IKUO KABASHIMA
LYNN T. WHITE

Political System and Change

A World Politics Reader

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A *WORLD POLITICS* READER

Political System and Change

EDITED BY
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To Cyril E. Black

CONTENTS

AGENDA FOR FUTURE STUDY

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Introduction

SYSTEMATIC DEFINITIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT POLITICS

By LYNN T. WHITE III and IKUO KABASHIMA

THINKING implies comparisons. To make these, stable categories are needed for understanding politics and the ways it changes in various countries. Clearly defined, *un*changing terms—better yet, a set or "system" of interrelated and mutually consistent definitions—are inevitable for such study. There is no way to do without them. But a natural tension arises in political science, since politics has the nasty habit of not standing still. "System" and "change" conflict with each other.

To compare politics across different places in space or eras in time, the usual means is to define changes by functional categories. The functions are processes that a system performs so that it can last over time in its environment. Even thinkers who do not want to call themselves "systems theorists" often find it hard to avoid this approach. The only obvious alternative is to forgo any hope of comparison.[1] Let us begin with a look at classic approaches to definitions for comprehending the chaos of politics.

Old Ideas and New Politics

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Western political scientists were mainly interested in European-style polities. They created a legalistic, institutional set of definitions, which allowed them to compare politics in just a few European and English-speaking countries. The old *tria politica* of executive, legislative, and judicial functions provided a system to meet most of their interests.

The Depression of the 1930s, however, encouraged social scientists to rethink their disciplines. Many felt a need to move beyond institutional

[1] Anthropologists are the only notable group of social scientists to have taken up this alternative—and when they choose this tack, they try to adopt the analytic categories of the people whose behavior they study. This option has little currency in political science, where the tradition of trying to compare nations has long been strong. For more, see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), esp. chaps. 1 and 15. It is not surprising that when anthropologists turn to the study of larger collectivities and of development, they also adopt system-like units of analysis and emphasize the ecologies of these units. For example, see Geertz, *Agricultural Involution. The Processes of Ecological Change in Indonesia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), and *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968). For an exploration of the extent to which the anthropological approach is applicable to politics, see the essay by Harry Eckstein in this Reader, and the paragraphs of this introduction that apply to it.

studies toward research about actual behavior. They rejected an emphasis on preempirical ideas about how people ought morally or legally to act.

The number of states rose after World War II and soared by the early 1960s. Political scientists consequently had to face yet bigger problems. They needed approaches that stood a chance of holding true not only in European-style politics, but throughout the world. They were in danger of biting off more than they could chew; but political science would obviously be inadequate if it were irrelevant to the new states in cultures that had received scant attention before. New sets of analytic categories (subtler systems) were the only hope of avoiding intellectual chaos.

The first task was to gather basic data about little-known countries. The "Human Relations Area Files" and other encyclopedic projects offered straightforward descriptions of the politics, religions, economies, cultures, and international links of many new states.[2] Inventory, rather than theory, was the most obvious need.

But studies of individual countries showed that modern change was worldwide: urbanization, higher literacy, increasing product per capita, and wider use of media. Even descriptive studies had a tendency to be implicitly comparative, if only because they had to use English words as well as research categories that often had Western roots. In 1953, the Social Science Research Council established a Committee on Comparative Politics to explore the possibilities of evolving systematic ideas about quick-changing polities.

"Functionalist" ideas in sociology—especially the ambitious, very abstract notions of Talcott Parsons—therefore came to influence political science. Parsons tried to offer definitions for all "functions" of any "social system."[3] His scheme was subtle enough to link many sizes of human collectivity, from the individual to the international system, and it took seriously the need to consider human values as well as external constraints.[4] Above all, Parsons specified the definitions that make a "system" in terms

[2] The "Human Relations Area Files" were kept at Yale University, and a major series of books about particular countries was published in this project.

[3] Parsons' most comprehensive book is *The Social System* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1951), but it is written in such convoluted and abstract English that it is now seldom read—even by graduate students. His more accessible work is an intellectual history of the bases of his approach, *The Structure of Social Action* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1937)—vol. I on Marshall, Pareto, and Durkheim; vol. II on Weber. See also Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York: Macmillan, 1933); D. F. Aberle and others, "The Functional Prerequisites of a Society" (an article by Parsons' students), *Ethics* 60 (January 1950), 100-111; and an application to one functional sector: Talcott Parsons and Neil J. Smelser, *Economy and Society* (New York: Free Press, 1956).

[4] For an attempt to apply this scheme, see Lynn White, "Shanghai's Polity in Cultural Revolution," in John W. Lewis, *The City in Communist China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971), 363-64.

of "functions" that contribute to the system's maintenance over time in its surroundings.

Crosscultural studies of politics seemed to need definitions as cagey and comprehensive as these. Even at the risk of abstraction, a system of functional definitions was unavoidable for any student who took seriously the job of comparing nations. As Gabriel Almond put it,

> instead of the concept of "the state," limited as it is by legal and institutional meanings, we prefer "political system"; instead of "powers," which again is a legal concept in connotation, we are beginning to prefer "functions"; instead of "offices" (legal again), we prefer "roles"....[5]

The journal *World Politics*, published under the auspices of Princeton's Center of International Studies by Princeton University Press, has been a major forum for refining the "systems" or "functional" approach to political change. It has also been a major forum for challenges to this approach. The essays in the present Reader are culled from *World Politics*, and many of them are precursors or summaries of studies that have become landmarks in the field of comparative politics. Some of them do so more cogently than the related longer books which appeared later.[6]

Are "System" and "Output Functions" Inevitable Notions in Political Analysis?

David Easton, in "An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems," uses a biological analogy to show the different processes of politics, while

[5] Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman, eds., *The Politics of the Developing Areas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 4. This work was the first major publication of the S.S.R.C.'s Committee on Comparative Politics.

