

CHAPTER FIVE

Culture, Knowledge, Politics

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In the last thirty years, culture has been taken more seriously as an analytic tool and used more extensively than ever before in the social sciences. A generation of scholars has now demonstrated the cultural dimensions of all political institutions and processes. At the same time, they have shown the political side of all culture, from childrearing to insane asylums, television shows to presidential inaugurations, architecture to the gardens of Versailles, fairy tales to high fashion. Across many disciplines, the study of culture today is about the power of gatekeepers, the rhetorical legitimation of formal organizations, the social determinants of art and ideas, the reproduction of hierarchies, the acquisition of cultural capital, the normalization of the individual self. To show that an idea or institution is socially constructed – one of today's great intellectual pastimes – is normally to reveal the political purposes hidden behind it (Hacking, 1999).

Political sociology should be riding high thanks to the "cultural revolution," as culture and politics have become central, intertwined lenses for viewing all social life. But I suspect the opposite has happened. Rather than defining its domain as the exercise of power, the clash of wills, the construction of favorable ideas and institutions, wherever it happens – in other words, making politics, like culture, a way of seeing the world – political sociology has defined its terrain more narrowly as the institutions of the nation-state: parties and elections, citizenship and boundaries, state agencies and

their constituencies. When power is discussed, it is the ability to set urban growth agendas or gain citizenship rights, not to make blockbuster movies or suppress masturbation. What's more, there has been considerable reluctance to recognize the cultural dynamics within the organizations of the state itself. By defining their domain as certain institutions rather than certain processes, most political sociologists – especially in the United States – have chosen a narrow and safe terrain over a broad but treacherous one. Political sociology has yet to fully incorporate meaning in its explanations, and it will be more dynamic and creative when it does.¹

BRIEF HISTORY

For two hundred years, political analysis has reflected a broader cultural conflict between Enlightenment and Romantic impulses, between "civilization" and "culture" (Elias, 1978/1939). On the one hand is an optimistic, liberal faith

¹ Here is some evidence that cultural sociology has embraced politics more than political sociology has culture. In Smelser's 1988 *Handbook of Sociology*, Anthony Orum's article on political sociology paid virtually no attention to cultural dimensions, despite his enthusiasm for E. P. Thompson, important to Orum for his historical approach not his cultural. Several years later when Diana Crane edited a volume called *The Sociology of Culture* (1994), almost all the chapters in fact concerned power and politics, although the titles were about historical sociology, formal organizations, the integration of national societies, material culture, and art.

in science and rationality, which views people as essentially the same everywhere, differing primarily by how far they have traveled along the same road of progress and development. On the other hand we see a recognition, and sometimes celebration, of abiding cultural differences, thought to be the fount of spiritual values more important than material advancement, a higher source of knowledge than science. The utilitarian tradition that derives from Enlightenment ideals has given us rational choice models of humans as largely material creatures, with mostly universal urges, and a corresponding model of social science as the search for constant laws like those of physics or chemistry. Those suspicious of modernity (whether on esthetic, ecological, or reactionary grounds) have been more likely to analyze culture as a source of resistance and alternative values. For every Bentham there has been a Coleridge, for every Tom Schelling a Clifford Geertz.

Romanticism began to stir at the very height of the Enlightenment. As early as the 1760s, the *Sturm und Drang* movement emphasized the inner self and its emotions over the colder rationality of science. Rousseau published his *Confessions* in 1783, claiming that the truth about individuals lies in their inner workings and sentiments. In 1813, Madame de Staël returned to France from a German sojourn with a new term, "romanticism." Burke (1773/1790) famously described the ancient origins and slow, organic development of British liberties solidly rooted in community – in contrast to the radical social engineering of the French Revolution. Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli transformed many of Burke's ideas into practice, adding an overlay of medieval nostalgia, while Matthew Arnold and others additionally insisted on the benefits of high culture (also Eliot, 1949). The great turn-of-the-century theorist of hermeneutics, Wilhelm Dilthey (1976), explicitly contrasted his holistic vision of cultural meaning – and the human sciences – with the Enlightenment reductionism and materialism of natural science. Into the twentieth century, theorists like Michael Oakeshott continued Burke's

image of government as a natural outgrowth of society, easily disrupted by efforts at sudden transformation. Culture and community were central to this vision.

Political sociology (and perhaps sociology as a whole: Nisbet, 1966; Seidman, 1983) was born out of the tension between Enlightenment and Romanticism. We see this in Marx's search for universal laws of history, placed precariously alongside his faith in the revolutionary action of the proletariat. It is even more striking in Weber's distinction between the value neutrality of social science and the normative commitments of researchers that influence their choice of problems. From this contrast came another: Weber's analysis of the increasing rationalization and rigidity of modern, bureaucratic societies and his desperate hope for charismatic leaders to bring innovation to these systems. Pessimism over Europe's political arrangements in the 1920s fostered a cult of actions and decisions that could set things right.

This brand of Romantic political thought came to a fiery and disreputable end with fascism, its great triumph and debacle. Figures like Carl Schmitt (1976/1932), arguing for a strong state and community, savaged liberalism for its optimism about human nature, indeed for its denial of the need for politics and the state. Inspired by Weber, Schmitt developed an existentialist reverence for powerful leaders who could make decisions and create politics by defining a society's enemies (Wolin, 1992: chapter 4). Mussolini articulated the Romantic spirit of mythical community in proclaiming, "We have created a myth, this myth is a belief, a noble enthusiasm; it does not need to be reality, it is a striving and a hope, belief and courage. Our myth is the nation, the great nation which we want to make into a concrete reality for ourselves" (quoted approvingly in Schmitt, 1985/1923:75–6). In their dread of communism, most conservatives abandoned Burkean principles of organic community to line up behind fascist parties of radical change, thereby discrediting traditional tropes of culture, community, and nation. Romantic political language was made unavailable to the initial

postwar generation of political analysts (cf. Alexander, 1995).²

Romantic tropes of culture and community could thus be rediscovered in the 1960s, migrating from the Right end of the political spectrum to the Left. The traditional association of the Left with universalist rationality and the Right with cultural singularities was in large part reversed (Gitlin, 1995). Increasingly, political activists and scholars of the Left used cultural analyses to build their followings and criticize their societies, drawing on many antimarket images first developed by conservatives. Collective identities, beginning with Black Power and Third World revolutionaries, became a source of resistance to political and economic structures; community became a rallying cry of the Left more than the Right. Ecology and feminism articulated a critique of the "instrumental reason" of Enlightenment science and self-confidence; new criticism of professions and other experts appeared. Small became beautiful. In a momentous shift, the professional middle classes, once the great supporters of the rationalistic tradition, grew more ambivalent if not critical of the Enlightenment project (Espeland, 1998; Moore, in press). (These concerns find echoes in today's antiglobalization protest.) At the same time, much of the Right embraced promarket utilitarianism with a revolutionary zeal, especially in Britain and the United States.

Political analysis changed as well. Under Enlightenment ideals in the immediate postwar generation, most students of politics believed in two forms of knowledge, that which accurately reflected reality and that which did not. Those with accurate understandings were thought to include scientific scholars, of course, but also citizens who pursued their goals by voting and forming interest groups in good pluralist fashion. Suffering from illusions, on the other hand, were those with ideologies or those who stepped outside normal institutional channels to

join social movements led by demagogues (Bell, 1960; Smelser, 1962).

Marxists challenged this vision, but simply reversed the attribution of truth and ideology. The state, in thrall to capital, promulgated false ideology through the schools, the media, and other "apparatuses" (Althusser, 1971; cf. Thompson, 1978), whereas the social position of the working class (and intellectuals aligned with it) allowed it to grasp the truth about capitalist society. If the mainstream blamed fascism on Romantic impulses, the Left frequently attributed it to the Enlightenment (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1979/1944). In postwar political analysis of all stripes, however, people were either right or wrong in their thoughts and actions.

