social science cannot be value neutral. Not only are the subjects of social inquiry themselves subjects who act in terms of values, but the inquirer too is a practical subject whose ability to understand others as participants rests on his or her capacity to evaluate. Thus, it can't be neutralized.

From this standpoint, post-positivists are critical of empiricist notions of social science. There are no brute facts in the social world that are independent of our shared understanding; rather, data itself is interpreted. Thus, the idea that there can be direct observation of events, which confirms or denies a hypothesis, has been called into question. We cannot employ a notion of truth or validity as a correspondence with reality. Even measurement is a social process. The translation of meaningful action into quantitative data through coding and the like is an interpretation that does not correspond to any pre-existing quality of reality.

Aaron Cicourel's work has stressed the interpreted character of quantitative data. He does not reject quantitative work, but wants it to be placed in the context of the participant's perspective.[2] The researchers foreknowledge plays a role in how they interpret the lifeworld of those they study, and thus their own assumptions play a role in research.

For example, in regard to survey work, he notes:

> Conducting interviews with closed- or fixed-choice questions or sending respondents questionnaires to fill out fixed-choice survey questions has often been an end in and of itself. There has been little or no interest in conducting systematic observation of the ecological settings in which respondents lived or played or worked, including their discourse practices.[3]

This applies equally to mathematical analysis of data. Mathematical data do not exist as pure data, but each mathematical operation is carried out on an already interpreted world to which its analysis must fit. Here, however, quantitative methods are not mere techniques, rather their status is a type of cognition.

A good deal of research in the social sciences and economics has been influenced by computer-aided and computer-generated big data sets. In other areas like comparative politics, large N studies have begun to compete with case studies as the major approach to inquiry. No doubt, such large-scale studies can produce interesting, and sometimes unexpected, connections between data, but their value as either explanations or predictions is questionable. Sometimes collection of large data makes no attempt to establish that they are a representative sample. Other objections have been raised against many of the most prevalent types of mathematical and statistical techniques employed by political scientists, such as regression analysis, structural equation modeling, factor analysis tests of statistical significance, and probability theory, concerning their adequacy, for example, in establishing secure and unambiguous proof of the relation between variables.[4] More important, however, is the question of whether only such correlations or relations between variables have any meaning outside of some interpretive/explanatory framework. They don't establish causes or explain why people act. Moreover, such sets do not often have the predictive value proponent's claim. All such explanations require reference to reasons. Large N studies and large data sets are still subject to the effects of knowledgeable participants.[5]

The contours of a post-positivist social theory, however, need to be clarified. Some commentators like Mary Hawkesworth argue that post-positivism transcends the sterile disputes of the German methodenstreit, which distinguish between methods for the natural and social sciences.[6] The post-positivist insight that all knowledge is interpreted counts against any hard and fast distinctions. Instead, she argues that we should take a pragmatic and instrumental approach to research, which does not foreclose any method. Like Schram, she holds that we always have a specific interest or aim in inquiry. Thus, it has a strategic element. We need to ask whom we are addressing, not how we should apply method.

It is, however, difficult to see how the post-positivist approach necessarily rejects the distinction between natural and social sciences, for while natural science is both theory-laden and culturally shaped, the object of its inquiry does not presuppose other actors in a social world, but a nature that is not meaningful. In contrast, the double hermeneutic of social inquiry means that modes of inquiry are fundamentally different from those of the natural sciences. We don't proceed pragmatically, instrumentally, or strategically in social inquiry, but communicatively. That is to say, we seek to establish mutual understanding between inquirers and participants.

The distinction here is not entirely an ontological one.[7] We can consider the human body as natural one, subject to the laws of physics, chemistry, and biology, but it is also a social body formed in the process of interaction oriented to mutual understanding. The selfsame world has different dimensions, which have to be approached with different epistemological assumptions. It is a mistake to see the methodological conflict in social sciences as a rigid ontological dichotomy. Many of the major figures saw it as an epistemological one.[8]

While the social world is not independent of the forms of mutual understanding, the latter is not merely a matter of agreement but of validity based on the force of the better argument. Participants come to an understanding about something in the world (including the social world). They hold norms to be valid, and their own life plans and actions in terms of conceptions of the good. These normative components are basic feature of lifeworlds. Thus, social inquiry has to evaluate the validity claims of participants, which have a power that is partly independent of the linguistic and cultural frames in which they are embedded. It is only through granting the formative power of intersubjective action that we grasp the relations between frame and actors. Thus, not every method is equally valuable in explaining action in the social sciences.

Some theorists who take a post-positivist view think the standpoint of mutual understanding is a form of power-free theory. Like Foucault, they employ an ambiguous view of power. Foucault's theory is really a theory of power as domination. It concerns the strategies used to retain control over discourses; this control, however, depends on the capacity for communicative power that can be created strategically. Forms of mutual understanding draw on the communicative power of subjects who are acting in concert, as well as the background forms of understanding on which they depend. Their individual and social capacities are forms of communicative competence.

Causal Explanatory or Singular Causal Analysis

The idea of a causal explanatory political science modeled after the natural sciences is not compatible with the idea of a critical social science that begins from the participant's perspective. One reason concerns the difficulty of applying a naturalistic standard of causal efficacy on the realm of social action. The second problem stems from the idea of social explanation being

intentional in nature. The third and most important problem is that all inquiry has a potential critical moment in it. Social inquiry requires reflection on our shared situation.

From the standpoint of a naturalistic social science, the aim of science is to create universal laws that can be used to predict and control action. Universal laws state that whenever one set of conditions, specified in a definite way, is found, a second set of conditions will be also be found, where the first set causes the second. However, it is difficult to find any such invariant relationships in the social sciences because the subjects themselves are not just acted upon, but are potential subjects. Giddens notes:

> If it is correct to say, as I have argued that the causal mechanisms in social scientific generalizations depend on actor's reasons, in the context of a "mesh" of intended and unintended consequences of action, we can readily see why such generalizations do not have a universal form. For the content of the agents' knowledgeability, the question of how 'situated' it is and the validity of the propositional content of that knowledge, all these will influence the circumstances in which these generalizations hold.[9]

Put differently, our reasons for acting are a major element in our ability to bring about something in the world, and thus can be seen as a causal power. On the contrary, structural process can act as constraints on action, since we cannot carry out our intentions, and, instead, are acted upon. In such situations, things happens to us, but they are still types of reasons, and we can't specify any "causal mechanisms" that act on us in an invariant fashion independent of action.

In addition, we have to take into account the historical dimensions of action. Many forms of generalization in social science have a limited temporal and cultural scope, and such regularities might transform the power exerted by social institutions, norms, or customs. However, such explanations always have to explain the motives or patterns of motivation of action, not a non-social mechanism.

In their sharp critique of rational choice theories, Donald Green and Ian Shapiro suggest that the problem with rational choice model building is that it is fundamentally rationalist in nature.[10] It generates research problems that stem from the nature of the model, and not from empirical reality. Thus, they are not subject to any test. This objection is based on the formal model of action, which was discussed earlier under the question of model Platonism. Often these models operating with a limited set of

assumptions fail to find any analogue in social life. I think, however, this problem points to a different source. It is not the conflict between rationalism and empiricism, but it is the limited conception of rationality that is employed. The rational choice model is an inadequate model of social action. It is based on a strategic model of social action ultimately rooted in an economic model of utility maximization. While it may be helpful in a small number of cases of pure strategic action, it fails to account for elements such as values, beliefs, norms, or other features of our form of life. More importantly, strategic action alone cannot provide an account of social order. Action coordinaed by strategic action alone, fails to generate relations of mutual accountability. Strategic action is embedded in shared lifeworlds structured by mutual understanding. Models of social action to be fruitful have to be embedded in a theory of society. If the model of social action is not sufficient to explain basic characteristics of social action, it will, as Green and Shapiro note, lead to absurd conclusions.