[6] Many of these books were published by Princeton University Press, under the sponsorship of either the Committee on Comparative Politics or Princeton's Center of International Studies: Almond and Coleman, *ibid.*; Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (1963); Lucian W. Pye, ed., *Communications and Political Development* (1963); Joseph LaPalombara, ed., *Bureaucracy and Political Development* (1963); Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow, eds., *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey* (1964); Cyril E. Black and Thomas P. Thornton, eds., *Communism and Revolution: The Strategic Uses of Political Violence* (1964); James S. Coleman, ed., *Education and Political Development* (1965); Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba, eds., *Political Culture and Political Development* (1965); Harold and Margaret Sprout, *The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs* (1965); Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, eds., *Political Parties and Political Development* (1966); Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (1969); Leonard Binder, James S. Coleman, Joseph LaPalombara, Lucian W. Pye, Sidney Verba, and Myron Weiner, eds., *Crises and Sequences in Political Development* (1971). Other books from the same Press and Center have dealt with particular countries: Karl von Vorys, *Political Development in Pakistan* (1965); Harry Eckstein, *Division and Cohesion in Democracy: A Study of Norway* (1966); Henry Bienen, *Tanzania: Party Transformation and Economic Development* (1967); C. Sylvester Whitaker, *The Politics of Tradition: Continuity and Change in Northern Nigeria, 1946-1966* (1970); Francine R. Frankel, *India's Green Revolution: Economic Gains and Political Costs* (1971); and Henry Bienen, *Kenya: The Politics of Participation and Control* (1974).

A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO POLITICAL SYSTEMS

By GABRIEL A. ALMOND

DURING the past decade two tendencies have come to dominate the field of comparative politics. One of these is the concern for theoretical explication and methodological rigor, and the second is the emphasis on field studies of the "emerging," "new," and "non-Western" nations. The theoretical tendency has largely taken the form of applications of "systems" theory to the study of politics, and the chief criticism of this approach has been that it is a static theory, not suitable for the analysis and explanation of political change.

The great output of empirical studies of contemporary politics in the new and emerging nations and the relative decline in the volume of European political studies have similarly been criticized. Here the argument is that the relative neglect of Western political studies, and particularly of their historical dimension, handicaps us in our efforts to work out the developmental theories and approaches which we need for our research on the new and emerging nations.

Both of these criticisms have great cogency. Systems theory does have a static, "equilibrium" bias; and the stress on the politics of the new and emerging nations gives us an inadequate sampling of man's experience with social and political change. The only answer to this criticism is that this seems to be the way sciences develop—not by orderly, systematic progression, but in a dialectical process involving overemphases and neglects. If we are to come to grips more effectively with political change, we shall have to redress this imbalance, adapt systems theory in a developmental direction, and utilize historical knowledge of Western political development (but not only Western history) in elaborating theories of political systems and political change.

This article represents a move in this direction, an effort on the part of one political systems theorist to define what political development consists of and to take into account the variables which affect it.[1]

[1] Whatever merit this contribution to the theory of political change may have is due to a long series of polemics which began with my paper, "Comparative Political Systems" (*Journal of Politics*, XVII [August 1956], 391-409), and became somewhat more lively after the appearance of my introductory essay in Almond and Coleman, eds., *The Politics of the Developing Areas* (Princeton 1960). An early and partial version of some of the ideas contained here appeared in Almond, "Political Systems and Political Change," *American Behavioral Scientist*, VI (June 1963), 3-10. The polemics were in part with myself, in part with graduate students in seminars, in part

abstraction may be necessary if we want to use understandings and words developed in one political situation to help describe another.

Gabriel Almond, in "A Developmental Approach to Political Systems," points out that systems theories are often accused of being inherently static. A system may change to match changes in its ecological niche, but the analytic definitions on which it is based must remain stable. Almond is determined to refine systems theory—to make it less abstract and rigid—while retaining its virtue of allowing comparisons. He is more specific than Easton when describing the functions a political system must perform in order to flourish.[10] He tries to set forth a more detailed list of tasks that a political system must accomplish lest it lose power. Easton emphasizes processes, especially how a "political system" absorbs resources. Almond's main interest lies in the processes it must perform to survive, and thus he stresses "output" processes in particular. But this focus of Almond's—which is not clearly inherent in the original need for clear definitions that first gave rise to the idea of "system"—also makes the logic of systems theory more flexible: it permits incoherence between the parts of a system (as long as the system has sufficient coordination to maintain itself). Above all, Almond's categories allow for more concrete comparisons, especially among developing systems.

The ideas of comparativists in the late 1950s and early 1960s grew apace—but so did the variety of new states. Third-world leaders at first had great expectations that economic growth would lead, more or less naturally, to greater social equality, then maybe to democracy—in any case, to "modernization." The whole happy process would abet political stability. Even if social scientists were more pessimistic, they did not quickly incorporate such worries into the structure of their comparative studies.

The optimistic view that political development walks hand-in-hand with economic growth was in for some unexpected shocks. In the 1960s, charismatic leaders and militarists had come to unprecedented promi-

nonetheless showed how consistent paradigms in natural science are refined until "crises" of new evidence arise with which their frameworks cannot deal. By the 1970s, this idea came into conflict with functionalist systems approaches in social science. The works of Clifford Geertz and Albert Hirschman were crucial to this change of thinking. For references, see fns. 1 and 22, and Hirschman, *A Bias for Hope* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 1-38 and 342-60.

[10] Almond's essay in this Reader refines, and adds sophistication to, the ideas in his introduction to Almond and Coleman (fn. 5)—which was later expanded to Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966).

nence in the third world: Sukarno in Indonesia, Nkrumah in Ghana, and many others. These political changes were not totally inconsistent with systems theory; still, political scientists, always looking for linkages, had seldom argued that militarism or dictatorship arises as a matter of natural course. Systems theorists had tended to assume that history would bring *more* political efficiency, not less, to third-world nations. Military coups and political turmoil seemed to argue otherwise.