As many activists of the 1960s — such as Todd Gitlin, Richard Flacks, and Stanley Aronowitz — became academics in the 1970s, they frequently turned to culture as a way of criticizing their societies and explaining what went wrong. Social scientists rediscovered the local meanings and practices of culture. They came to appreciate that people do not see and encounter the world around them directly, but through the many lenses of cultural meanings, language, tradition, memory devices, structures of feeling, and cognitive schemas. "False consciousness" was a convenient first effort to explain the failure of revolutions, but it was soon dropped for its arrogant assumption that scholars had the truth while the working class were dupes. Even scientific facts, Thomas Kuhn and others showed, are not entirely free from expectations, theories, and cultural frameworks. All that we know and do as humans occurs through thick webs of meaning. The social sciences took a profound cultural turn, complete with the celebration of diversity that traditionally accompanied a cultural emphasis, but (mostly) without its reactionary associations.

There were broader social sources for the resurgent Romanticism of the 1960s. Most strongly in the United States (where World War II could be viewed as a victory rather than a debacle for the Enlightenment), the 1950s had been an apogee for Enlightenment values. Science was glorified as never before. Modernism

² After Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger was the greatest anti-Enlightenment thinker, and it is no accident that he was both a Nazi sympathizer and the trailblazer for environmental ideas, the cultural turn, and the critique of instrumentalism.

in architecture and urban design triumphed through an alliance with developers and planners attracted by its no-frills economy. Architects and developers shared a disregard for local contexts and communities, which stood in the way of broad freeways and International Style blocks (the modernist premise of this architecture was that buildings had their own logics independent of existing contexts). Nuclear reactors and skyscrapers were built regardless of the qualms of local populations. Such hubris was ripe for reaction. In the early 1960s, Jane Jacobs's defense of traditional city life (1961), Rachel Carson's warning of environmental disasters (1962), and SDS's 1963 critique of instrumentalism, the Port Huron Statement, were parallel reactions to an Enlightenment apparently running amok. The movements of the 1960s, populated by those who had not lived under fascism or fought in the war against it, surreptitiously carried Romantic baggage.

Since the 1970s the Left has been torn between Romanticism and Enlightenment, between deconstructing all claims to truth, thereby undermining its own bases for political rhetoric and action, and attacking especially or only the truth claims of the powerful. (Even postmodernists have an ironic, nihilist wing and a political, engaged wing: Rosenau [1992].) In figures like Foucault and Derrida, this tension is never fully resolved; many combine thoroughgoing intellectual critique with political action based on strongly held values — with no necessary connection between the two. Collective movements are similarly torn. Feminists build social movements on the basis of the idea of "woman," for example, but also criticize each other for reifying this concept. Their critique of all metaphysics seems to undermine their own programs. (Anyone who thinks this "postmodern" plight is altogether new should read not only Weber but also Robert Musil's unsurpassed portrait, *The Man Without Qualities*, set in 1914 and written in the 1920s.)

The collapse of the Left at the end of the 1960s also helps explain the shift in scholarly perspectives. When history seems to be on your

side and your favored group is doing well, you tend to see the world as rational. When your group acts as you think they should but is blocked anyway, you may tend to turn to structural explanations, as also happened after the 1960s. When your side does not even act as you think they should, in the way the working class has regularly disappointed the intellectuals sympathetic to them, cultural and psychological explanations come naturally to the fore. In the 1970s academic radicals turned to either structure or culture to understand what had gone wrong. Those who entered the humanities could assure themselves they were still "doing politics" while studying Courbet or Shakespeare (e.g., Clark, 1973; Eagleton, 1976; Jameson, 1981).

This momentous flip-flop, in which Right and Left traded tropes of culture and particularism for those of science and universalism, is only part of intellectual history. Alongside the new free-market Right, there persisted a religious Right that continued to appeal to values of community and family. Nor were all scholars of culture and politics leftists inspired by images of popular communities. But more than ever before, progress and social justice came to be associated with criticism of large bureaucracies in the name of the local and the particular. Whatever the motivation, however, the proliferation of cultural concepts since the 1970s has enormously enriched the study of politics.

POSTWAR APPROACHES TO POLITICS AND CULTURE

For twenty years after World War II, efforts to understand politics and culture were dominated by attempts to explain fascism and communism, while at the same time reflecting national differences. Enlightenment approaches triumphed most fully in the United States, perhaps because Americans' experience of World War II was less psychologically devastating than Europeans'. One research program examined the civic culture thought to be necessary for democracy. Another addressed the occasional regression of

politics into participation outside normal channels, viewing protestors and insurgents as irrational or immature.

Civic Culture

The main American approach was to examine what was called "political culture," how people thought and behaved in the civic arena (Almond and Verba, 1963). On Enlightenment assumptions, researchers expected Western-style democracy to spread gradually throughout the world. They also sought to promote these systems to counter communism. Civic culture was linked to pluralist ideals of stable institutions within which organized pressure groups could maneuver freely, an amalgam of democratic spirit and deference toward "proper" authorities. Pockets of resistance, such as fascist Germany and many developing nations, could be explained by their backward political cultures (Banfield, 1958). Poor childrearing, as in authoritarian families, was blamed for inadequate veneration of representative elections and institutions (Adorno et al., 1950). The civic culture approach combined a belief in unitary cultures, usually associated with nation-states, faith in attitudinal surveys as the means for getting at cultural meanings, and a Burkean notion that certain national cultures were conducive to democratic institutions.

Research in this vein continues today. One branch has claimed to find increased civic-mindedness in Germany (Baker et al., 1981) and Italy (Inglehart, 1989; Putnam, 1993) and a decline in the United States (Lipset and Schneider, 1983; Putnam, 2000) and Britain (Kavanagh, 1980). Such research shows that civic virtue varies over time, affected by factors like historical events and demographic transformations, rather than being a mysterious emanation from a national population. Another branch has examined diversity within a nation as well as changes over time. Ronald Inglehart (1977, 1989), most prominently, has disclosed the rise of "postmaterial" values among significant minorities in the advanced industrial countries: issues such as

environmental protection, the quality of life, and the avoidance of hierarchy, rather than material concerns with a paycheck and what it can buy. Such values are of interest especially for their effects on political trust and participation (Barnes and Kaase, 1979).

Political culture research has come in for its share of criticism (e.g., Elkins and Simeon, 1979; Somers, 1995). It has been accused of inadequately distinguishing between individuals' attitudes and institutional opportunities open to them. It does not fully address differences within populations, especially those who do not fit the "dominant" pattern of values and behaviors; cooperation does not require consensus (Mann, 1970). It does not specify clearly the relationship between political and other domains or the ways in which cultures change over time. Many of these inadequacies have been discussed by Verba himself (1980). Another problem is the conceptualization of culture as individual attitudes measurable through surveys — a view that distinguishes the political culture tradition from the cultural revolution that has appeared alongside it. Today's practitioners, such as Robert Putnam, are at least more sophisticated in the kinds of evidence they deploy.

The Crowd Mentality

Protest movements and other extrainstitutional forms of political action were seen as the opposite of sound civic participation (Almond and Coleman, 1960:5-8). Most postwar academics dismissed them in pejorative fashion, associating them with the mass rallies of fascism and communism. In one view, personality deficiencies led people to join larger entities, to lose themselves in some cause, no matter what it was (Hoffer, 1951); deluded participants were working out internal psychodynamics from their childhoods, with little connection to the world around them (Swanson, 1956, 1957). In another, crowds led members to act irrationally, to do things they would avoid as individuals. Hence social movements were studied in the same "collective behavior" field as fads

and panics (Smelser, 1962). More charitably, protestors were immature young people, perhaps working out unresolved Oedipal issues or identity crises, but not hopelessly and permanently pathological (Smelser, 1968; Klapp, 1969). This was a popular academic response to the youth-filled social movements that appeared in the 1960s, and which would eventually evoke a more sympathetic and sophisticated view of protest. Critics of American society at least put the blame on institutional tendencies toward mass society (Kornhauser, 1959), especially after Stanley Milgram (1974) discovered that Americans, and not just Germans, could be bullied into administering electric shocks to research subjects. Psychologizing approaches like these were often crude attempts to grapple with cultural meanings (Jasper, 2004).

Like civic culture, the study of collective behavior continues. Relative deprivation theories have been used as a way of thinking about grievances and discontent in protest (Tyler and Smith, 1998), the importance of which was denied in structural models (e.g., McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Jenkins and Perrow, 1977). David Snow and coauthors (1998) found a breakdown in the routines of daily life to lie behind much collective action. To explain feelings of threat, so important to political mobilization, requires psychology and culture (Jasper, in press, a), one reason that more structural approaches have missed it entirely (cf. Goldstone and Tilly, 2001).