More than this, the rational choice formulation, at least in its classical form, does not account for the reflexivity of action. The pure utility maximizer simply attmpts to best maximize a given preference; the model does not account for questions of why an agent might prefer one goal or value. This leads Amartya Sen to postulate a set of preference ranking or ordering, Once this condition is introduced, James Bohman points out,

> what is 'best' is not univocal but relative to a variety of different rankings, This reflexivity makes the practical rationality of choices at least in part a matter of judgement about one's preferences themselves and how one ranks them, not just of maximizing one's given preferences.[11]

The most obvious problem with rational choice theories arose with the question of voting. Seen as an aggregation of preferences, rational choice theorists saw voting as irrational. Yet, voting is much more than choosing or preferring one candidate to another. It is a normative activity. In some cases, it affirms the value of democratic participation and follows not just from choice, but from deliberation, however minimal, notions of democratic accountability, and from an expressive dimension of one's participation in democratic accountibility. In addition to the notion of deliberation, the notion of accountability is central here. Because a democracy is a form in which government is supposed to be accountable to the populace, voting is one way (not the only one) of expressing that accountability.

The inadequacy of the model of strategic action became an issue in rational choice theory with the rise of neo-institutionalism. Rational choice fundamentalism retained the idea that social order could be derived from strategic action alone. Neo-institutionalists, however, argued that forms of strategic action needed to be supplemented by norms. Kenneth Shepsle notes that "classical" rational choice theories are based on market models. His idea is that equilibrium rests in the core, that is, with the self-sustaining order generated by unbounded aggregate choices. For Shepsle, however, the failure of rational choice theories to fulfill this goal indicates the "glue"; the binding force of social/political relations lies elsewhere. However, Shepsle keeps the notion of equilibrium as the source of order, but speaks of a structure-induced equilibrium, which is not the result of "core" processes.

Others like Randall Calvert also agree that earlier versions of rational choice take for granted the existence of background conditions, such as social institutions and rules that make rational choice possible. He thinks that Shepsle's solution is too much indebted to Durkheim's version of social institutions, but he sees these institutional rules and roles constructed from the building blocks of strategic action. Despite increasing sophistication, these models fail to see that such strategic forms of action depend on a framework of mutual understanding and accountability. Norms and social rules cannot be derived from strategic actions.

A further stage of neo-institutionalism is reached in the analytic narrative approach of Robert Bates and associates. Analytic narrative theorists believe that they can best account for processes of institutional transformation, using a combination of interpretive and analytic tools. Analytic narrative theory is ideographic, rather than nomothetic.[12] It seeks to explain singular phenomenon or processes that have unique historical properties and cannot be subsumed under a covering law. Here, grasping the forces at work in a particular situation requires interpretation, a detailed "political anthropology" that requires detailed knowledge of the values of individuals, of the expectations that individuals have of each other's actions and reactions, and of the ways in which these expectations have been shaped by history.

No doubt, the analytic narrative approach is more promising than fundamentalist versions of rational choice. Yet, it still flounders in its attempt to be an explanatory social science. Bates and his associates see symbolic action primarily through the model of expression, and values express the preferences of groups. These symbolic forces are independent of maximiz-

ing strategies. They use this to explain social transformation. The power of emotion and feeling can build to the point at which it explodes, and unexpected actions and transformations can occur. This is clearly an interpretive account and not a nomological one. However, it bypasses the communicative elements involved in revolutionary or other radical forms of transformation. Radical changes can be seen not just as expressive, but as normative. They entail new forms of authorization. Participants have come to act in concert to institute or try to institute new norms and institutions.

Realism Reconsidered

While Shapiro is critical of the rationalism and method-centered conception of rational choice theory, he looks to substitute a problem-driven theory for a method-driven one. His preferred alternative is an empiricist account of social science based on the discovery of causal mechanisms, not formal models. It seeks to find out if you will what really happens that is it seeks to find the mechanisms that explain the actual behavior of social actors not the increasing elaboration of a formal model. His realist alternative still runs up against the problems of interpretation. As we saw in the Introduction, Shapiro thinks that meaning, although important, is secondary. It excludes causal explanation. In contrast, Shapiro wants to base realism on observables, and sometimes unobservable. These entities are assumedly independent of mind. The interpretivist is tied to describing meaning as it exists in societies; they cannot deal with questions that arise when existing meaning is inadequate. In contrast, for the realist, causation is a relation between mechanism and outcome, and it uses abduction and observation to describe these mechanisms. Finding the causal mechanisms that answer the inquirers' questions about the world is the task of science. It does not just interpret the world, but explains it.

It is difficult to see how we can study human activities through observation alone when what is needed is a meaning–interpretive approach. Consider, for example, an institution such as marriage. We cannot simply observe from the outside a couple who may be clothed in special vestments in the company of others who look on with someone holding a book, speaking words. We have to know the meaning of the ritual, its significance for human social activities, and the nature of the avowal of the couple even in different times and places among whom marriage is allowed. A third person observer, who cannot interpret the actions of the participants, cannot study marriage. Knowing what marriage means also implies knowing

when it is illegitimate, or even being able to grasp changes in the meaning of marriage across different situations. After all, the rationale and purpose of marriage has changed historically, and, currently, radically, in several ways. Interpretive approaches are not limited to explicating existing meanings. They only claim that meaning is embedded in the social world, not that they are for that reason fixed or inflexible.

The same problem arises for the example that Shapiro uses to establish the superiority of his realist approach: the problem of consent. Shapiro argues that interpretive approaches stay on the surface and can only take the expression of consent as it appears. He claims, "An interpretivist who believed that causal arguments were entirely inappropriate in the social sciences would reject any effort to explain the miner's quiescence in terms other than communities of discourse and meaning." He takes up Gaventa's claim based on Bachrach and Baratz' notion of the second dimension of power.[13] As is well known, their conception relies on a notion of non-decisions, that is, the failure of issue to become pubic problems due to the dominance of power, which prevents their airing. These non-decisions are thus non-observables. They are not events, but are postulates of inquiry. The social scientist, thus, has to explain how this unobservable entity can exert a causal force and how the effect of an unobserved entity can come into being.

We could, I think, provide a much better account of consent and quiescence using the resources of interpretive social theory. Clearly, consent is a meaningful act—it is an avowal or an acceptance of some social practice, and we can only grasp consent from the perspective of a participant. Neither consent nor quiescence is observable; it is a meaningful action. The latter indicates a stance or position someone takes toward his or her situation in the world and its possibilities. I will take this up later in this chapter.