Roland Pennock, in "Political Development, Political Systems, and Political Goods," stands back from systems theory. He notices that its original logic makes one "output"—the stability of the system itself—more important than any other. Pennock argues this is a problem: governments should provide more welfare, security, justice, and liberty for their subjects, not just more order. Governments satisfy needs, "not just needs of the state as such . . . but human needs whose fulfillment makes the polity valuable to man, and gives it its justification." Stability should, Pennock writes, be merely a way to achieve human ends that systems theory fails to value enough. The proper measure of development should be outcomes like liberty—justifiable by norms that are independent of systems.

Pennock is more frank than Easton or Almond in introducing liberal values to systems theory, and he takes a more substantive approach than system logic would require to the "outputs" of government: *not* just stability, but also the crime rate, the incidence of independent political parties, fair trials, freedom of the press, official efforts in welfare, education, transport, and many other functions that are "development" for ordinary people.

Is "Order" the Fundamental Function?

In "Political Development and Political Decay," Samuel Huntington responds differently to the obvious breakdown of politics of newly independent countries during the 1960s. His ideas are more "realist" and less normative than Pennock's. Huntington emphasizes a single "output" of government—order—and finds that function to be the crucial one for political development.[11] The structure of Huntington's approach makes him a systems theorist; but he differs from his predecessors in that he shows broad reasons for pessimism about the ease of political progress.

[11] The essay in this volume summarizes the main idea developed in Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

He has no hopes that an emphasis on liberal norms will shape political development.

Socioeconomic modernization increases the political participation of citizens, but it does not ensure that their demands can be met. Political development, for Huntington, differs from modernization, mobilization, and participation: it is an expansion in the ability of governments to deal with the onslaught of problems brought on by change. Here is a systems theorist without a smile, seeing danger in modernity, especially when elites lack practice in the "art of associating together" and lack institutions that can channel the social chaos that accompanies modern growth.

Modernization (in the form of higher output, urbanization, literacy, and so forth) thus bears no necessary relation to political development. In fact, political systems may decay because of socioeconomic progress. Aristotle's Athens and Republican Rome were politically developed in many ways, though they were not modern. By the same token, a country can modernize economically without any improvement of its political procedures. As Huntington shows, many countries follow just this course: political turmoil grows along with GNP, literacy, education, communication, and even voting. Political decay is one of the normal, not aberrant, paths to modernity.

Charismatic or military leaders often arise in third-world states—and they weaken nonpersonal institutions that might solve political problems. Such leaders are good at mobilizing people to serve in campaigns for goals such as literacy or industrialization, but a cost of their style is the lack of long-run political progress.

Huntington poses a dilemma: new states can have modernization or they can have political development; but unless they change slowly, they cannot usually have both. There is "no easy choice" between these values.[12] Huntington does not flinch from making bold policy recommendations to reduce the dilemma. First, he suggests that modernization be slowed. If university graduates are likely to foment political dissent, Huntington proposes that fewer students be funded. If free communications will undermine the political order, he recommends that regimes muzzle the press. Second, he finds no alternative to stronger regimes. Political parties—or just one of them, if more will cause trouble—are Huntington's key to institutionalization. Free elections and competition among elites, Huntington says, are no substitutes for political organization.

[12] See Samuel P. Huntington and Joan M. Nelson, *No Easy Choice: Political Participation in Developing Countries* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

That is strong medicine for an ailment which other liberals and systems theorists had failed to diagnose. Huntington has provoked many (including Ake, Whitaker, Wiarda, and Kabashima in this volume) to argue that the inherent looseness of all systems, or cultural checks on instability, may prevent civil disorder from getting out of hand. But Huntington's contribution to scientific thinking about political change is nonetheless path-breaking. Huntington retains a systemic framework, while discarding normative assumptions about progress that had been implicit in earlier work. He thereby brings the theory of developing systems back to face the facts of political decay that were obvious in many countries by the mid-1960s. Huntington's essay is the culmination of a line of argument in the first part of this book—from Easton's abstract logic of input and output processes, to Almond's laying out of more specifically political functions, to Pennock's normative emphasis on output functions that are socially desirable, finally to Huntington's stress on one particular output (order) without which no state can long survive. Most of the later essays in this volume assess the limits of the systems theory that Huntington makes realistic. His article, right or wrong, is the central pivot of this book.

But Huntington does not fully delve into the question, why does civil disorder arise? He points to its frequent occurrence in times of socio-economic progress, and to the political effects of that chaos. But to get to the basic reasons for this link, one needs human psychology—and that discipline, relying often on concepts whose relation to facts are hard to specify, is intellectually riskier.

Ted Gurr's "Psychological Factors in Civil Violence" steps into this breach.[13] Referring explicitly to works by psychologists, especially on the causes of aggression, Gurr outlines a set of variables that explain the frequency and amount of civil violence. "Relative deprivation" arises when people achieve less than they expect—and it determines when they rebel. It is an awareness, most important when collective, among citizens that government interference prevents them from attaining what they want. Gurr offers a series of propositions that relate selected variables to the likelihood and magnitude of civil violence. In an article published several years after Gurr's, Huntington praises the comprehensiveness of Gurr's thinking and says that ideas about relative deprivation "dominated scholarly work on political instability" in subsequent years.[14] Gurr supplies

[13] Also see Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (fn. 6).

[14] Samuel P. Huntington and Jorge I. Dominguez, "Political Development," in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science* (New York: Wiley, 1975), 8.

reasons, in the psychologies of many individuals, for the collective political decay against which Huntington warns.

In "Toward Explaining Military Intervention in Latin American Politics," Robert Putnam explores whether political decay (as evidenced by coups) correlates with mobilization. He examines all 20 Latin American countries over two separate periods of time, 1906-1915 and 1956-1965. Social mobilization relates strongly—and negatively—to military intervention in these cases.