In true Enlightenment style, most American research in the 1950s and early 1960s was deaf to the particularities of culture and community. All nations would follow the same path of progress toward autonomous individuals freed from the cognitive and emotional bonds of local communities. When they did not, psychoanalysis could be used to explain deviations as pathologies. (As always, there were exceptions, such as Lane's [1962] lengthy interviews probing the political beliefs of fifteen men.) After the political conflicts of the 1960s destroyed this Enlightenment complacency, community and cultural embeddedness resurfaced as central categories. Scholars had several traditions, incubated in different national settings, to which they could turn in

their efforts to understand the political effects of culture.³

Structuralism

From France came a semiotic model (the best history of which is Dosse, 1997). Drawing on Saussure's structural linguistics, anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1969/1949; 1967/1958) had shown that other cultural phenomena could be treated as though they were tight systems of signs, whose meanings derived from each sign's difference from other signs rather than from the intentions of the user or correspondence to objective reality. Thus we know what "beige" means because we know how it differs from tan, brown, and other colors; it does not reflect any inherent "beigeness." As structuralism's influence grew in France in the 1950s and 1960s, any number of human conventions were analyzed as though they were a tightly organized language. Lacan (1977/1966) reinterpreted Freud's concept of the unconscious as a language. Barthes applied the same ideas to media images (1972/1957), fashion (1983/1967), and Japanese culture (1982/1970). Althusser (1969/1965, 1971) recast Marxism in the same light. A flood of English translations of semiotic works like these appeared in the 1970s.

French structuralism gave central place to culture, but allowed little room for intention or creativity, change in or resistance to the system's meanings. Language strongly constricts its users, whose tiny innovations appear rarely and spread slowly. Indeed, Saussure's linguistics largely dismissed people's spoken speech in favor of the underlying rules of language. Compared to orthodox Marxism, Althusser's concern with ideological state apparatuses was an advance,

³ Anthropologists such as Victor Turner (1967, 1974), Mary Douglas (1966, 1973), and especially Clifford Geertz (1973, 1983) also provided insights into culture. But these scholars tended to see culture as a search for existential meaning, in contrast to more politically and strategically alert anthropologists like Fredrik Barth (1959, 1969) and F. G. Bailey (1991, 2001). As a result, political sociologists were less influenced by anthropology than other sociologists were.

allowing a "relative autonomy" to noneconomic factors in politics, but economic determinism remained. And structuralists' insistence that they were doing rigorous science through their analysis of signs (for example, Lévi-Strauss hoped to locate binary sources of mythic structures in the human brain) was not the impulse that would draw so many to culture in the 1970s. The great cultural turn was deeply suspicious of science, searching instead for the same "richness" of cultural meaning that had attracted earlier Romantics. The semiotic model was alluring because it highlighted meanings, but it conceptualized them as rigid and relatively unchanging.

Critical Theory

The Frankfurt School provided a more political version of culture, steeped in the horrors of Nazi Germany. Led by philosopher Max Horkheimer, this group began its social analysis in the 1920s, in the same atmosphere of despair as Weber and Schmitt. Drawing on Marxism, they grappled with several historical observations: Modern society seemed increasingly shackled by the iron cages of bureaucracy and industrial production; the working class was not a reliable force for progressive change, accommodating easily to mainstream politics and even to the nationalism of World War I; the world's only socialist nation seemed more and more subject to Stalin's cult of personality and rigid domination by the state; and average citizens were increasingly drawn to the peculiar fascist amalgam of nationalism and populism, anticommunism and communalism. The group's exile to New York in 1934, or more precisely the conditions that forced it, only added to their reasons for pessimism.

Mass culture became the primary culprit used to explain the unfortunate direction the zeitgeist took in the 1930s.⁴ The Enlightenment

⁴ The members of the Frankfurt School who studied politics more directly, such as Franz Neumann, Otto Kirchheimer, and Frederick Pollock, receded in prominence over time and were barely read at all when the perspective enjoyed a resurgence in the 1970s.

itself, according to Horkheimer and his collaborator Theodor Adorno (1979/1944:xi-xii), led to fascist barbarism, the end result of a process in which "thought inevitably becomes a commodity, and language the means of promoting that commodity." In psychological terms, capitalist crises undermined the power of the father, in struggle against whom boys had traditionally developed their own autonomous egos and superegos. Without these, they were susceptible to mass propaganda from the state. The team – especially Adorno and Marcuse – increasingly turned their attention to art, finding in it a critique of the present and a longing for some future society that would allow freedom and creativity. Yet art was too often an instrument for capitalist docility and alienation, when it suggested that modern societies had already attained social harmony. The culture industry leveled its products to commodities, isolated from any sense of society as a whole or of the possibilities for historical change. Through numbing familiarity, for instance, radio eroded our capacities to listen to music in a sophisticated, critical way (Adorno, 1978/1938).

For former activists hoping to draw lessons from their political failures, critical theory was almost as grim as French structuralism. The culture industry could turn everything, even radical critique, into another fetishized commodity. Jürgen Habermas, primary heir to this tradition, has explicitly looked back to the Enlightenment as a way to rescue the entire Frankfurt project (1987a). Rather than an inherent tendency, barbarism is one possible path down which rationality can take us. Unlike the French, Habermas turns to speech rather than language as the basis for his analysis, finding in it a foundation for action and critique rather than a tight system (1979, 1984, 1987b). Through communicative interaction we can challenge those in power to live up to rules and ideals we all share, asking them to justify their actions. Through his ideal of "undistorted communication," Habermas suggests both an analysis of current distortions and a direction for progressive change. Pitched at such a high level of universalist abstraction, however, his work does not altogether satisfy the curiosity about and fondness for the

particularities of culture that motivated many scholars of the 1970s and 1980s. Although he puts meaning at the core of social life, Habermas remains a social theorist, not a cultural analyst.

Hegemony

A third national tradition, hailing from Britain, thoroughly attends to those details of culture and community, the stuff of meaning. Old leftists such as Raymond Williams and E. P. Thompson, heavily involved in working class movements, perceived considerable resistance to the dominant culture. When Williams tried, in *Marxism and Literature*, to give a general description of culture (liberally defined as meanings, values, practices, and relationships), he even smuggled in a model of class conflict. His residual, dominant, and emergent elements of culture all too obviously correspond to the aristocracy, bourgeoisie, and proletariat. Williams escaped Marxism's economic determinism but not its image of history as class struggle. (He gives the game away [1977:123] by the – admittedly “difficult – distinction between emergent elements “which are really elements of some new phase of the dominant culture . . . and those which are substantially alternative or oppositional to it” – a familiar metaphysical distinction between what remains capitalist and what is instead socialist).

No other work on culture and politics matches the influence of E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, published in 1963. The book's title suggests the central theme of agency, so entirely missing from the semiotic and Frankfurt traditions: The working class was present at and active in its own making. Thompson especially describes the cultural and religious traditions and ideas, with roots deep in the eighteenth century, that were major ingredients. Like Williams, he takes the working class and the class basis of historical change for granted. He assumes it was the same collective actor resisting industrialism on the basis of class interests and consciousness in the 1790s and the 1830s. But much of that resistance, Calhoun (1982) has shown, arose from preindustrial

traditions and community solidarities rather than from economic class.

British traditions of seeing class conflict in culture continued. At the University of Birmingham, Stuart Hall, Paul Willis, Dick Hebdige, and others looked to working class subcultures for forms of resistance that fused culture and politics (Hall and Jefferson, 1976). Willis (1977) famously described how youthful rebellion in the schools condemned working class boys to a life of dead-end jobs. Hebdige (1979) found resistance in the safety pins and torn clothes of punk subculture. In a related vein, Stanley Cohen (1972) saw “moral panics” in mainstream institutions' reactions to working class youth, whom they cast as dangerous “folk devils.”