EXPERTS AND LAYMEN

The relation of social inquiry to the participants' perspective has implications for the normal conduct of both theorists and researchers. Certainly, such a view challenges versions of expertise that draw a strong distinction between the expert and lay participant and gives primacy to the role of the expert, through a specialized knowledge that sets experts apart from everyday life. Here, expertise also serves as a gatekeeper of the border between specialists and laymen; the former is capable of a rigorous form of

inquiry, while the latter's perspective is imprecise and inaccurate one. The expert has authority over a domain of thought, which cannot be effectively criticized by the layman, and interference from the layman threatens to water down standards and weaken explanatory power. Looking at it sociologically, professionalism has been employed to enhance the status of members of professional groups, and to raise the authority of practitioners, allowing them higher status and monetary rewards. Yet, this kind of expertise often reifies the pursuit of knowledge and separates it from the public domain. Expertise is not really a matter of pure research versus applied. After all, the great works of pure science were at the beginning of the scientific era widely circulated and available to all who had the ability and interest to read them. It is more a matter of the separation of expertise from society. When we view the relations between citizens and experts asymmetrically, we separate expertise from its basis in mutual understanding.

This perspective has been challenged even in the hard sciences. Certainly, for example, the relation between doctors and patients has been reformulated in recent years. The doctor no longer has an unquestioned expertise over the patient's course of treatment. This challenge becomes even more direct in the social sciences where expert and laymen share the same participant's perspective. Expertise is never just a matter of pure technical mastery.

The relation between experts and ordinary citizens in a political context is a matter of values and norms, which cannot be satisfied by the kind of knowledge that experts possess. Considerations like these famously led Max Weber to separate the knowledge of social science experts from the value judgments of citizens. Experts might tell you the probable consequence of a policy, but not whether citizens should adopt that policy. Ultimately, this solution, as the examples in the first chapter here show, is inadequate. The social scientist cannot avoid making value judgments. These judgments, however, have to be part of a cooperative dialogical process of inquiry.

Often, when approaching cultures from which we are culturally distant, or even subcultures within our own group, social inquiries have sometimes taken an imperial attitude and acted as rulers or colonizers of the domain of everyday action. They have tended to impose or project interpretations onto other cultures or groups that are different from them, but these norms are not appropriate. They act as modes of domination. Interpretation has to be acceptable to the participants because our notion

of truth is based on mutual understanding. Truth and validity are based on reasons that can be assented to by others. We can't simply go to people, even from our own culture, and tell them they are wrong-headed and oppressed, and impose our own understanding on them. They have to accept our understanding as valid. Of course, this doesn't require that we always accept the interpretations of participants without question. To stay within our own culture, we may not be able to convince a committed fundamentalist that evolution is valid, or that social inequality is destructive; however, the lack of consensus here does not mean these ideas are wrong. Any existing situations can be characterized by dissensus, but truth and validity, to an extent, have to engage in idealizations. We have to anticipate and act upon those reasons that we think would be validated in discourse. Still, the creation of mutual understanding between inquirer and layman is a question of mutual critiques.

What does this mean for the role of expertise? The important point is that expertise has to be proven in discourse. It can't simply be assumed to hold prior to discussion and be used as a deliberative trump that has to be vindicated in dialogue with others, primarily those who are affected by the inquiry but also the larger community of both social scientists and participants. Expertise, although specialized, is not a distinct or esoteric form of knowledge, but is continuous with the capacities of ordinary reason. This is doubly true of participants in our own culture.

Anthony Giddens has emphasized this point. Conceptions of social science knowledge and social inquiry enter into the everyday forms of knowledge. Laymen are not cultural dopes, but are capable of understanding, if not the specifics, the conclusions of inquiry. They are aware of knowledge in the social sciences. We are all Freudians: we know what it means to have an oral or anal fixation to live in the shadow of one's father, be excessively tied to his mother, or to have something like a repetition compulsion. Freud's work is a clear example of social science, which was widely published and read and made part of a public discourse. His ideas entered into everyday knowledge of modern actors. We can read and evaluate his work, and agree or disagree with reasons. Giddens gives the example of Machiavelli's influence on the culture of his time, and then on ours. Machiavelli's observations about power became part of the commonplace knowledge of European societies in his time, and afterward. This also meant that participants take account of this type of action in their everyday action. Just as we have become accustomed to seeing unacknowledged motive in the actions of others (or even our own actions!),

the actor who thought that the politician was acting in a Machiavelli way might change his or her own behavior or expectations to take care of that possibility; this would be true, for example, in diplomatic negotiations.

Since participants are not cultural dopes, but are aware that those studying them bring to their inquiry their own assumptions about the groups they study, they often see these inquirers as bringing to inquiry norms or assumptions about normality they don't hold. This is especially true of those at the bottom of the social economic ladder, cultural and social outsiders, or deviants whose behavior is alien to social scientists. This leads to work with little validity or applicable scope. Social scientists need to be reflective about their own practices. Our knowledge is hypothetical and not apodictic. It can be criticized and questioned, and either confirmed or rejected, or changed or transformed by any competent participant. Forms of social inquiry are cooperative processes between researchers and those affected by their researches.

One obvious candidate for a more reflexive notion of research is participant observation study. The researcher directly engages the group in order to get an insiders grasp of the way they make sense of the world. Here, research proceeds ethnographically. This form of research can be especially useful with groups that are seen as not well understood by dominant culture. These groups and their norms are in need of interpretation. Sometimes we don't understand enough about how the conditions of social life within a particular group or subculture operate to engage in productive dialogue. Some interpretive theorists, however, criticize participant observation for not going far enough, to create a cooperative dialogue. After all, the participant observer remains an observer, and in some important respects, maintains an outsider attitude toward the group. This allows the participant observer to maintain an attitude of superiority toward the group under study.[14] Davyyd Greenwood, for example, argues that in anthropology, the participant observer is almost always one who has higher status, is richer, and is more powerful than those under study. While this may be true in some cases where the inquirer acts as an expert, if the inquirer proceeds in a true ethnographic fashion, he or she has to accept that he or she is on the same interpretive level as those under study. We have to genuinely encounter the group under study. Participant observation also provides translation of cultures and what Gadamer called the fusion of horizons; however, the inquirer cannot enter the relationship with a sense of superiority. He or she has to take an attitude of reciprocity

openness and cooperation—although this doesn't mean he or she has to accept behavior uncritically.

As noted at the beginning of this work, the advocacy model of research is another candidate for representing the interests of the less well-off members of society or in the interests of political issues such as environmentalism and other social movements. Here, the researcher is an advocate for political empowerment and greater democracy, by countering what he or she sees as elitist biases in inquiry. The researcher wants to make research available to those who are often excluded from decision-making processes. Yet, as Frank Fischer pointed out, while these forms of advocacy research may combat systematic biases in research that favor social and political elites, they do not necessarily promote the goal of a more participatory democracy. The relation between experts and citizens here remains asymmetrical. The advocacy of experts did not always represent the interests of the groups for which they claimed to be advocates.[15]

What is needed in order to address these limitations is a broader conception of inquiry and method. More recently, another conception of cooperative research has gained some attention. Participatory action research more directly addresses the relation between inquirer and lay participants. Research cannot be detached from the researcher's participation in the social world nor is social inquiry an objective value-free process. The model of the researcher as co-participant draws on the basic situation of actors in the social lifeworld that both researchers and participants share, and in which individuals are mutually responsible and mutually accountable. This is not just a descriptive but a moral condition. If researchers are co-participants, those whom they study have an equal ability and responsibility to evaluate and criticize research. They reject conceptions of the researcher as disengaged or detached observers for one that stresses the involvement of researchers with the public. Both researcher and participant work on the same level. The researcher is not seen as a collector of information who has an exclusive right to interpret data and use it without regard to the concerns of the groups he or she researches and without a chance to critically assess the results. Ultimately, researchers and participants are engaged in common practical projects aimed at social transformation.