Putnam's approach is valuable because it provides a behavioral check (not just another plausible argument in logic) on Huntington's ideas. At first, Putnam may seem to disprove the notion that social mobilization and military intervention are two aspects of a single process—political decay. A closer look at what Putnam does with his data, however, suggests a general dilemma that faces attempts to attach empirical referents to concepts deduced from sets of definitions (and any systems theory is a set of definitions): Putnam shows correlations without being able to show the direction of causes. He proves that, over long time periods in many countries, mobilization and coups do not go together. He cannot, using correlations, tell whether this result arises because armies intervene to stop mobilization or, on the contrary, because lower mobilization gives the soldiers opportunities to intervene. This essay exemplifies the best potentials of inductive, empirical analysis; it also shows the limits of that approach.[15]

Do Reforms, Irregularities, and Traditions Weaken a System?

The original purpose of systems theory was to provide clear, linked, functional definitions that allow comparisons across different polities in space and time. But Huntington goes far beyond this original purpose. First, functionalist logic does not require that instability must always weaken a system. That happens only if the chaos goes beyond the regime's ability to cope. Second, systems theory does not require that all traits of a polity mesh perfectly with each other; it only directs attention to their links, whether tight or not. Third, the basic idea behind functionalism implies nothing about cultural differences that deeply affect actual

[15] The statistical correlations approach in Putnam's article differs from the implicit simultaneous equations approach that Gurr uses to explore the implications of the same theory. Gurr shows restraint in avoiding algebra for his propositions (since the symbols would obscure the meanings for most readers), but the two forms of mathematical interest contrast with each other nicely.

politics; but we cannot expect to understand how states change without taking cultural factors seriously.

These three aspects of the original notion of "system" have been implicitly ignored by many functionalists eager to describe development—and they provide the basis of a host of critiques, of Huntington in particular. Ake takes his predecessors to task on the first of these grounds. Whitaker emphasizes the second. Both Wiarda and Kabashima show the importance of the third.

In "Modernization and Political Instability: A Theoretical Exploration," Claude Ake challenges Huntington directly: "Political change is compatible with political stability, as long as the change occurs in accordance with prevailing expectations about how such change may legitimately come about." The original functionalist idea does not require us to think of *all* disorder, *all* efforts for social change, as threatening the end of a system. Huntington seems to imply that the chaos of modernization necessarily weakens political systems. But basic functionalist theory—which he follows in most respects—has a different implication: chaos will weaken regimes only if it becomes so extensive that it crosses a *threshold* above which the system cannot manage. Below that threshold, as Ake indicates, disorder may force reforms that strengthen a regime.

The classical quality of Ake's critique of Huntington—the fact that it harks back to the beginnings of this theory—is the main source of its power. If the polity is like a body, it may develop new immunities from the experience of becoming sick; it may become stronger rather than decay or die. The disagreement between Ake and Huntington echoes an antinomy that has concerned many social scientists in this century (notably Max Weber). On the one hand, modern bureaucratic development seems to constrain possibilities in politics. On the other, such change shows the need for leadership and political will, so that people remain in control of their fates.[16]

Ake also seems to depend on Emile Durkheim's point that increasingly different modern functions in society may lead to greater (not less) solidarity if these functions complement each other. In that case, violence, conflict, civil disorder, short regimes, and the lack of strong political institutions may not be as problematic as Huntington says. Ake also takes Lucian Pye to task for overstating the dangers of psychological anomie in modern times; and he criticizes David Apter for emphasizing the disrup-

[16] Max Weber, in his various writings, presented this dilemma most clearly. For an interpretation with this emphasis, and for further sources, see H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society* (New York: Knopf, 1958). For a brilliant treatment of the American case, see E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People* (Hinsdale, IL: Dryden, 1960).

tive political effects of modern changes in social roles.[17] Modernization, Ake admits, can be disintegrative; but it is not necessarily so. It may replace the structures that it attacks with new ones that will be just as strong or stronger.[18] There is nothing inherent in systems theory that should make us treat only change as news and lack of change as normal. Growth is as natural as growth pains.

The broad sociological—not just governmental—origins of systems theory also support Ake's point that *coups d'état* and executive crises (in which Huntington finds much danger) do not necessarily indicate political instability. Political authority is a phenomenon in many sizes of social collectivity, right down to the family. Too much stress on the importance of state leaders—who are very important to Huntington—reflects an unnecessary elitism.

In short, Ake is a systems theorist too, even though he criticizes other functionalists. He chastises them, in effect, for neglecting the original logic of the ideas they are trying to correct. They have forgotten, he implies, that "dysfunction" makes no vital threat to a system until it passes a threshold.

Sylvester Whitaker, in "A Dysrhythmic Process of Political Change," raises a similarly classic critique of other functionalists. He studies an African context, the complex society in Northern Nigeria, with its mix of Hausa-Fulani, Tiv, British, and other cultures.[19] People living there can choose among these traditions for various purposes that they determine. In education, both Islamic and Western forms are available. In politics, the emirs claim legitimacy on the basis of posts inherited from the colonial system as well as on the basis of their traditional roles. In any functional sphere, the peoples of Northern Nigeria use new as well as old bases for action. Whitaker does not repeat Ake's concern for thresholds, but he points to *loose links* in any system. He shows that modernizations in different parts of a unit of analysis march out of sync with each other. Choosing a metaphor appropriate to the culture he studies, Whitaker speaks of rhythms—and of "dysrhythmic political change." He does not reject the idea of system completely; he only shows there is no need for lockstep in the actual evolution of its sectors. The definitions were never anything but categories in which data could be explored, among which

[17] See Pye, *Politics, Personality, and Nation Building* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), and David Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

[18] Ake's argument, which suggests some positive political functions of modern stress, is highly consistent with that made by the more general sociologist Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1956). Ake's own functionalism is obvious in this close relation to Coser.

[19] Whitaker's book, *The Politics of Tradition* (fn. 6), elaborates on the ideas in this essay.

relations could be posited. Of course, variables may cluster in development—but this is always an empirical matter, to be researched anywhere. The clustering was never inherent to the business of definition. Whitaker maintains that other functionalists, if they imply modernization is a seamless web, forget the analytic quality of the notions they were trying to refine.