The British and eventually others recovered the concept of cultural hegemony from Antonio Gramsci (2000), whose involvement in Italian politics in the 1920s made him sensitive to the real choices to be made in wars of position and wars of maneuver. The term “hegemony” attractively suggested that resistance was possible, even while most power lay with those on top. But elites' hegemony is not automatic; they must constantly work to maintain their position. According to Gramsci, much of that work is cultural, promulgating ideas favorable to their continued power. Like many cultural concepts, hegemony could be read in ways that stress structure and the stability of domination or ways that emphasize struggle and the potential for change.

These basic, if contrasting, models of culture and politics were easily exported to new realms. A good example is R. W. Connell's research. Having written about class relations in the 1970s (Connell, 1977), he turned his attention to gender in the 1980s (1987, 1995). He simply applied his British model, describing hegemonic images of masculinity, subordinate, complicit, and marginalized ones, as well as “protest masculinities.” Connell runs into the difficulties characteristic of this tradition, however: Knowing the structure of class or gender in advance, as well as in many cases the direction of historical change, these scholars misrecognize other kinds of political players (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). They also

have trouble linking ideas and concrete actors, or rather they assume a link rather than demonstrating it. Ideas and sensibilities can float more freely than the metaphor of class structure and conflict allows.

Synthesis

Agency, the ingredient missing from French and German cultural studies, had to be imported from Britain. Anthony Giddens (1973, 1979) coined the now-famous term "structuration" to insist that structures must be reproduced by agents even while constraining and channeling their agency. Drawing on interpretive traditions like those of Schutz and Winch, Giddens (1976) insisted that mutual knowledge allows social interaction to be meaningful to agents. In turning away (partially) from structuralism, Pierre Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, translated into English in 1977, also viewed culture as strategic, seeing it not just in oppressed groups but throughout social life, in marriage ceremonies as well as motorbikes. Whereas Giddens remained at the abstract level of theory, carving out a logical place for meaning in social explanation, Bourdieu reveled in the details of cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979), artistic tastes (1984), academic competition (1988), and artistic production (1996). For both, invoking agency was a way of throwing up their hands at the limits of structural explanations, a kind of residual. (On the incomplete ways in which Giddens and Bourdieu inserted agency into their work, see King [1998, 2000], and for a more cultural approach to structures, Sewell [1992].) By the end of the 1980s, cultural research had transcended the national models that had constrained it in the 1970s.

Postmodernism and Globalization

The influence of the cultural turn was obvious in discussions of postmodernism and globalization in the 1980s and 1990s. Although it has been given many nuances, postmodernism is closely related to the "postindustrial" concept that modern societies are dominated less

and less by the extraction of raw materials or their processing into industrial products, and more and more by the production and distribution of symbols, knowledge, and information (Touraine, 1971; Bell, 1973). At the same time, postmodernism in those arts affected by it has resulted from a thoroughgoing cultural constructionism in which the play of human creativity is emphasized over the search for supposedly "deeper" ontological realities (Huysen, 1986). The increasing efficiency and penetration of communication technologies are said to have created a world of simultaneous, superficial images without any extension in time or space (Meyrowitz, 1985). The result is an increasing "incredulity toward metanarratives," the metaphysical groundings by which we situate ourselves, including both the Science of the Enlightenment and the Soul of the Romantics (Lyotard, 1984). To trace power today one must "read" the polity and economy: The world is a text to be interpreted (Shapiro, 1992). (For more on this tradition, see chapter 6 of this volume.)

Culture has also left its mark on debates over globalization (Featherstone, 1990; King, 1997; Tomlinson, 1999). Much of the research conducted under this banner reflects a fusion of the interpretive concern of postmodernism with an older world systems interest in international relationships. The Marxist world systems tradition was resolutely structuralist and antiinterpretive (Wallerstein, 1997), so a generation of scholars interested in the cultural aspects of global trends had to march under a different banner, rediscovering many of the older generation's insights in the process. The speed with which the concept of globalization replaced the more structural idea of the political economy of world systems reflects, I think, the cultural turn. Debates over globalization frequently center around the relative homogenization and resistance of culture – even when disguised as debates over the future of the nation-state.

FORMS OF CULTURE

In this proliferation of work, several trends stand out. Foremost, culture is seen to permeate all

knowledge, choices, practices, and institutions, rather than being a restricted part of social life. In this "constructionist" view, all that humans can know and perceive, even the most objective scientific knowledge, is shaped by our frameworks. As a result, there is skepticism about truth claims and efforts to establish foundations in social science, which found its strongest expression in postmodernism. We simply cannot get outside our language and our theories to test the latter with total assurance. The crisp Enlightenment distinction between true and false claims is hard to maintain, as all ideas reflect their social context.

At an implicit level, culture helps constitute our reality; at a more explicit level it is deployed strategically to shape that reality (Laitin, 1988). Culture is therefore viewed as an element of strategy and power, a potential site of contestation rather than automatically a source of social unity (if it does encourage unity, this is because elites have used cultural tools for that purpose). Ann Swidler (1986, 2001) has suggested that we view culture as an open-ended "toolkit" of strategies from which individuals select in pursuing their goals and living their lives, a form of problem solving. Charles Tilly's repertoires of action (1978) is a more structural version of the same idea. As a result, the tendency has been to abandon talk of "a culture" (as a coherent entity shared by members of a "society") in favor of discussions of cultural tools, meanings, and rituals. Culture comes in discrete pieces, not as a whole. It is everywhere, but it is not everything.

At the same time, culture has not been collapsed into the subjective beliefs of individuals, which would be a kind of anything-goes relativism. The "social context" of knowledge includes institutional and rhetorical mechanisms – always imperfect – by which we continue to sort better and worse claims. There has been a strong insistence that culture is an objective reality of symbols and rituals that can be interpreted without having to delve inside the minds of individuals (e.g., Wuthnow, 1987:32). Perhaps too strong. Meaning, like language, seems both subjective and objective: We can get at it from the

structured, public meanings available to us, but also from interviews with individuals and even introspection (a lost art in sociology). Culture arises from a constant interaction between individual intentions and others' responses. You can use language and culture in new ways, but you will then struggle to be understood. Like the old question of coherence, that of subjectivity turns out to be something of a red herring.

To avoid seeing culture as either a unitary whole or subjective beliefs, we need to recognize that each individual has a unique set of meanings, generated through a lifetime's interaction with the natural and social worlds. The idea that individuals "share" a culture, which they "internalize" so that it means exactly the same to each of them, seems misguided. Turner (2002) grounds this differentiation in the learning structures of the brain, Chodorow (1999) in lifelong psychodynamic interaction.

If culture is everywhere, then we need to distinguish the forms it takes if we are to avoid tautology. Various metaphors and concepts have been used to understand it, which also roughly correspond to different embodiments and uses of culture. Unfortunately, partisans of one or the other of these concepts have regularly inflated them into general theories of culture to the exclusion of other forms and formulations – a strategy good for academic careers but not intellectual progress. Here are some of the most prominent.

Ideology. A relatively coherent and explicit system of ideas, this was the most common way to study culture in politics when observers had more confidence in their ability to distinguish true and false beliefs (the latter being ideology). It lost favor in the cultural turn, but there are signs that the term may be revived to mean simply "a system of meaning that couples assertions and theories about the nature of social life with values and norms relevant to promoting or resisting social change" (Oliver and Johnston, 2000:43). In other words, a rationalized set of images, claims, and values that are a useful tool in political mobilization and argumentation. One limitation

is that few parties, movements, or individuals attain such a high degree of coherence in their beliefs.

Frames are cognitive schemas or root metaphors that highlight or encourage certain meanings and feelings rather than others. Even though Snow et al. (1986; also Carruthers and Babb, 1996) insisted on the processes by which leaders and followers came to agree on frames to analyze a problem, in most research frames are analyzed, one at a time, through the static lens of traditional content analysis. Rhetors try on one frame after another until they find one that works with their audiences, but little attention is paid to the development of each frame.

Collective identity is the drawing of group boundaries, us versus them. It is the solidarity often needed for mobilization and is probably more an emotional than a cognitive process (Jasper, 1998). Drawn from the world of structural binary oppositions, collective identity has rarely been seen as an interactive process unfolding over time – although this may be the future direction of research (Polletta and Jasper, 2001). Although analysts emphasize the “social construction” of identities, they are only now turning to the actual work that goes into that construction rather than the structural circumstances that allow it.