Nancy Naples has also argued for a form of participatory research. As she notes, "a researcher does not have complete autonomy in shaping relations to his or her research, Research subjects have the power to influence the direction of the research, to resist researchers' efforts and interpretations, add their own interpretations and insights."[16] She argues that

researchers, especially ethnographic ones, have to negotiate the relations with participants. Naples employs a participatory framework in a variety of studies of women's experience, such as the experience of survivors of abuse and the representation of the experience of female college students in textbooks. She attempts to proceed, phenomenologically that is, from the lived experiences of women. Here, the researcher who takes such a phenomenological/interpretive approach, must attend to the meaning of the participants and modify his or her own knowledge of the participants and definitions of the situation. Following feminist standpoint theory, she stresses the unique ways that women's position in the lifeworld structures the way they experience it and know it. This insight is certainly true, but one must use standpoint epistemologies with caution. The experienced world of women, while in some dimensions similar, is no more than that of men, homogeneous. The experiences of working class or poor women are very different from that of more well-to-do women; likewise, experiences of straight women will be different from gay or bisexual women, just to name a few possibilities. For some, their experience may share as much or as more with the experienced world of working class men than well-off women. Our identities encompass a variety of roles, which can affect us in different ways. Women, like men, can take a broader, more universalistic perspective on some issues. We cannot argue that these standpoints, although unique, cannot be grasped by others who are not part of the group. After all, we have the capacity (which, to be sure, we sometimes fail to employ) to understand injustice and disrespect in others even if their experience is not directly ours. While we have to be attentive to the unique elements of gender identity, we have to be also aware of its links to other elements of culture. It can't be viewed in an essentialist manner.

A number of contributors to the collection *Real Social Science* also provide examples of participatory research. Corey Shdaimah and Roland Stahl [17]advocate a form of collaborative research, which is inherently phronetic. The phronetic model of social research is a form of collaborative research that "invites engagement with issues that matter to the communities and other stake holders." Rejecting a one-sided version of expert knowledge, they hope to reverse the relation between researchers and participants. It is not the subjects who participate in research, but the researchers who participate in larger social projects. Leone Sandercock and Giovanni Attilli [18] also stress the importance of mutual knowledge and dialogue between researchers and participants, in their article on the film-making project they carried out to bring attention to Canadian government viola-

tion of the human rights of aboriginals. They reject the priority of expert knowledge in favor of the centrality of narrative that links participants to knowledge in phronetic research.

Virginia Eubanks'[19] study of feminist groups finds links between feminist theories of Sandra Harding and Dorothy Smith and phronesis. Both are concerned with the integration of the perspectives of subjugated knowledge in social research. In so doing, Eubanks argues, they have to start from the everyday knowledge of social action. She extends the model of collaborative research into a model in which critical understanding is promoted. Using a collaborative model involves going beyond learning how to use technologies, but encompassing forms of self-understanding. Individuals began with the understanding that they were the problem, that is, being deficient in learning, but gained the insight that social relations of power were at the source of their subordinate status.

Of course, not all social inquiry can follow the collaborative or participatory model. For one thing, some research is historical. We can only engage in a virtual dialogue with the past. In other cases, inquiry can't engage fully or collaborate as a partner in inquiry. The other may be someone or group that would not be willing to collaborate, or for other reasons simply unable to collaborate. Jessica Marie Falcone recounts her experience of fieldwork with Hindu and Sikh communities in the Washington DC area.[20] She found herself at odds with the nationalism and militancy she discovers with some (not all) in the groups she works with. Because of her dissent from their militant views, and her disagreements over the way they distort their own history, she feels she has to dissimulate and conceal her own views in order to continue her work. Her fieldwork eventually is terminated because of ethical concerns and political antagonism. In general, participant observations studies often run into a problem when trust breaks down, or when inquirers feel betrayed by their contacts.

The inquirer may not always provide an interpretation that is identical with that of participants. A well-known example of that is Clifford Geertz's interpretation of the Balinese cock-fights. Geertz provides an interpretation of the fights in which he argues that the fights are not between the animals, but are between the men. While this might be a problem for a theory which sees interpretation as mere description, the view developed here, which we might call rational interpretation, holds that understanding and evaluation mutually imply each other. The participant's understanding may be wrong or incomplete in some respect. The important consideration is that the ethnographic inquirers'

interpretation is not privileged, but is equally subject to criticism by the participants.

Another issue in such participant observation studies is raised by James Scott's work. He questions the way that subaltern groups conceal their own aims, feelings, and capacities from others. In opposition to the public transcript, which is the open form of interaction between a subordinate and those who dominate, in which the latter shows deference, the hidden transcript is a discourse that takes place *a la* Goffman, offstage or behind the scenes.[21] Here, the subordinate may act toward and evaluate authority in a very different way. Scott too then suggests that we have to begin with the participants' understanding of the situation, but we have to attend to the cultural political context of their situation. We have work reflexively to grasp the way in which forces of domination and oppression impact forms of mutual understanding. Here, Scott highlights some of the ways that domination works. On the one hand, the public discourse, the use of reason, and justifications are limited, censured, and banished from deliberation. On the other, public identities are restricted, and forms of recognition are limited by disrespect and exclusion. If we are to attend to the lived meaning of participants under conditions of domination, we have to be aware not only of what is said but of the conditions under which understanding is public. If individuals don't have a say, much less an equal say, in things, and their subordinate position means they can't hold their superiors accountable, then that has to be part of a critical interpretive approach.

Certainly, we could elaborate other forms of inquiry that are not collaborative, like much quantitative research. I do not think that the existence of these types of conflict or some of the difficulties found in participant observation or collaborative research means that we have to abandon the model of mutual critique. They just make the task more difficult and call for a greater reflexivity on the part of inquirers. The fact that a dialogue cannot take place or is even suppressed is much like the setting of everyday life when we disagree on norms values or ways of life. However, the model of mutual critique serves as a guideline for all forms of inquiry. We have to proceed as if we could engage in a dialogue with those we study and be reflective of the ways that research would affect them. Inquiry and theory should not seek to control the social world, but to act in concert with others.

CRITICAL THEORY AND THE PARTICIPANT'S PERSPECTIVE

For a critical theory of society, the aim of social inquiry is not exhausted in the search for the causes of social action. Nor does it aim at a deductive theory. Its aim is to promote reflection on the forms of power and domi-

nation in society. This reflexive element is critical to its project. It seeks to change the society.

Critical theory draws on the insight that inquirers and participants have access to the same social world and are engaged in mutual understanding. In that respect, they are both on the same interpretive level. Unlike the natural sciences, social practice is the "object" of theory, which itself transforms the social world.

If inquiry is a process of mutual critique, then participants and inquirers are on the same level; they are equally capable of understanding and gaining insight into processes of domination and oppression. The critical theorist then does not approach participants from the elevated position of the expert; the critical theorist is a co-participant in the pursuit of greater freedom from domination. The critique of domination aims to identify the structures and sources of domination and oppression, and to promote insight into these processes. By fostering reflection on the sources of domination, we transform ourselves and our self-understanding in order to discover new possibilities for action. Thus, critique is freedom enabling. It fosters new possibilities for action is common, political action comes into play when participants deliberate together and authorize collective action.

Critical theories address the kinds of situations that are found in the work of Scott or in the work of Gaventa mentioned earlier. Each of these are examples of a situation in which what we consider ordinary understanding is limited. This conception gives us a more adequate way of grasping the issues raised, for example, in Shapiro's account of Gaventa. Critical theories are not primarily concerned with the search for a causal explanation of manipulated consent or quiescence, although they can use causal interpretive procedures. Although critical theories may be concerned with the genesis of quiescence, the aim is critically understanding it as a form of domination.