Howard Wiarda and Ikuo Kabashima carry a third line of criticism to Latin America and a special part of Asia. Each of these writers emphasizes the influence of culture on politics—and the inability of systems theory to explain actual developments in specific countries unless the "boundary" between politics and culture receives enough attention.

Wiarda, in "Toward a Framework for the Study of Political Change in the Iberic-Latin Tradition: The Corporative Model," shows that the policies of the Alliance for Progress in the 1960s were based on functionalist systems theory premises. The originators of these policies assumed that many Latin American countries were moving quickly toward revolution (as Cuba had already done), so that only urgent measures to promote moderate, liberal politics could prevent violence. They also assumed that if Latin American economies would grow, political democracy might soon follow. The result—a foreign aid program—was designed to meet the need and avert the danger.

What that analysis overlooked was the importance of cultural traditions in "Iberic-Latin" politics. Corporate and elite ideals made nonsense of the functionalist predictions. Revolution came slowly, and liberal democracy expanded little. In many large and important Latin American countries, armies seized power. "Semi-modernizing" movements such as the *Estado Nôvo* in Brazil, *Peronismo* in Argentina, and the carefully named *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* in Mexico had long been important in Latin America—yet the analysts of the early 1960s did not heed their implications for later change. Wiarda, referring specifically to Iberian ideals of authority that are still important though gradually changing, shows how system analysis fails when it ignores cultural ecologies.

Kabashima, in "Supportive Participation with Economic Growth: The Case of Japan," responds to Huntington's notions that modern participation endangers political order, and that participation must be limited if developing countries are to grow politically. But Kabashima shows how participation by have-nots may strengthen a system—if cultural conditions are right. In Japan after World War II, both political and economic mobilization was widespread, and a *supportive* kind of participation al-

lowed a strengthening of institutions along with an increase of mobilization.

The supportive or nonsupportive *quality* of participation—not the *amount* of participation—determines the result in political order or decay. If the people who are negatively affected by modern economic change (peasants, in most developing countries) have a culture that inclines them to mobilize to help the regime help themselves, increased participation can raise the government's resources. In Japan, farmers who benefited little from economic development nonetheless participated a great deal in politics. As a result, there was some redistribution of income from urban to rural areas through the official budget, which counteracted the usual tendency toward inequality in development. A regime's cultural environment may tend to encourage supportive participation, especially among rural people; when it does, the result is modernization with order.

Kabashima offers an answer to the old question about how to link political and economic change. Students of comparative politics have long associated democracy with economic equality, because the former is egalitarian in principle. Some research, however, suggests that the degree of democratization is not related to economic equality.[20] Kabashima suggests that democracy (measured in terms of high political participation by have-nots) results in greater economic equality.

None of the critiques of Huntington that are raised by Ake, Whitaker, Wiarda, and Kabashima completely rejects systems theory. But all of them suggest that research should take adequate account of the cultural environment of politics. Even Ake, for whom the emphasis on culture is less obvious than for the other three, implies a need for more awareness that unusual political exchanges can be widespread in a system without leading to its collapse. Logics to accept this kind of inconsistency in systems have been best developed by anthropologists.[21] These culturalist methods are usable alongside systems theory.

What Is the Future of the Idea of a Developing Political System?

In his 1982 study, "The Idea of Political Development," Harry Eckstein sees a change "from dignity to efficiency." This insight allows Eckstein to choose between culturalist and systems approaches: the first

[20] See Robert W. Jackman, *Politics and Social Equality. A Comparative Analysis* (New York: Wiley, 1975).

[21] See Edmund R. Leach, *The Political Systems of Highland Burma* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954). For studies in a different vein, see the works by Clifford Geertz cited in fn. 1.

is for regimes that emphasize the sacred qualities of politics, the second for systems in which functions have been specialized. He makes a bold argument based on past data rather than on a claim that we should begin with his premises.

Eckstein outlines the main change that polities have actually undergone as they develop. He would have us take seriously both the notions "political system" and "monotonic development." Many people sense some uniform change in modern polities, but they have a hard time pinning down what grows. Eckstein shows that "the early explorers" of political systems and change "were getting at something worth getting at"—something unavoidable, if we are to have clear definitions and see some regularities in modern change.

Originally, in primitive societies where work was not specialized, ceremonies were crucial to the legitimacy of leadership. As Eckstein notes, "power served pomp, not pomp power." Rituals of order were the heart of political life. The dignity of government, not its functional use, was its basis. Eckstein is no symbolic anthropologist (he is a systems theorist), but he relies on Geertz's ethnography of a "theatre-state"[22] to show how politics started.

When kings and courts began to extract and arrange social resources, they claimed a monopoly on violence and taxes, not just on cosmic right. As groups with separate interests arose, the functions of labor were differentiated (in governing as in all other social activities). Functional systems theory is thus a natural way to look at the vectored, monotonic change from politics whose main concern was sacred, to politics whose center is functional efficiency. And it is a natural analysis for politics that is no longer traditional.

Eckstein thus establishes a link between the use of systems theory and the use of the culturalist approach. For the analysis of modernizing polities, he suggests, there is no alternative to looking at functional sectors and their boundaries. He takes many current writers on development to task because they tend to study random or varied changes without paying attention to the need for clear definitions and categories that do not change over time and place. Without such definitions, there is no way to do comparative work. The impulse to be comparative, Eckstein shows, is not just an arbitrary choice, not just an intellectual fad. It relates to the central, most obvious, substantive changes in past politics.

Eckstein's sweeping review of political history leaves us with two basic points that seem perennial and inevitable. First, the idea of political "sys-

[22] Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre-State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

tem" is not *passé*. On the contrary, the need to have consistent definitions of functions is basic to the study of modernizing polities. The symbolist alternative has its place mainly in the study of "primitive" polities or sacred politics. Second, some notion of political "development" remains necessary, despite the great effects cultures have in varying the kinds of change in different countries.