Text is the favorite postmodernist metaphor (Shapiro, 1992). Sometimes literal texts are important, as postmodernists, indebted to literary criticism, prefer to read novels, constitutions, and other documents. But they also read everything else *as though* it were a text: cities, wars, geography, political cartoons, the evening news, even fondness for animals. The text metaphor reminds us that our object of study is a human creation, often carefully and consciously fabricated, not a fact of nature, but it can also be used to shift attention from the intentions of the creator to the thing created (Foucault, 1977/1969). Texts lend themselves especially to semiotic and structuralist analysis.

Narrative. Many cultural meanings come packaged in stories with beginnings and ends, told in a variety of social contexts (Hall, 1995;

Somers, 1995; Polletta, 1998). Although often treated in static fashion as structural, predictable combinations of characters and events, narratives can be used in a more dynamic fashion – “storytelling” – to get at the interaction between “speakers” (figurative as well as literal) and their audiences (Ricoeur, 1984; Davis, 2002).

Ritual. When meanings are expressed in action, they can get a grip on people without their being aware of it. The most obvious case is ritual, a symbolic expression of shared beliefs at a time and place intended to increase their emotional resonance (Kertzer, 1988). People enjoy rituals for their embodiment of group solidarity, the collective effervescence Durkheim pointed out (Berezin, 1997). Rituals can have external audiences as well as internal, telling outsiders what is important to a group or organization, what kind of entity it is, who its enemies are.

Practice. Bourdieu and Giddens both argued that much of our cultural knowledge is tacit, embodied in practices rather than consciously and explicitly held in the form of something like propositions. The emphasis is on the work that goes into making meanings and knowledge rather than the ideas produced, even though intention is often overlooked. Turner (1994) has raised questions about what exactly is shared in practices – a difficulty avoided by newer formulations which view practices as an engagement with the physical world (Archer, 2000), as in science (Knorr Cetina, 1999). We can learn to accomplish expected tasks without necessarily sharing the same underlying knowledge. This is a radical rethinking of what culture is.

Discourse. Dialogical approaches, inspired by early Soviet scholars such as Bakhtin and Vygotsky, are highly social in their models of the origins of meaning, highlight the open-ended freedom of social life, and include attention to the emotional dimensions of meaning and action (Steinberg, 1999; Barker, 2001). Like texts, however, discourse can be viewed as having a life of its own, independent of the institutional contexts in which it unfolds. (See Chapter 6.)

Rhetoric. Many of these cultural concepts can be rethought as a form of strategic and symbolic interaction by placing them in the context of rhetoric: of speakers and audiences, of emotional and cognitive responses, of the open-ended development of cultural meanings (Billig, 1987). Emotional responses become prominent, and there is room for creativity and innovation as cultural meanings are fabricated in a complex interactive process that can never be predicted in advance. Rhetoric (about which the ancient Greeks and Romans knew so much: Quintilian, 2001) seems a useful way to understand culture in politics, for it focuses on the appeals made – in both words and actions – to a variety of audiences, often simultaneously. And at 2,500 years, it is our oldest tradition of explicit social constructionism.

The first five of these cultural concepts emphasize structured meanings. Ritual and practice put meanings in action, although they usually leave little room for intentionality. The last two focus on social action and interaction as the source of meaning, and they can also be used to show strategic intentions behind cultural work. Each gets at a different form that culture takes.

MOBILIZING CITIZENS

Cultural tools and historical research have enriched each other, especially concerning the rise of the modern state and related practices. The nation-state is notorious in its need to mobilize and discipline large numbers of people, most obviously to fight in and support wars but also to reproduce the population, train it, keep it healthy and productive, acting normally or predictably. The disciplinary techniques of recent centuries are cultural efforts to shape the minds, hearts, and habits of citizens and their families. States are not the only perpetrators: Sometimes rising economic classes craft themselves (and especially the next generation), and economic leaders need to train people for specific kinds of workplaces (as in the abstract notion of

time necessary for the coordination of modern factories [Thompson, 1993] or the ability to display certain emotions on demand [Hochschild, 1983]).

As the great student of techniques used to keep people in line, Michel Foucault did more than anyone else to make the cultural turn glamorous. Through the 1960s, Foucault (1965/1961, 1973/1963, 1973/1966) was a fellow traveler of structuralism, showing the extent to which humans are trapped within their languages and languagelike conceptual systems – in what amounted to an assault on the human sciences. In the 1970s, he turned his attention to more institutional settings (1978/1975, 1978/1976), especially the “disciplinary” practices and knowledges that controlled minds and bodies: surveillance in prisons and schools, military drills, psychological tests for “normalcy,” statistics on fertility and other demographics that could be helpful to the state. He criticized existing theories of power for focusing so heavily on the state: Power was treated as though it were a thing rather than a relationship, it was seen as too centralized, and it was viewed as primarily negative and constraining. In Foucault’s “capillary” model, power also produced actions and knowledge, created new kinds of people and new practices. In the final years of his life, Foucault (1982, 1991) was groping toward a more strategic view of power, based on metaphors of war and conflict rather than the structuralist metaphor of language or economic metaphors of money and exchange.

For politics in a narrower sense than Foucault’s, the French Revolution was a great leap forward in techniques of mass mobilization – and its historiography has been a proving ground for new theories. The history of its histories shows the increased appreciation for culture in the 1970s, as studies of the class basis of the revolution (Lefebvre, 1947; Soboul, 1974) were displaced by discussions of the revolution’s symbolism, rituals, and language. François Furet (1981/1978) took the lead in attacking traditional accounts that saw the revolution as the triumph of the bourgeoisie, preferring instead to emphasize the struggle over symbols and

language (and the right to speak for the nation). Mona Ozouf (1988/1976) analyzed revolutionary festivals as special events in which meanings were constructed, even new images of time and place worked out. Although recognizing that rival festivals were used as part of a conflict between the emerging political parties, she nonetheless found in them a Durkheimian effort to forge a national collective identity. Extending their work, Lynn Hunt (1984:54) showed that politics itself is a cultural creation, an improvisation based on existing values and beliefs but also a crucible for creating new ones: "Political symbols and rituals were not metaphors of power, they were the means and the ends of power itself." This cultural and linguistic reinterpretation of the revolution stressed its creativity and particularity as an "event" (Sewell, 1996) – in contrast to earlier Marxist images of it as an important step forward for universal historical progress. Studying cultural creativity was also a way to break with Lévi-Strauss's semiotic model.⁵

Nationalism was one of the most powerful mobilizing rhetorics used after, and in response to, the universalistic pretensions and imperialist policy of the French Revolution and Napoleonic consolidation. Nationalism consists of the meanings necessary for rousing people to support modern states, usually appealing to some sense of a shared history, even if it had to be fabricated, as well as a common language – itself thought by Romantics to define the essence of a "people." At its heyday from the French Revolution to World War II, nationalism was deployed most often by aristocratic elites who wanted to mobilize the lower orders for war and work but not to help govern. The intellectual history of nationalism is closely tied to that of Romantic political thought (e.g., Fichte, 1968/1807–8), and

both of them flourished and then collapsed with fascism. The power of nationalism, long ignored by materialist and universalist interpretations of European history, which expected it (like religion) to wither, began to receive considerable attention in the 1980s (Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1983, 1991; Hobsbawm, 1990) – especially as a form of discourse (Calhoun, 1997).

Benedict Anderson's (1983) suggestion that nations are "imagined communities" opened the way to understanding the elaborate work that goes into constructing national identities, through literature, folk traditions, monuments, buildings, ritual commemorations, museums, and other carriers of collective memory. Almost all commentators have debunked nationalists' own claims to deep-rooted "natural" or essential identities – although Anthony Smith (1986) sees most nationalism as grounded in premodern ethnic identities. Fascist regimes were especially adept at manipulating symbols of national identity. Mabel Berezin (1997) and Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi (1997) have amply shown the aesthetic dimensions of politics, especially the careful staging of rituals designed to bolster Mussolini's regime. (Fascism's foes had to arouse equally strong emotions to defeat it: Dower, 1986.)