Quiescence becomes a problem for the inquirer, because our normative expectations about responsible action and political participation in our culture are not met. We expect that free individuals in a democracy will at least protest their ill-treatment. They may not always succeed in converting their concerns or sense of felt injustice into political action that changes the situation, but, at the least, they will publicize their problems. It has to be explained by other means.

Explaining the quiescence of a population starts with understanding. We don't observe quiescence or fail to understand it from the outsidenor do we know it through induction; induction we understand it as a participant. The inquirer begins with a pre-understanding of concepts like consent, which may be changed or elaborated in the course of inquiry.

Such a pre-understanding includes notions of the genesis and structure of consent, though they may or may not be well formed. In coming to understand the terms in which a group conceptualizes consent, the inquirer has to reconstruct the background conditions and the definitions of the situation that participants employ situation. These could include, as Scott and writers like Goffman note, ideas of front and backstage (to speak metaphorically), or public and private statements. Background conditions, however, can include relations of power and subordination.

In order to understand an act of consent, for example, we have to understand how and why it is valid. In many respects, our understanding is the explanation. But understanding isn't just a matter of *understanding that,* understanding is always also evaluation. Understanding means *understanding how* and *understanding why* participants take a position on the world. This, of course, includes the structural relations of domination that can restrict access to discourse roles or distribute them unequally. Understanding and evaluation cannot be neatly separated. For quiescence is more that an abstract meaning. Making sense of the world is also taking a position on it. The quiescent actor feels a sense of powerlessness, and sees the world he inhabits as resistant to change. His own sense of his agency is limited. He feels powerless, and, perhaps, even has a sense of torpor when it comes to political action. The world of politics may seem opaque, and the unfathomable or the fear of sanctions might be overwhelming. When we engage in historical or cultural analysis of the world of the participants, or we engage in a structural analysis of power relations, these analyses function in an interpretive way. They help us to make sense or to understand why actors seem quiescent. It is not a matter of which method or technique is employed, but whether they contribute to a valid account of quiescence.

This account is somewhat different from that given by Shapiro. He thinks that the kind of explanations that are appropriate here are empirical and causal. It would uncover the "mechanisms" that explain quiescence. We have seen, however, that these causal features are interpretive accounts, rather than empirical ones; they are causes that operate though reasons. We can explain the existence of quiescence and powerlessness when we understand the conditions, both external and internal, that create the motivational complex we call powerlessness.

The critical theorist, however, goes a step beyond the need to explain interpretively the problem of quiescence. The critical theorist doesn't just try to understand why or how actors are acquiescent or apathetic, but gen-

erates a reflexive relation to one's own situation that illuminates the role of domination and oppression in maintaining social and political power. A critical theory would not simply appeal to political scientists who want to understand quiescence, but to participants who want to understand their own situation in order to change it. But, in this case, the standard of a valid understanding requires that we directly engage the participant, and not simply see them as having a problem to be solved in an attempt to gain agreement on something in the world. Quiescence is seen as a form of domination and oppression from which actors can escape. It is not really a question, as some argue that such freedom is total or final. This problem, I think, is mostly concerned with what critics think are the transcendental premises of some forms of critical theory. The question of emancipation is not one of ridding the world of domination once and for all, but the question of overcoming forms of power that are unjust and cause unnecessary suffering. To the extent that relations of power may have an impact on process of mutual understanding, we can discover a need for self-reflection that has a liberating power.

The critical theorist views critique not just from the point of view of the theorist, but from that of the participant. From the standpoint of the participant, critique begins in the felt dissatisfactions that actors experience in their situation. It requires the conversion of private troubles into public issues. The participant has to gain the insight that his or her felt dissatisfactions has larger roots; certainly critical theories can be part of this process by showing how these factors are linked. It might mean engaging participants in the tensions they feel in the situation and attempt to offer a diagnosis that links the tensions and the unhappiness to sources of social power. Thus, this form of reflection can lead to a change in the way that actors understand themselves and their situation.

On the contrary, critical theorists have to listen to the response of the actors in the situation. We may find out difficulties with our own attitudes toward issues or learn more about their situation. Perhaps, we underestimate the difficulties they have in opposing power, or the pull of tradition or religion on their views. In any case, we can only reach understanding and effect change when the actors consent to our interpretations and we accept their criticisms.

One way we win the capacity for new action is by reimagining the narrative of individual and collective action.[22] When we reflect on forms of domination, we come to gain new life histories. We see the course of event in a new way, under new horizons, for action. This process is not simply a

matter of thinking differently; we become different people, and it changes
our identity as participants.

Contrast this to the empiricist approach of the researcher who begins
and ends inquiry with the search for a causal explanation of action. Exactly
what relation does this approach seek to do with regard to practice? If
the inquirer attempts to use this knowledge to intervene in a practical
situation, he or she does so with a kind of strategic or instrumental atti-
tude. Such interventions, however, bypasses the consent of those whom
he studies. Eliminating the notion of mutual critique limits the ability to
make fundamental changes in society. Do we want, for example, to use
studies of the attitudes of the populace to win elections? Or do we want to
create a more democratic society.

Such problems plague the phronetic approach of Flyvbjerg Schram and
Landman. Too often, this work departs in important ways from the model
of mutual critique. This is especially true of Flyvbjerg's work. In their
joint work, *Real Social Science,* the authors stress the importance of turn-
ing points in the conduct of a phronetic social science. Real social science
introduces the idea of tension points to emphasize the need to confront
power. A tension point is a turning point in a power constellation.

> In phronetic research tension points, power relations are particularly suscep-
> tible to problematization, and thus to change, because they are fraught with
> dubious practices, contestable knowledge, and potential conflicts. Thus,
> even a small challenge, like a problematization from scholars, may tip the
> scales and trigger change in a tension point.[23]

The editors suggest that "building on this new version of Phronesis—
to include issues of power—is the best bet for the rebirth of the social
sciences in society. Intelligent social action requires Phronesis" (Flyvbjerg,
Landman and Schram 2012).[24] They want to incorporate notions of power
(domination) into the traditional conception of phronesis.

When Flyvbjerg turns to a more concrete elaboration of phronesis, it
is more difficult to see it as an Aristotelian notion of wise judgment and
more like a version of pragmatic notion of a problematic situation. While
Flyvbjerg is clear that phronetic research is oriented to the good, the right
thing to do, he does not really develop the idea of the good or just and a
matter of mutual understanding. Flyvberg sometimes subordinates mutual
understanding to a strategic notion of phronesis, The aim of phronetic
research is a matter of pragmatic questions, such as where tensions and

conflicts occur in a problematic situation, and tries to assess the desirability of the policy or practice in terms of who benefits and who loses, if the practice is truly problematic. The phronetic researcher then identifies the dubious practices in the problematic situation and addresses them by "problematization" (in Foucault's sense) and the identification of tension points.

Here, Flyvbjerg conceives of practical action more like a strategic intervention in the public debate than a collaborative effort. The social scientist becomes an exemplary public actor who, with tactical acumen, finds the weak spots to intervene in a deliberation and tip the balance, causing a positive outcome. I think, for Flyvbjerg, this strategic cunning is what he now calls phronesis. It seems, however, more like Machiavelli's republican virtue than Aristotelian virtue. It moves from the moral judgment of the participant to the strategic judgment of the political actor. To be sure, Machiavellian virtue was to be employed in the service of republican ends whenever possible, but Machiavelli, unlike Flyvbjerg, seems more aware of the problem of dirty hands.