Tony Smith's 1985 essay, "Requiem or New Agenda for Third World Studies?" relates development functionalism to its main political alternative, dependency theory, just as Eckstein relates it to its main methodological alternative, symbolic cultural analysis. The *dependencistas'* unit of analysis is different from that of the developmentalists: it is a "world system" rather than separate national units. True to their Marxist heritage, dependency theorists define their main variables as economic rather than political. This theory holds that underdevelopment is not merely a stage of pre-development in national systems; on the contrary, it is an aspect of specifically capitalist development in the world system. Both *dependencismo* and developmentalism accept that history is the record of increasing functional differentiation; but the results are new when this division of labor is mainly conceived internationally rather than within countries, and when the functions being divided are basically economic.

The *dependencistas* argue against a political bias they see in development functionalism. They point out that an emphasis on the value of stability—whether because of a methodological need for sure definitions or because of an empirical need for political order—can be seen as a weak excuse for repressive authoritarianism. Emphasis on the inevitability of development may rationalize timidity and quietude—despite obvious injustice and poverty, e.g., in many countries of Latin America. Functionalists should have no false hope that such problems will disappear without any struggle.

By showing that dependency theory is flexible, and by emphasizing that dependency creates real problems which developmental functionalism fails to address, Smith takes this approach seriously.[23] But he also notes a weakness of many *dependencistas*: their tendency to insist on grand logics that ignore too many exceptions. Systems theory has the same flaw when it, too, is carried beyond the basic need for coherent definitions and is converted into hasty political recommendations.

Smith ends with an explicitly eclectic position—not because eclecti-

[23] For a subtle treatise from a nondogmatic *dependencista* viewpoint, see Gary Gereffi, *The Pharmaceutical Industry and Dependency in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

cism is nice or polite, but because the critiques of development functionalism (or of dependency theory, for that matter) leave it strong. Systems theory sensitizes us to the twin needs to use stable definitions and to look for regularities in historical change. It broadens our horizons of understanding and makes us aware of issues in the real world. What more could we ask of a theory? Smith's essay suggests that developmental systems theory will be with us for a long time.

Conclusion: Clarity for Comparisons as the Sole Point of the Theory of Developing Systems

Systems theory and dependency theory are not opposites. Most *dependencistas* now explicitly try to make comparisons between developing countries while at the same time trying to analyze a larger system (the whole world). Both the systems and dependency frameworks ideally use constant definitions, even if the *dependencistas* sometimes attempt to narrow their project and show the overall importance only of "economic" functions. Both modes of thought are easiest to criticize when they limit the job of historical explanation to one function: order or monopoly are typical choices. Both are most convincing when they are flexible enough to take account of the many factors (political, economic, and cultural) that influence change in actual situations.

The earlier essays in this volume were written in the 1960s, when systems theory flourished. Yet the concerns they raise have not disappeared. The four studies criticizing and refining these now classic efforts toward better comparisons, as well as the two evaluations from the 1980s, together show that the main problems which arise with the idea of "developing system" occur only when it is misapplied.

There is nothing new about the problem addressed by development functionalism or systems theory: how to keep order in a society that changes. Even before Durkheim, this question stirred people who thought about political and social integration, and it is a practical concern of modern governments. The abstraction of systems theory gives it the ability to serve as a framework for dealing with this question of order and development. Many critiques of particular versions of systems theory face other questions: issues of freedom and welfare, issues of how people should react to injustice, questions how cultural factors affect the possibilities of order, concerns for units smaller than the state, or concerns that international links may be exploitative. These other approaches have refined development functionalism—and made it a rich tradition.

Yet to the extent they do more than refine it, they start from questions

basically different from the one it addresses. And that one does not go away. When systems theory is construed in terms of its original logic, without excluding any factor that is actually found to bear on the link between order and change, it organizes a great variety of thinking about that perennial question. If its purpose were more substantive and less definitional, it would not be able to do this.

The impulse toward a coherent set of definitions for looking at different polities, in distinct times and places, remains the most important intellectual challenge of comparative politics. We can solve the problem of using constant definitions in changing situations—but only if we accept it *as* a problem. We should not try to get around the antinomy by giving up either of two needs: to look for links between different kinds of social functions, and to take relevant evidence seriously even when it does not fit predefined categories.

Political System: Definitions and Functions

AN APPROACH TO THE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS*

By DAVID EASTON

I. Some Attributes of Political Systems

IN an earlier work I have argued for the need to develop general, empirically oriented theory as the most economical way in the long run to understand political life. Here I propose to indicate a point of view that, at the least, might serve as a springboard for discussion of alternative approaches and, at most, as a small step in the direction of a general political theory. I wish to stress that what I have to say is a mere orientation to the problem of theory; outside of economics and perhaps psychology, it would be presumptuous to call very much in social science "theory," in the strict sense of the term.

Furthermore, I shall offer only a Gestalt of my point of view, so that it will be possible to evaluate, in the light of the whole, those parts that I do stress. In doing this, I know I run the definite risk that the meaning and implications of this point of view may be only superficially communicated; but it is a risk I shall have to undertake since I do not know how to avoid it sensibly.

The study of politics is concerned with understanding how authoritative decisions are made and executed for a society. We can try to understand political life by viewing each of its aspects piecemeal. We can examine the operation of such institutions as political parties, interest groups, government, and voting; we can study the nature and consequences of such political practices as manipulation, propaganda, and violence; we can seek to reveal the structure within which these practices occur. By combining the results we can obtain a rough picture of what happens in any self-contained political unit.