Collective identity has been recognized as a crucial building block of political action, even in relatively simple tasks like voting. Most research has focused on legally defined identities involved in citizenship and discrimination, even though all identities (including citizenship: Brubaker, 1992) are a cultural accomplishment that reflect considerable conflict over interpretations and boundaries. Some are more obviously cultural, such as religious or regional identities, which often arise in response to state efforts to suppress them in favor of national identities. In the Islamic world, religious identities today sometimes serve the role that nationalist ones did in Europe a hundred years ago (Jasper, in press, a). We can no longer assume that class will be a primary identity, especially as the most active theorizing over identity in recent years has focused on gender (Scott, 1988; Young,

⁵ For Kevin Michael Baker (1990), the revolution resulted from conceptual shifts in the field of discourse that included the word "revolution." Rosenfeld (2001) extended this symbolic approach to other, nonverbal arts in the making of the revolution. Also see Chartier (1991).

1990; Nicholson, 1990) and sexual preference (Gamson, 1995; Bernstein, 1997; Stein, 1997; Lichterman, 1999).

An untheorized tendency persists, in which identities are assumed to form as a kind of cultural icing over a structural cake. For instance, class may be thought the important factor, subject to different ways of living and feeling one's class position. Or sexual preference may be the bedrock, so that theorists can then describe the cultural work it takes to make people aware of the identity that it supports (Taylor and Whittier, 1995). If there are structural positions that are more likely to encourage collective identity, almost no one has successfully theorized about why (cf. Tilly, 1998). And each time a framework privileges one position, another comes along that seems equally important: Gender challenged class in the 1970s, but crashed on the shoals of racial differences, then sexual preferences came along to cut across the others. What is more, we recognize the structural basis only after we encounter the culturally elaborated identity, never before. Some identities form with no conceivable structural supports except what the collectivity creates for itself. We must no longer assume that collective identities exist prior to mobilization efforts – many people identify with a movement, an organization, or in some cases even a political tactic such as nonviolence (Melucci, 1996; Jasper, 1997: 85ff).

It took powerful ideas and feelings – and a lot of blood – to enlist normal people in the projects of state builders and rulers. Rulers regularly maintain their positions by manipulating symbols and rituals. They build edifices that awe their subjects, control flows of information in the media, determine school curricula, and even build gardens to demonstrate the scope of their power (Mukerji, 1997). Words are crucial, but they are not the only carrier of meaning. The power of meanings is every bit as great as that of force, and history has been a fruitful source of evidence in rediscovering the former. The cultural creation of “nations” and “peoples” was necessary for the institutional invention of modern states, the primary focus of political sociology.

OUTSIDE THE STATE

The raw materials of politics – motivations, fantasies, fears, and sensibilities – arise in any sort of practice or institution, but they are especially thought to be formed in the private sphere, whence they shape what happens in the public. The private sphere has proven remarkably amenable to cultural analysis. Studies of national character, for example, stretch back at least to Montesquieu and Tocqueville, if not Herodotus and Thucydides. More recently, to take one example, Lamont (1992) showed how French professionals use intelligence as a central criterion in judging people, whereas Americans rely more on moral probity and material success. Other works are only implicitly comparative. Weiner (1981) found widespread English resistance to industrialism even at its apparent peak in the late nineteenth century, while Perkin (1969) demonstrated the reach of the emerging middle class in the same period, including its increasing dominance of state offices. A number of scholars have addressed the roots of American individualism (Bellah et al., 1984; Merelman, 1984; Gans, 1988), and Macfarlane (1978) traced English individualism deep into medieval history. Such studies (and these are only a tiny sample) trace the social roots of political preferences.

Inspired in part by Habermas's (1989) discussion of the public sphere as the incubator of political goals, understanding, and participation, considerable research has investigated the resources normal citizens use to approach politics. Bellah and his collaborators (1984) found Americans extremely individualistic in their talk, making it hard to see how collective politics could emerge. Gamson (1992), on the other hand, used focus groups to uncover critical ideas and feelings out of which protest might arise. Eliasoph (1998) showed how a pejorative cultural definition of “politics” prevents Americans from taking their “private” opinions into public arenas – in other words, how they work hard to create the apathy so often observed. Citizens' moods, such as cynicism, resignation, or optimism, shape their political participation. Others (Reinarman, 1987; Hochschild, 1995; Block, 1996; Jasper, 2000) have explained Americans'

embrace of markets and suspicion of government.

Following the assumptions of the hegemony model, many scholars look to marginalized and oppressed groups for resistance to mainstream institutions, values, and sensibilities. They are seen, for instance, as sources of new tastes and means of expression, as with graffiti and rap (Rose, 1994). Poor African Americans (Duneier, 1999) and working class youth (Charlesworth, 2000) fascinate sociologists not only because of political sympathies but also, one suspects, as Romantic symbols of the "other" (on the blurred line between sociology and moral cheerleading, see Wacquant, 2002). Multiculturalism seems to encompass both sides: a universalist embrace of equal opportunities for cultural expression and a Romantic celebration of particularities. So-called communitarianism insists on membership in a cultural community as a defining property of human beings, even though many of its standard-bearers are rootless academics who move from university to university – and whose "communities" are rather fanciful, nostalgic constructs.

Moral panics are one form of political mobilization that sociologists have investigated, but under the rubric of deviance more often than political sociology. The concept (which as I noted developed in loose connection to the Birmingham School but also echoes crowd theories of the 1950s) describes sudden concern over a group or activity, accompanied by calls for control and suppression. Out of an infinite range of potential perceived threats, one – which may be neither new nor on the rise – suddenly receives considerable attention. The news media, public officials, religious leaders, and private "moral entrepreneurs" focus public attention on the issue, typically by identifying some recognizable group as "folk devils" – usually young people, racial and ethnic minorities, or other relatively powerless groups – responsible for the menace (Cohen, 1972; Rieder, 1985; Beisel, 1997; Springhall, 1998; Glassner, 1999 – not all of whom explicitly use the concept of moral panic). New political or legal policies are sometimes the result, and new symbols and sensibilities (available as the raw materials for future

panics) almost always are (Jenkins, 1992, 1998). "Panic" is a pejorative word, but it attracts cultural constructionists by viewing public reactions and rhetoric as a part of cultural struggle rather than linked to any objective measure of threat. Many observers have found the concept useful because it opens a window onto a society's disagreements over basic values, often intuitively felt ones, as well as onto fears and anxieties that are normally submerged.

Social movements and other nongovernmental organizations are today's preferred vehicles for articulating new sentiments and interests. In turn, recent theories of movements have described them as sources of moral, emotional, and cognitive creativity, satisfying to participants less because they pursue group and individual self-interest than because they express emerging knowledge and moral intuitions (Luker, 1984; Melucci, 1989; Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; Jasper, 1997), including new collective identities (Melucci, 1996). Whereas an earlier generation of scholars (summed up in McAdam et al., 1996) concentrated on explicitly political and economic movements, such as labor and civil rights, younger scholars turned their attention to more cultural movements in the 1980s and 1990s (Rose, 1994; Stuempfle, 1995) – sometimes using the misleading label "new social movements" (Calhoun, 1993). A number of cultural dimensions of social movements have been described, including the need to frame arguments in ways that resonate with potential audiences (Snow et al., 1986; Gamson, 1992); the use of discourse (Steinberg, 1999) and narrative (Polletta, 1998; Davis, 2002); the emotions of social movements (Jasper, 1998; Goodwin et al., 2001); and, finally, the use of collective identities for mobilization (Gamson, 1995), strategic outreach (Bernstein, 1997), and the clarification of goals (Polletta and Jasper, 2001).

Revolutions are the most political form that social movements can take, aiming at transformation of the state. Their obvious structural intent (to change state structures themselves, and sometimes economic structures too) seems to have discouraged more cultural views, perhaps combined with the long shadow of Skocpol's (1979) structural reorientation of the field.

Nonetheless, Goldstone (1991) has inserted some role for ideology into his structural model; Foran (1993) and Goodwin (2001) integrated cultural factors more fully with structural ones. (See the chapter in this volume by Goodwin.) Even structural conflicts and transformations are imbued with meaning for participants on both sides.