In Flyvbjerg's prime example, he intervenes in a debate about megaprojects through a report in the *New York Times* that criticizes the overspending in megaprojects. Flyvbjerg is then the subject of an attempt within his university to censor and silence his criticisms. He is able, due to his virtuoso skill, to parry these attempts and strategically intervene to carry the day.

Flyvbjerg's notion that social science is evaluative and normative is important, but he does not always draw out the character of that evaluative dimension. In inequity, we can only understand meaning when we evaluate it. Thus, we can only understand the aim of a megaproject as a socio/political process when we can see how it is justified and evaluate it aims. Perhaps, one of the best examples of an intellectual intervention in public discussion was Rachel Carson's The Silent Spring. This work called attention to the devastating effects of pesticides on the environment and on the reproductive processes of birds. She also focused on the way in which Carson's book both spurred legislation and helped create an environmental movement in the USA and throughout the world. It would be difficult, however, to see it as simply a strategic intervention, which seeks out a weak spot in a public issue and attacks that as much as a powerful contribution, which raises questions and spurs political action. In his notion of tension points, Flyvbjerg does not necessarily set out to spur a social movement or any project to enhance freedom or reduce domina-

tion. Yet, this would seem to be needed to compensate for the power of large interests and domination. Flyvbjerg is, of course, a successful professor at a prestigious university, and is able to get his views into a publication like the *New York Times*, due to his position too he has some resources to resist the efforts to silence him. This would be less so in the case of average individual who might raise similar criticism, albeit without the impressive scholarly apparatus. Such a person might not get his view in the paper, or may be more easily dismissed and silenced. Sometimes, the question of acting in concert though social movement's, that is, collective action would seem to be the better alternative. This seems to be a weakness of his project.

Tension points represent areas of problematization that make practices questionable and undermine the secure sense of normality. Phronesis becomes a virtuoso ability to identify these weak spots in ideologies and practices in order to break the aura of authority. Flyvbjerg's project seems to make the social inquirer a kind of existential hero, skilled in the art of intervention. If critique consists solely of suspending the naturalness of norms, it is not clear how we would escape a generalized skepticism over norms. Foucault's critical stance suggests that the critic stands above the moral commitments of participants and views norms as sets of normalizing strategies, that is, as something that produces effects. The interpretive model of social inquiry postulates that the interpreter and participants are on the same level. If phronesis is normative, it can't step outside the world of mutual accountability; in fact, it is not possible to understand norms as a set of effects without the element of evaluation. How do we justify our own norms and goals?

It is just as plausible to see Flyvbjerg analysis as resting on a very Habermasian belief in the power of the liberal public sphere. In bringing to bear conceptions of free discussion in the public sphere, Flyvbjerg is drawing on the participants' perspective developed in the collaborative model, not Foucault's theory of power. But, here he would have to adopt a different conception of mutual understanding,

The merger of the contextual approach of neo-Aristotelian phronesis with Foucault makes understanding between regimes of power/knowledge problematic. If a regime of power is really constitutive of knowledge, then it is difficult to see any way to compare different regimes of truth. It is obviously true that interpretive understanding is contextual in a weak sense since we can only understand at all against a background of pre-understandings that structure the world. However, we also possess general

communicative competencies that enable us to understand other cultures and groups that don't share our own assumptions.

Flyvbjerg's conception of phronesis also suffers from a second problem. If the inquirer is an individual hero, instead of the model of mutual critique in which inquiries and participants are on the same level it seems to provide a notion of inquiry in which the viruoso skill of the social scientist is intrinsically better than that of the layman. Flyvbjerg often borrows for Hubert Dreyfus the notion of social inquirer as a virtuoso performance as his primary exemplar. The social researcher in Dreyfus's model has an extensive pre-reflexive knowledge of patterns of social life, and draws on this implicit pre-reflective knowledge to formulate. Dreyfus' version of pre-reflective knowledge, however, comes close to separating the virtuoso from the layman's understanding. It becomes a special and privileged kind of knowledge. It may be different from the expertise of the scientist; it is based on insight rather than on technique, but it is distinct. It is the social science version of the Great Man Theory.

Certainly, we all can't be virtuoso performers, whether it is music or literature, sports or sociology. The knowledge of the virtuoso researcher still has to be accepted by others, or it risks being an esoteric form of knowledge. Even the great musicians, like the great jazz artist John Coltrane or Miles Davis who combine great skill as performers and as musical innovators, are not creators of an esoteric knowledge. Their work depends on an audience that recognizes it as part of a tradition and as an innovation within it, as well as being able to distinguish a skilled performance from an ordinary one. To be sure, not everyone will recognize these right away, but laymen are, in principle, capable of grasping it.

Phronesis Revisited: Aristotle or Hegel (via Kant)

Aristotle's conception of phronesis is a theory of judgment. In the context of a fixed notion of the good, which is not a matter of human creation or construction but given in the order of the universe, individuals must decide the right thing to do in the situation. Judgment is required because the imprecision of the knowledge of human affairs requires sensitivity to context. Unlike knowledge of the universe, which is eternal and unchanging, human knowledge can only be knowledge of changing things. Phronesis is a virtue, an excellence of habit and character. Aristotle's theory is not, however, the same as modern notions of the culturally relative or socially constructed view of human knowledge that creates limitations

on understanding. The good is a unity a fixed goal rooted in the order of the universe, even if there is no science or procedure for application. Aristotle's notion of the difference between science and human knowledge is based in this pre-modern ontology. Aristotle certainly anticipates notions of mutual recognition formulated by Hegel and others, and serves as an effective counterweight against atomistic versions of liberalism. It does not, however, provide a notion of critical reflection that unearths forms of domination, and one that can come to terms with the normative foundations of modern societies.

Contemporary neo-Aristotelians take up the cause of phronesis as a way of criticizing liberal theories they believe are abstract and falsely universal. Alastair Macintyre, one of the first to call for a phronetic social science, uses virtue ethics to contrast with theories of rights he sees as individualistic and transcendental.[25] Macintyre is skeptical of any norms that have not just a universal but an explicit status. Instead of individual rights, he wants to employ the Aristotelean notion of the ethos, a unified set of beliefs that express a conception of the good. An ethos is something that inheres in a culture and cannot be made explicit or expressed in a set of norms. An ethos is not a subject of reflection; it exists prior to reflection. The modern notion of the individual who forms himself or herself, at least in part, by his or her own activity is lost.

Undoubtedly, Aristotle still has a metaphysical notion of the good to give his appeal a universal notion. While not every society, especially those that were not Greek, could approach the proper moral understanding, it still was the guiding idea. Not so for modern neo-Aristotelians who cannot appeal to older metaphysical certainties. Instead, they rely on the ethical understanding of communities. This ethical self-understanding is, however, limited to that of a community. It is a kind of knowledge that orients us to action, but does not extend to others. Yet, in modern societies, we encounter other cultures who are unlike our own. We are reflectively aware of plurality, which alerts us to our contingency, and cannot retreat to tradition or the comfort of an unreflective ethos.