In combining these results, however, there is already implicit the notion that each part of the larger political canvas does not stand alone but is related to each other part; or, to put it positively, that the operation of no one part can be fully understood without reference to the way in which the whole itself operates. I have suggested in my book, *The Political System*,[1] that it is valuable to adopt this implicit assump-

* The point of view expressed in this article was later fully developed in *A Framework for Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965; reprinted by University of Chicago Press, 1979) and *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York: Wiley, 1965; reprinted by University of Chicago Press, 1979).

[1] New York, 1953.

tion as an articulate premise for research and to view political life as a system of interrelated activities. These activities derive their relatedness or systemic ties from the fact that they all more or less influence the way in which authoritative decisions are formulated and executed for a society.

Once we begin to speak of political life as a system of activity, certain consequences follow for the way in which we can undertake to analyze the working of a system. The very idea of a system suggests that we can separate political life from the rest of social activity, at least for analytical purposes, and examine it as though for the moment it were a self-contained entity surrounded by, but clearly distinguishable from, the environment or setting in which it operates. In much the same way, astronomers consider the solar system a complex of events isolated for certain purposes from the rest of the universe.

Furthermore, if we hold the system of political actions as a unit before our mind's eye, as it were, we can see that what keeps the system going are inputs of various kinds. These inputs are converted by the processes of the system into outputs and these, in turn, have consequences both for the system and for the environment in which the system exists. The formula here is very simple but, as I hope to show, also very illuminating: inputs—political system or processes—outputs. These relationships are shown diagrammatically in Figure 1. This

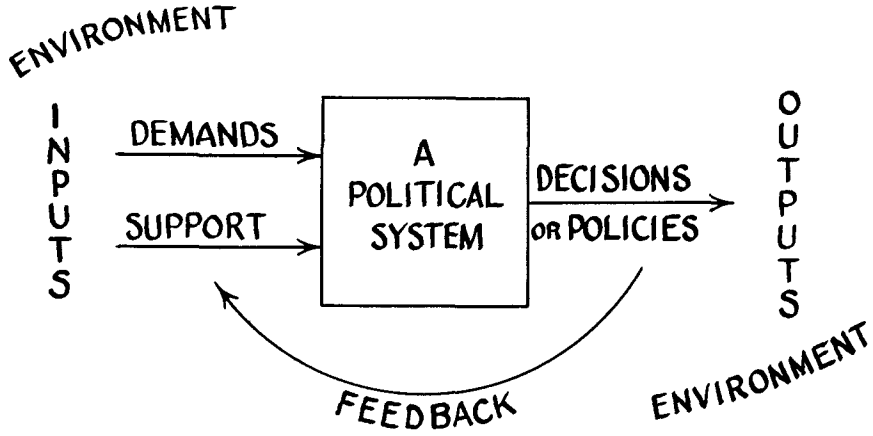

FIG. 1

diagram represents a very primitive "model"—to dignify it with a fashionable name—for approaching the study of political life.

Political systems have certain properties because they are systems.[2]

[2] My conceptions relating to system theory have been enriched through my participation in the Staff Theory Seminar of the Mental Health Research Institute at the Uni-

To present an over-all view of the whole approach, let me identify the major attributes, say a little about each, and then treat one of these properties at somewhat greater length, even though still inadequately.

(1) Properties of identification. To distinguish a political system from other social systems, we must be able to identify it by describing its fundamental units and establishing the boundaries that demarcate it from units outside the system.

(a) Units of a political system. The units are the elements of which we say a system is composed. In the case of a political system, they are political actions. Normally it is useful to look at these as they structure themselves in political roles and political groups.

(b) Boundaries. Some of the most significant questions with regard to the operation of political systems can be answered only if we bear in mind the obvious fact that a system does not exist in a vacuum. It is always immersed in a specific setting or environment. The way in which a system works will be in part a function of its response to the total social, biological, and physical environment.

The special problem with which we are confronted is how to distinguish systematically between a political system and its setting. Does it even make sense to say that a political system has a boundary dividing it from its setting? If so, how are we to identify the line of demarcation?

Without pausing to argue the matter, I would suggest that it is useful to conceive of a political system as having a boundary in the same sense as a physical system. The boundary of a political system is defined by all those actions more or less directly related to the making of binding decisions for a society; every social action that does not partake of this characteristic will be excluded from the system and thereby will automatically be viewed as an external variable in the environment.

(2) Inputs and outputs. Presumably, if we select political systems for special study, we do so because we believe that they have characteristically important consequences for society, namely, authoritative decisions. These consequences I shall call the outputs. If we judged that political systems did not have important outputs for society, we would probably not be interested in them.

Unless a system is approaching a state of entropy—and we can assume that this is not true of most political systems—it must have continuing inputs to keep it going. Without inputs the system can do no work; without outputs we cannot identify the work done by the

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versity of Michigan. There has been such thorough mingling of ideas in this Seminar that rather than try to trace paternity, I shall simply indicate my obligation to the collective efforts of the Seminar.

system. The specific research tasks in this connection would be to identify the inputs and the forces that shape and change them, to trace the processes through which they are transformed into outputs, to describe the general conditions under which such processes can be maintained, and to establish the relationship between outputs and succeeding inputs of the system.

From this point of view, much light can be shed on the working of a political system if we take into account the fact that much of what happens within a system has its birth in the efforts of the members of the system to cope with the changing environment. We can appreciate this point if we consider a familiar biological system such as the human organism. It is subject to constant stress from its surroundings to which it must adapt in one way or another if it is not to be completely destroyed. In part, of course, the way in which the body works represents responses to needs that are generated by the very organization of its anatomy and functions; but in large part, in order to understand both the structure and the working of the body, we must also be very sensitive to the inputs from the environment.

In the same way, the behavior of every political system is to some degree imposed upon it by the kind of system it is, that is, by its own structure and internal needs. But its behavior also reflects the strains occasioned by the specific setting within which the system operates. It may be argued that most of the significant changes within a political system have their origin in shifts among the external variables. Since I shall be devoting the bulk of this article to examining some of the problems related to the exchange between political systems and their environments, I shall move on to a rapid description of other properties of political systems.