If cultural meanings channel political aspirations and action, they are also the stuff of politics as a spectator sport. Given the complexity of modern societies, most of us participate in politics indirectly through the media. Dramaturgical metaphors of politics become quite literal. One implication is that we need to distinguish the many audiences for any political choice or action, bringing rhetoric to the fore (Nimmo and Combs, 1980; Jamison, 1988; Popkin, 1991). Politicians carefully "manage their visibility" to achieve the desired impacts on audiences (Thompson, 1995). Robin Wagner-Pacifici (1986), for instance, successfully analyzed the Red Brigades' 1978 kidnaping of Aldo Moro (Italy's prime minister) as a social drama.

For several decades Murray Edelman has shown how politics and policies are aimed at more than one audience at the same time. Apparently drawing on "mass society" models, he distinguished material and symbolic effects of policies, with "organized" interests having sufficient power to grab the "real," namely, material, effects. Although Edelman insisted that elites do not simply use symbols instrumentally as a smokescreen – the opiate of the masses – he did describe symbolic processes pejoratively (1964:40) as "the only means by which groups not in a position to analyze a complex system rationally may adjust themselves to it, through stereotypization, oversimplification, and reassurance." He later expanded the residual contrast between rationality and symbolism into a tougher critique (drawing on French postmodernism) of political language (1977) and images (1988) for the ways in which they hide power in modern societies. When attention is thus refocused on elites rather than on "masses," the critical kernel of the earlier theories – formulated as a critique of complacent pluralism – becomes clear.

The media, as the lens through which most citizens view politics, were important to the emerging cultural perspective in the 1970s and 1980s. A number of scholars examined the characteristic biases of print and television news (Schudson, 1978; Gans, 1979; Bagdikian, 1983; Kellner, 1990). Todd Gitlin (1980) showed not only how media coverage of the New Left distorted its means and ends in the eyes of outsiders, but also how it transformed the movement's sense of its own identity. Fictional programming could also be deconstructed for its political (or apolitical) thrust (e.g., Gitlin, 1983; Jhally and Lewis, 1992). Edward Said (1978) made a large impact by decoding the cultural biases of the West in dealing with the East, showing how the former made the latter appear mysterious, unchanging, and inferior. Critics decried cultural imperialism, implying that the flow of meaning was unidirectional from the center to the periphery (Hamelink, 1983; Schiller, 1992).

This hegemonic view of the media began to give way to a more complex picture in the late 1980s. Under the influence of reader response research in literature, sociologists began to discover the varied interpretations viewers made of the programs they watched (Ang, 1985; Liebes and Katz, 1990) and citizens' ability to mix their own common-sense understandings with media information (Gamson, 1992). By the 1990s, viewers were no longer the passive recipients portrayed by critical theory, but agents actively interpreting the world, using media such as television for a variety of purposes (Tomlinson, 1991; Lembo, 2000). No one can be left in the status of pure victim: not even Islamic women (Saliba et al., 2002; Beaulieu and Roberts, 2002). A vast literature on the political meanings and impacts of other media and arts has followed a similar trajectory toward the recognition of audience agency. (On similar trends in anthropology, see Miller [1995] and Baumann [1996]; in history, Geyer and Bright [1995].) Postcolonial discourse gives a voice to those once framed as others and then as victims (Bhabha, 1994).

Political sociology, alas, has had too little connection to these closely related fields, in which culture and power have been central.

INSIDE THE STATE

The state remains the central focus of political sociology, and here cultural approaches have made the least progress. The biased vision of the 1950s, in which extrainstitutional action was based on ideology and emotion while bureaucrats were driven by interest and instrumentalism, seems to persist. Whether tinged with admiration or indignation, analyses of state actors tend to examine their practical, strategic choices and policies as though they were transparently rational. Admitting that they too operate within culture and emotion, however, would hardly render them irrational – just human.

Scholars have found it easier to examine the cultural dimensions of past states than contemporary ones, and especially practices of state formation. Thus Philip Gorski (1993, 2003) analyzed the “disciplinary revolution,” propelled by ascetic Protestantism, which helped create modern state bureaucracies. Eiko Ikegami (1995) described a parallel process in Japan, the “taming of the samurai” as part of modern state building. The works on nationalism and disciplinary power cited above also address state formation in the early modern period (and Steinmetz’s *State/Culture*, a central collection addressing the cultural dimensions of the state, has as its content and subtitle, “State-Formation after the Cultural Turn,” as though there were no culture in normally functioning states).

State culture has also been probed from the perspective of those oppressed by it. Thus James Scott, with a career devoted primarily to peasant resistance (1985, 1990), could write about what it is like to “see like a state” (1998). Like large-scale capitalism, the modern state controls territory and people by reducing them to simple, homogenized categories and numbers capable of counting and manipulation. Scott decodes the faith in progress and technology that peaked in the twentieth century within subcultures of the state and the experts closely aligned with them.

The “new institutionalism” in sociology emphasizes culture in explanations of organizations and their decisions, including components of the state (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). But its

impact on political sociology has been limited by the backward way the state has been used, primarily to criticize images of firms as autonomous rational actors. The thorough and defining intervention of states in markets has been one of the approach’s core ideas (Dobbin, 1994; Fligstein, 2001), but the emphasis has been on the state’s effect on corporate policies rather than on state policies themselves. A small current, however, emphasizes normative models of how states should be organized (e.g., democratically, with certain kinds of departments and agencies), and the worldwide spread of a single model of the national state (McNeely, 1995; Meyer et al., 1997; Meyer, 1999).

As part of their broader program to show that organizational development and change are not driven by efficiency, Meyer and Rowan (1977) argued that organizations devote considerable resources to following prevailing conceptions about how organizations should function, in other words increasing their legitimacy more than their efficiency. Strategic efficacy is not the same as technical efficiency. In some ways, the new institutionalists have substituted cognitive components for the norms of structural functionalism as the glue that binds organizations and systems of organizations. At any rate, there is a large opening for cultural analysis of organizations, including state agencies. Fligstein and Mara-Drita (1996), for example, showed how political elites strategically frame arguments to legitimate their policies to one another.

Other scholars have looked inside the state from cultural perspectives. Most common have been accounts of local organizational cultures. For instance, a fatalistic attitude toward accidents and pollution may arise among those who process nuclear materials and wastes daily (Loeb, 1986; Zonabend, 1993). In many cases, organizational cultures reflect the professional training of those who dominate the organizations (Jasper, 1990) – even when these conflict with legal mandates (Bell, 1985). Yet the same profession may contain factions with contrasting assumptions about the world, reflecting in some cases generational differences (Espeland, 1998). Unfortunately, many of these works present the cultural aspects of decision making as though

they interfered with rationality, accepting an unrealistic notion of pristine rationality.

Culture becomes a clear explanatory variable when different sets of meanings are compared or traced across different institutional levels. For example, I was able to trace different "policy styles" – based largely but not entirely on professional training – across different organizations involved in nuclear policy making (Jasper, 1990). Disagreements were especially strong between engineers, who relied on developing technologies and transforming the physical world as the solution, and economists, who preferred to let prices reconcile supply and demand, aided by careful cost-benefit analyses. Then, by comparing the organizational distributions of these styles across countries, I could explain policy outcomes. The same policy styles were found inside and outside the state, helping to explain why some preferences affected policies more easily than others. What Haas (1992) calls "epistemic communities" of similarly trained professionals transcend the boundaries of the state and of the nation. The borders of the state are porous, and cultural meanings are one of the things that flow across them.

Finally, a growing body of research has examined the role of ideas in politics and policy making (reviewed in Campbell, 2002). All too much of this literature compares the impacts of ideas and interests, as though the two were competing and mutually exclusive – a starting point encouraged by the boldest rational choice formulations (Jacobsen, 1995; McDonough, 1997). Some research on ideas often pushes into more implicit forms of meaning (such as worldviews: Dobbin, 1994); looks at experts and others who attempt to "own" social problems and policies (Gusfield, 1981); and examines the social networks through which the ideas flow (Keck and Sikkink, 1997). Discussion of ideas rather than less explicit meanings still tends to concede considerable rationality to state officials, however.

Despite this start, the emotions, cognitions, and moral principles and intuitions of elected officials and bureaucrats cry out for closer investigation.