Flyvbjerg is similarly skeptical of such attempts to discover universals. He wants to employ a theory that stresses context, and in a sense particularity. He is critical of discourse theories such as Habermas, because he sees it as idealist. From Flyvbjerg's standpoint, social actors do not make normative decisions in line with Habermasian universal principles. For example, he thinks theories of rights in the bourgeois era failed the test of universality because, in historical order, they excluded working class

males without property, women, and young people between 18 and 21 years. Because these forms of rights were restricted, they reached merely a particularistic perspective, but failed to reach a universal one. Habermas' thought then is irredeemably idealist. It contends that we act based on the force of the better argument, a conception that rarely if ever realized.[26]

There is an obvious reply to this objection. Habermas' critical theory does not claim to be a description of the way in which people reason, but a critical standard with which we can evaluate these practices and identify the work of domination to limit these interests. He employs a conception of rational interpretation that is not available to neo-Aristotelians. The fact that mundane reasoning is sometimes wrong does not mean that the notion of validity is incorrect or that the force of better argument is not useful. Rather, it can mean that domination is at play in restricting general interests. Critical theorists would no doubt agree with the notion that bourgeois theories of rights are one-sided and incomplete. However, they are, nonetheless, rooted in conceptions of freedom and equality that are fundamentally distinct from those which preceded it. New theories of rights, for example, have effectively criticized these conceptions based on the very conceptions of freedom and equality that their opponents use. They appeal to the suppressed universal interests in freedom and equality so to speak, but argue that they have a more inclusive view of these conceptions. Thus, they seem both correctly and effectively at times to be the force of the better argument, that is that our interpretation of freedom and equality need to be expanded. In this way, our understanding of universality changes without necessarily abandoning it. The claims of groups for expanded rights are not, then, simply claims about the good for that particular group, for their own benefit, but as a claim about justice for all. This is a type of immanent criticism of our modern self-understanding.

Alastair Macintyre develops a more compelling notion of the neo-Aristoteles notion of ethical understanding. He does not contest that our ethical claims have a normative and cognitive content. They are based on our conceptions of truth or rightness. While we see these as binding, they can fail to solve a problem or provide orientation, and a tradition falls into crisis. We may find that another tradition solves those problems in a superior way. In such cases, Macintyre seems to say we have to undergo a kind of conversion. We adopt the rival tradition more or less as a totality. We cannot modify or broaden our tradition.[27]

This formulation brings us back to a problem found several times in this inquiry. It cannot account for the context-breaking or context-transcending character of reflective reason. Macintyre's account of change is better explained as a matter of translation between traditions, rather than that of simple conversion. The participant already has to have the ability to grasp the "alien" tradition interpretively and from the inside, or at least some significant element of it, in order to see that the other tradition provides a solution. There is not then an incompatibility between some traditions, but at least some capacity to translate between them. The participants have interpretive capacities, or in Habermas' language, communicative competencies that allow us to transcend a tradition and form a new horizon of understanding.

When Hegel took up the notion of mutual recognition, which was influenced by his reading of Aristotle, he also interpreted it in terms of the modern notion of the individuality. While Hegel's notion of ethical spirit is reminiscent of the Aristotelean ethos, he also realizes that one cannot go behind the achievement of Kantian philosophy. Rather than rejecting the Kantian construction and liberal theory, in general, he also recognizes the system of rights of modern society. We come to be both individuated and be a member of a community in the process of mutual recognition. In a series of steps, Hegel illustrates the process through which we encounter the other, first, as an object in the world; next, as a hostile presence to the other with whom we form a common world and who we have to recognize as our equal. We achieve this through our capacity for reflection. Ego recognizes other as one on whom we depend for understanding and our own identities and formation, just as other recognizes ego. As an independent other, we must experience the possibility that the other will challenge our understanding ego, and we can reciprocally challenge others. This is not a matter of simply acting within an ethos, but of acting together to institute new ways of acting and new norms. We have to incorporate not simply judgment about an already given ethos, but fundamental reflection about the formation of norms and questions of justice. It is the communicative power of individuals as embedded in mutual understanding, not the virtuoso power of judgment that needs to be placed at the center of a practically oriented social theory. We can understand the model of mutual recognition as providing a direction toward of universalist notion of reason that is not objectivist, but is found within our interpretive capacities.

I think this notion of reflection is a necessary feature of grasping the nature of domination, an oppression. I am not convinced that the

introduction of Foucault's perspectives really solves the problem that contemporary phronetic theories, like Flyvbjerg, want to address. The first two stages of Foucault's work are clearly aimed at deconstructing modern subjectivity without incorporating subjectivity into a larger notion, such as those of Hegel and post-Hegelians have done. Thus, he bypasses this notion without incorporating the formative processes of mutual recognition. He does not provide an adequate notion of domination. It is only with Foucault's last work that he incorporates Kantian insights and retrospectively reinterprets his corpus. It is, of course, impossible to say where this insight would have led. Foucault, had his life not been cut short, but, at best, this stage of his thought remains suggestive.

Mutual Accountability, Communicative Power, and Ideology

For theorists who follow Foucault and other post-structuralist theories, the problem with contemporary critical theories in the traditions of Habermas, is that they employ a power-free notion of understanding. The latter denies the ubiquity of power in all social relations. However, I contend that mutual understanding approaches are not power free. These approaches identify an independent source of power—communicative power, which binds participants to one another. The ability to orient and bind action though mutual understanding is communicative power; the capacity of mutual understanding to interpret and make sense of the world with others is communicative freedom[28] (Habermas 1993; Cornell 1998; Wellmer 2001).

The binding power of communicative freedom does not inhere primarily or exclusively in the semantic level or with the frame of thought as some post-structuralists sometimes argue, but comes into being through the mutual accountability and the communicative freedom of social actors. Our sense of legitimacy or the proper ethical conduct and sense of truth all rely on the ongoing understanding of participants in interaction. Communicative power is intersubjective. It is the power to authorize that results when people deliberate and act in common. Thus, it is not just something that exists in the world of ideas; it involves volition, the formation of will.

When structures of power become forms of domination or oppression, they affect communicative freedom and forms of accountability of participants; they can affect the way we understand things by shaping the

kinds of reasons that we use in public and private discourses. This can be done through formal and informal censorships, forms of socialization, suppression of ideas, individual inhibition, control of media resources, and control of education institutions, and variety of other processes. Each of these shape not only the kind of reasons that can be employed but also the structures of relevance. Reasons that could be relevant are in a sense banned from discourse, and thus forms of reasoning that might challenge existing justifications and self-understanding can be restricted. I consider these strategic forms of the deployment of power. They don't generate understanding, but shape and direct it.

Marxists, like realists, often take the problem of ideology to be a relation of ideas to a material base. They don't take sufficient account of the communicative freedom and power. For example, Stuart Hall, an important cultural theorist who attempts to bring a constructivist perspective to Marxist theory claims:

> By ideology I mean the mental frameworks—the languages, concepts categories imagery of thought and the systems of representation—which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works.[29]

These ideas then "grip the masses" and become a "material force." They concern the "concepts and languages of practical thought" that underlie forms of power and accommodate people to their subordinate position. On the contrary, Hall also argues it can be a force for change when the "masses" discover ways to challenge these meanings.

Hall's work is significant as an attempt to move away from the conception of ideology as distorted ideas for a notion of ideology as discursive practices. He does not reject as do post-structuralists, the idea that we can do away entirely with ideas of falsity in ideology. Still, he tends to isolate ideas or beliefs from the communicative will of participants. The way that individuals make sense of society is already a practical force.