(3) Differentiation within a system. As we shall see in a moment, from the environment come both energy to activate a system and information with regard to which the system uses this energy. In this way a system is able to do work. It has some sort of output that is different from the input that enters from the environment. We can take it as a useful hypothesis that if a political system is to perform some work for anything but a limited interval of time, a minimal amount of differentiation in its structure must occur. In fact, empirically it is impossible to find a significant political system in which the same units all perform the same activities at the same time. The members of a system engage in at least some minimal division of labor that provides a structure within which action takes place.

(4) Integration of a system. This fact of differentiation opens up a

major area of inquiry with regard to political systems. Structural differentiation sets in motion forces that are potentially disintegrative in their results for the system. If two or more units are performing different kinds of activity at the same time, how are these activities to be brought into the minimal degree of articulation necessary if the members of the system are not to end up in utter disorganization with regard to the production of the outputs of interest to us? We can hypothesize that if a structured system is to maintain itself, it must provide mechanisms whereby its members are integrated or induced to cooperate in some minimal degree so that they can make authoritative decisions.

II. Inputs: Demands

Now that I have mentioned some major attributes of political systems that I suggest require special attention if we are to develop a generalized approach, I want to consider in greater detail the way in which an examination of inputs and outputs will shed some light on the working of these systems.

Among inputs of a political system there are two basic kinds: demands and support. These inputs give a political system its dynamic character. They furnish it both with the raw material or information that the system is called upon to process and with the energy to keep it going.

The reason why a political system emerges in a society at all—that is, why men engage in political activity—is that demands are being made by persons or groups in the society that cannot all be fully satisfied. In all societies one fact dominates political life: scarcity prevails with regard to most of the valued things. Some of the claims for these relatively scarce things never find their way into the political system but are satisfied through the private negotiations of or settlements by the persons involved. Demands for prestige may find satisfaction through the status relations of society; claims for wealth are met in part through the economic system; aspirations for power find expression in educational, fraternal, labor, and similar private organizations. Only where wants require some special organized effort on the part of society to settle them authoritatively may we say that they have become inputs of the political system.

Systematic research would require us to address ourselves to several key questions with regard to these demands.

(1) How do demands arise and assume their particular character in a society? In answer to this question, we can point out that demands have their birth in two sectors of experience: either in the environment

of a system or within the system itself. We shall call these the external and internal demands, respectively.

Let us look at the external demands first. I find it useful to see the environment not as an undifferentiated mass of events but rather as systems clearly distinguishable from one another and from the political system. In the environment we have such systems as the ecology, economy, culture, personality, social structure, and demography. Each of these constitutes a major set of variables in the setting that helps to shape the kind of demands entering a political system. For purposes of illustrating what I mean, I shall say a few words about culture.

The members of every society act within the framework of an on-going culture that shapes their general goals, specific objectives, and the procedures that the members feel ought to be used. Every culture derives part of its unique quality from the fact that it emphasizes one or more special aspects of behavior and this strategic emphasis serves to differentiate it from other cultures with respect to the demands that it generates. As far as the mass of the people is concerned, some cultures, such as our own, are weighted heavily on the side of economic wants, success, privacy, leisure activity, and rational efficiency. Others, such as that of the Fox Indians, strive toward the maintenance of harmony, even if in the process the goals of efficiency and rationality may be sacrificed. Still others, such as the Kachins of highland Burma, stress the pursuit of power and prestige. The culture embodies the standards of value in a society and thereby marks out areas of potential conflict, if the valued things are in short supply relative to demand. The typical demands that will find their way into the political process will concern the matters in conflict that are labeled important by the culture. For this reason we cannot hope to understand the nature of the demands presenting themselves for political settlement unless we are ready to explore systematically and intensively their connection with the culture. And what I have said about culture applies, with suitable modifications, to other parts of the setting of a political system.

But not all demands originate or have their major locus in the environment. Important types stem from situations occurring within a political system itself. Typically, in every on-going system, demands may emerge for alterations in the political relationships of the members themselves, as the result of dissatisfaction stemming from these relationships. For example, in a political system based upon representation, in which equal representation is an important political norm, demands may arise for equalizing representation between urban and rural voting districts. Similarly, demands for changes in the process

of recruitment of formal political leaders, for modifications of the way in which constitutions are amended, and the like may all be internally inspired demands.

I find it useful and necessary to distinguish these from external demands because they are, strictly speaking, not inputs of the system but something that we can call "withinputs," if we can tolerate a cumbersome neologism, and because their consequences for the character of a political system are more direct than in the case of external demands. Furthermore, if we were not aware of this difference in classes of demands, we might search in vain for an explanation of the emergence of a given set of internal demands if we turned only to the environment.

(2) How are demands transformed into issues? What determines whether a demand becomes a matter for serious political discussion or remains something to be resolved privately among the members of society? The occurrence of a demand, whether internal or external, does not thereby automatically convert it into a political *issue.* Many demands die at birth or linger on with the support of an insignificant fraction of the society and are never raised to the level of possible political decision. Others become issues, an issue being a demand that the members of a political system are prepared to deal with as a significant item for discussion through the recognized channels in the system.

The distinction between demands and issues raises a number of questions about which we need data if we are to understand the processes through which claims typically become transformed into issues. For example, we would need to know something about the relationship between a demand and the location of its initiators or supporters in the power structures of the society, the importance of secrecy as compared with publicity in presenting demands, the matter of timing of demands, the possession of political skills or know-how, access to channels of communication, the attitudes and states of mind of possible publics, and the images held by the initiators of demands with regard to the way in which things get done in the particular political system. Answers to matters such as these would possibly yield a conversion index reflecting the probability of a set of demands being converted into live political issues.

If we assume that political science is primarily concerned with the way in which authoritative decisions are made for a society, demands require special attention as a major type of input of political systems. I have suggested that demands influence the behavior of a system in a number of ways. They constitute a significant part of the material upon