UNDEVELOPED THEMES

Now that they have established that culture matters, researchers seem likely to continue current trends toward distinguishing and refining its many effects. Identities, frames, narratives, and so on operate differently. Once they are distinguished, we can begin to study the relationships among them. In what rhetorical situations are narratives most effective? When do narratives help to construct identities? Do different schemata give rise to different frames or identities? We still need to describe the identities, rhetorics, and so on at work in different countries and groups, now that so much work has been done defining these concepts at an abstract level. We need to know more about the concrete meanings in use; we currently lack even basic typologies for many of them.

Other aspects of culture and politics have been ignored almost entirely.

Emotions, for example, permeate all social life. Long-standing affects such as love and hate (but also trust and respect) are both crucial means and fundamental ends of political life. Other emotions, such as compassion or indignation, are complex cultural constructs that guide much political action. Moods such as depression, hope, or cynicism affect people's ability and willingness to participate in politics. Although some emotions seem hardwired into us, especially reflex emotions like anger and surprise (Griffiths, 1997), most are eminently cultural creations. Political psychologists have examined the effects of emotions on political perceptions and voting (Ottati and Wyer, 1993), and students of social movements have rediscovered the emotional dimensions of protest (Goodwin et al., 2001; Aminzade and McAdam, 2001). Otherwise, even the most culturally oriented analysts of politics have ignored emotions – even though in many cases it may be the associated emotions that give recognized causal mechanisms their real explanatory thrust (Jasper, 1998). It is obvious that emotional workmanship goes into the construction of someone as a victim, for example, but less so how much emotional work

must go into constructing someone as rational (Whittier, 2001).

Character. Victims are one example of the character types we commonly construct in political life; the other main ones are heroes and villains. Heroes and villains are both powerful, victims weak. Heroes and victims share moral righteousness, something villains notably lack. Through cartoons, jokes, and direct description, political parties, nations, and other players try to portray themselves as heroes or victims, their opponents as villains. The subject of the epideictic tradition in rhetoric, this kind of praise and blame is a core political activity rarely studied by political sociologists. It is cognitive, moral, and emotional at the same time.

Biography. The self and individuals are another topic inadequately studied – even by post-modernists who dismiss the idea as an illusion. There is little borrowing from the vibrant field of political psychology or mainstream research on personality. We need to understand selves if we are to incorporate individuals into our explanations. Ironically, the more “macro” one’s research, the more difference an idiosyncratic individual can make – as historians and readers of biographies understand. Political sociologists are less likely today to try to explain “the state” than they are to explain specific outcomes such as Swedish trade policies in the 1960s, and as soon as we are on concrete historical terrain, key figures loom large in any explanation. A dictator’s decision to fight or flee a mob, a prime minister’s passion for nuclear energy or ecology, a protest leader’s commitment to nonviolence: All these have significant effects, reduced to noise in more structural models (for critique: Jasper, 1990, 1997). Individuals are also widespread symbols (Fine, 2001). Through the intersection of culture and psychology, we should be able to deal with them more effectively. Many of these issues have been covered under the rubric of leadership, a matter central to Weber but so contrary to current trends that it lacks a chapter in this handbook.

Leadership. The subject of leadership has increasingly been left to students of strategy (e.g., Allison and Zelikow, 1999), while political so-

ciologists have looked for “structures.” Leaders were a staple of research in the 1950s, aimed at explaining demagogues’ ability to manipulate mass followers – a topic that at least focused on rhetorical dynamics (Burke, 1941). The functions of coordinating a team or agency are today collapsed into organizational research. Yet the emotional identifications, rhetorical framings, and other persuasive powers of leaders remain a rich and understudied topic. Cognitive and emotional issues of leader succession, for instance, are crucial for formal organizations, regimes, parties, revolutions, and protest groups (Gouldner, 1954:70–101).

Cognition. The cognitive revolution in psychology has paralleled the cultural one in sociology, but there has been little cross-fertilization. One has universalist pretensions whereas the other does not, but they cover similar topics like memory, basic assumptions, decision making, and so on (Cerulo, 2002). A variety of psychologies may have something to contribute to political sociology. Even psychoanalysis, once popular but now in disfavor, can still tell us something about unconscious motivations, hidden meanings, and personality types (Jasper, 2004). If individual leaders occasionally play pivotal roles in politics, then psychobiographies should have a larger part in our explanations.

Zeitgeist. Analyzed by Mannheim (1952/1928) but forgotten in recent years, every microgeneration comes of age in a slightly different cultural mood, retains different memories. The “structures of feeling” in a society (Williams, 1977) shift rapidly, reframing conflicts and how they are experienced, even shifting the identities of the players involved. Senses of momentum, for instance, shift quickly but influence goals and strategies. Each year’s recruits to parties and movements differ somewhat from other years’ (Whittier, 1995).

Strategy. Strategic action is a topic that has received both too much and too little attention. Just as rational choice theorists have managed to define rationality in their own narrow way, so the subset of them called game theorists have staked a claim to strategic thinking that has scared away other social scientists. Diverse

institutional and cultural contexts disappear in the sparse elegance of game theory. Strategic choice depends heavily on personality traits, know-how, routines, emotions – and a whole range of cultural meanings of every sort. Again, the structural bias of the 1980s has prevented political sociologists from recognizing strategy when they encounter it. They are likely to overestimate the constraints and underestimate the choice involved in any given outcome. A strategic approach might be the key to integrating culture and structure, order and agency (McAdam et al., 2001; Fligstein, 2001; Jasper, in press, b).

Agency. Agency is a concept whose popularity has risen in recent decades alongside that of culture, and the two ideas are often linked. Beginning with Giddens (1979), however, agency is a term most often used by structurally oriented researchers when they reach the limits of their models: a residual category for what is left over, dismissed as unexplainable. Attention to strategy and culture would, I think, help us give a fuller account of agency. People make choices, face dilemmas with no right answers, interact with each other in open-ended ways. In the political realm, this is the source of most freedom, creativity, and contingency (Jasper, 1997; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).

In addition to these underdeveloped areas, attention to culture could enrich other approaches and dimensions of political life. In recent years scholars have come to appreciate the role of social networks in mobilizing people and influencing policy. Although there remains a frequent tendency to reify the network metaphor in structuralist fashion, the impact of networks is mainly that they allow information to flow, affective loyalties to evolve, and common understandings to grow (Gould, 1995; Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994).

Structural approaches more generally might benefit from attention to culture. In their concern to demonstrate the autonomy of state bureaucrats (in a polemic against earlier marxist simplifications), structuralists overlooked one of the main ways that state and nonstate institutions

are connected, namely culture (Skocpol, 1979; Block, 1977; Evans et al., 1985). Political sociology has still not entirely recovered from this one-sided paradigm. But as we have seen, the most “structural” institutional settings are permeated by cultural meanings, which account for much of their causal impact.

In addition, many of the criticisms and gaps in rational choice theory can be addressed by supplementing it with culture (Ferejohn, 1991; cf. Adams, 1999). These include the origins of preferences, still often treated as exogenous to rational choice models. Culture may also help us grapple with noncomparable preferences, especially what Taylor (1989) calls moral “hypergoods” that people are reluctant to give up at any cost. A number of the decision-making biases described by cognitive psychologists and behavioral economists are the result of local cultures as well as limitations of the human brain (Kahneman et al., 1982; Thaler, 1992; Camerer, 2003). More broadly still, when actors satisfice rather than maximize, they must follow cultural traditions to tell them what satisfactory levels are, and often bring in culturally determined reference groups in doing so. Culture is the main context within which strategic decisions are made (Jasper, in press, b).

A number of these paths would lead cultural approaches out of their recurrent Romantic celebration of particularism, especially by linking them to abiding strategic concerns. Some scholars have already criticized the emphasis on community and culture for undermining universal standards of justice and equality (Gitlin, 1995; Barry, 2001), others – more dubiously – for abandoning materialism (Palmer, 1990). Habermas views humans as cultural creations yet still seeks universalist agreement through dialogue. In the study of politics it is hard to avoid moral polemics, but cultural approaches have given us a number of taut analytic tools for understanding the politics of social life regardless of our own value judgments. Political sociology will be a more interesting field as it continues to open up dialogues between culturalists and others.

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