I am not sure that the idea of mental frameworks is the most effective way to capture the discursive structuring of domination. It is open to the criticisms of mentalism formulated from Wittgenstein onward. It implies a kind of individual representation of the world, that is, distance from the social world, and thus it does not provide a very useful way of grasping the nature of making sense. Here, these mental representations need to be translated into material forces. The notions of communicative

power and communicative freedom can better interpret the ideas that Hall wants to develop. Beginning with the idea of the lifeworld as a form of mutual understanding, which requires mutual accountability, provides a better starting point. Forms of understanding are not mental representations but inter-subjective intentions that contain communicative power. The latter is a will to act, but an inter-subjective one. They are already a "force" in society. What we have to look at is the relation between the communicatively formed will to act and the way that accounts are shaped, and discursive power limited and shaped. This process, however, concerns not just the accounts given but the relation of self to the world that power shapes. Obviously, relations of social authority and of subordination limit the opportunities to participate and to be recognized as an equal participant. These pathologies of recognition lead to forms of disrespect and sometimes a sense of inferiority or exclusion among others.[30] A critical theory that wants to understand and change society has to look not only at the pathologies of reason but also at the pathologies of recognition. For example, forms of participatory action research could themselves have an emancipatory component to the extent that they establish a relation of mutual recognition between communities and inquirers, which can re-establish a sense of equality and effective agency for those who are traditionally subaltern. More generally, emancipatory theory has to address not just the content of ideas but also the modes of relationship and the forms of accountability that are prevalent in society.

An emancipatory theory also has to recognize that the kind of justifications and ways of making sense are not just embedded in the representations of the world but also in the structures of personality and identity of participants, along with forms of socialization. These too can limit the communicative freedom of individuals. The formation of personalities that are excessively obedient to authority or, conversely, authoritarian, can have a strong influence on the ability to interpret the world and on one's sense of past injustices and future possibilities. Some of these elements may well be "unconscious." A critical theory of ideology following, if not the substance, the spirit of the early Frankfurt School researches, has to account for these issues.

In modern societies, some central institutions have taken on a form that makes them partially independent of the regulations of action by mutual understanding. Notably, as critical theories have argued, following Weber, the economy and the bureaucratic elements of the state have become detached and are regulated via strategic or instrumental action. Obviously, reflection on our situation requires insight into the ways that

such institutions, and the asymmetries of power often embedded in them, effect forms of understanding. Still, they remain forms of action, not quasi-natural forces. We can't understand these processes from an objective standpoint beyond meaning, but as restricted forms of action, which both embed forms of reification and colonization of mutual accountability and contain forms of domination.

Undoubtedly, such an analysis would tend to soften the distinction between interpretation and understanding. Without employing a natural scientific model, we have to pursue the task of explaining these forms of misunderstanding not just from the point of view of interpretive failures, but from the view of a theory of society, which attempts to explain the genesis and structure of social capacities and current pathologies. This, however, is still a task of interpretation in the broadest sense.

NOTES

1. There are many accounts of post-positivism; they include Jeffrey Alexander and Paul Colony Tradition and Competition: Preface to a Post Positivist approach to Knowledge Accumulation in George Ritzer ed *Metatheorizing*: Thousand Oaks: Sage 1992 27–52; Frank Fischer. Beyond Empiricism: Policy inquiry in Post Positivist Perspective *Policy Studies Journal* volume 26 no 1 Spring 1998 129–46.
2. Aaron Cicourel *Method and Measurement in Sociology*.
3. "I am NOT Opposed to Quantification or Formalization or Modeling, But Do Not Want to Pursue Quantitative Methods That Are Not Commensurate With the Research Phenomena Addressed" Aaron Cicourel in Conversation With Andreas Witzel and Günter Mey *Forum*: *Qualitative Social Research* Volume 5 no 3 2004 http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/549/1186
4. For example, see the discussion in Henry E. Brady and David Collier Eds. *Rethinking social Inquiry*: *Diverse Tools Shared Standards 2nd edition* Rowman and Littlefield 2010 They refer to the formulations of Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, & Sidney Verba *Designing social inquiry Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
5. More recently, the DA-RT program has been an advocate for more transparency in data. However, the notion of transparency and accessibility of data could, as critics note, easily become a wedge issue to disqualify qualitative research in which such data are not easily available in the form required by DA-RT.

6. Mary Hawkesworth "Contesting the Terrain: Flyvbjerg on Facts Value Knowledge and Power" in *Making Political Science Matter*: 152–70.

7. Laura Ephraim Beyond the two sciences settlement: Giambattisto Vico's Critique of the Nature-Politics Opposition. *Political Theory* August 2013 Political Theory.

8. For example, see Frederick Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012 for a recent discussion of these issues.

9. Giddens Constitution of Society 345.

10. Donald Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory A Critique of Applications in Political Science* New Haven Yale University Press. 1996.

11. James ohman New Philosophy pf Sociel Science 76.

12. Robert H. Bates, Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal. Barry R, Weingast *Analytic Narratives*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1998.

13. Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, Two Faces of Power *The American Political Science Review*, Volume 56, Issue 4 (Dec., 1962), 947–952.

14. For example, see Davydd Greenwood "The Organization of Anthropology and Higher Education in the United States" In D. Douglas Caulkins and Ann T. Jourdan *A Companion to Organizational Anthropology* Blackwell 2013.

15. Frank Fischer, *Citizens Experts and the Environment*: *The Politics of Local Knowledge* Durham: Duke University Press 2000: 37–8.

16. Nancy Naples *Feminism and Method*: *Ethnography Discourse Analysis and Activist Research* New York Routledge 2003: 4.

17. *Real Social Science* 122–36.

18. *Real Social Science* 137–66.

19. *Real Social Science* 228–45.

20. Jessica Marie Falcone 'I spy…' The (Im) possibilities of Ethical Participant Observation with Antagonists, Religious Extremists, and Other Tough Nuts *Michigan Discussions in Anthropology* 18: 243–282, 2010.

21. James Scott *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*: *Hidden Transcripts* New Haven Yale University Press, 1990.

22. Paul A Roth, Interpretation as Explanation In David R. Hiley, James F. Bohman and Richard Schusterman eds. *The Interpretive Turn*: *Philosophy Science Culture* Ithaca, Cornell University Press 1991 179–196.

23. Bent Flyvbjerg, Todd Landman and Sanford Schram (Eds) *Real Social Science*: *Applied Phronesis*, Cambridge University Press. 2012, 288.

24. *Real Social Science*.

25. Alistair Macintyre *After Virtue*: *A Study in Moral Theory 3rd edition* South Bend: Notre Dame University Press 2007.

26. Bent Flyvbjerg Ideal Theory, Real Rationality: Habermas Versus Foucault and Nietzsche *Paper for the Political Studies Association's 50th Annual Conference, The Challenges for Democracy in the 21st Century, London School of Economics and Political Science, 10–13 April 2000* http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2278421 also see MSSM.

27. Alastair Macintyre, Whose Justice Which Rationality also see the Introduction to the third edition of After Virtue.

28. See, for example, Jurgen Habermas. *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* Cambridge MIT Press, 1993; Drucilla Cornell. *At the Heart of Freedom* Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1998; Albrecht Wellmer *Endgames: The -Irreconcilable Nature of Modernity: Essays and Lectures* Cambridge MIT Press 2000.

29. Stuart Hall "The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees" in Kwae-Hsing Chen and David Morley eds. *Stuart Hall Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* London: Routledge 1996.

30. Some of these are discussed in the work of Axel Honneth, especially, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* Cambridge MA: MIT Press 1995.

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