Traditional/Modern In Modernised Modernisation Thinking. The Development Of A Weberian Dichotomy

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Introduction

Summing up complex phenomena and complex dimensions of reality in neat, apparently simple, formulations is usually hazardous. The rich theoretical heritage of Max Weber is doubtless complex. Still what I am going to do now is to stick my neck out by claiming that the core of Weber's contribution to the core of what we know today as development studies can be neatly summed up under the celebrated dichotomy of **traditional versus modern**. This is a general sociological dichotomy, but it has obvious relevance to the study of modes of political and economic domination, which is probably the most important reason why it has become so highly significant within development studies.

The idea of that dichotomy was developed at length by the sociologist Talcott Parsons, whose work we know to have been greatly inspired by that of Weber. In the late nineteen-fifties and in the sixties the idea was then picked up from Parsons by a certain number of other sociologists and political scientists in the U.S., who turned the dichotomy into the core variable of the modernisation school which was at that time about to become predominant within development studies. It is true that the modernisation school was soon to fall into partial disrepute even within established social science. This occurred in the early nineteen-seventies. According to my own reading of the history of our branch of social science, however, that disrepute was not only partial but basically quite limited and even superficial.

My contention is instead that the modernisation school remained well alive up to the present moment, and that we need only scratch very lightly the surface of much of current development studies in order to find intact the core element of the conceptual structure erected in the sixties on the originally Weberian basis. I think this is an important observation, not least because **traditional versus modern** carries, in the minds of many, powerful normative

connotations of quite a different although related dichotomy, namely that of **backward versus advanced**, capable in turn of taking off in all kinds of ideological directions.

I am not at this stage of our discussion pronouncing any judgment on whether Weber's theoretical heritage was and is well or badly taken care of by his various self-pronounced trust-keepers. So far I am only saying that the traditional/modern dichotomy has remained vital in development studies all the way into the final decade of our millennium. As we shall see, there are some easily understandable reasons for this, all of which need not necessarily be linked to the normative power of attraction of the notion. Even "post-modernists" seem somehow to take the dichotomy for granted, in the sense that a post-modern stage presupposes a modern one.

When speaking of "the core element of the conceptual structure erected in the sixties on the originally Weberian basis", I have the following in mind:

Starting out from a primitive stage, the history of human societies moves naturally on to a ***traditional*** *stage from where it continues under suitable conditions towards a* ***modern*** *one. The latter stage not only tends strongly, conceptually seen, to be "final", but it is also, inherently, more desirable or humanly better than the preceding stages.*

The first part of this formulation will obviously remain a question-begging tautology, as long as we do not look into what is meant by "traditional" and "modern" (regarding largely, for our present purposes, the question of "primitiveness" as a sub-question of that of "traditionality"). That task will be taken on shortly. Let me first, however, elaborate a bit further and at the same time sum up, into the following four-fold series of propositions, the essence of what is intended to be shown through the present contribution:

1. *The basic notion of a "traditional"-to-"modern" historical tendency was obviously not invented by Max Weber. It is still truly Weberian in the sense that it acquired its normal-social-science, ideal-type meaning through Weber's work.*

2. *The normative dimension of this, however, elevating modernity to superiority, has been added by our latter-day modernisers. It does not seem to be very clearly, if at all, traceable to Weber himself. Sometimes*

the normative part is even presented disconnectedly from the notion of an historical tendency, the former then being nothing but a philosophical or politico-ideological norm disguised to appear as science.

3. *In Weber's central writings a sophisticated multi-dimensional mode of causal-probabilistic analysis is at work. Modern modernisation analysis, on the contrary, does not infrequently display a simple one-way mode of attempted cultural explanation tending more or less strongly to remain at a descriptive and sometimes even tautological level.*

4. *The core of that part of Weber's theoretical heritage which is found today in the core of development studies is thus only partially Weberian, if by "Weberian" is meant being true to Weber's own discernible theoretical and methodological intentions.*

Having said this much by way of introduction, let us now proceed step by step, beginning by a look at the traditional/modern dichotomy as formulated by Max Weber. This will be followed by comments -- necessarily brief -- both on Talcott Parsons' contribution in his role as the foremost bridge-builder between Weber and modernisation theory and on a few significant contributions by the modernisation theoreticians themselves. We shall end by an attempt to assess the most recent (modern?) ways of using the modernisation variable in development studies.

A Weberian Dichotomy

Without specialized knowledge of Max Weber's work, I have no intention of trying to add any new elements to its interpretation. The more humble task I have in mind may still seem daring to some: i.e. to pin-point very briefly (1) the meaning of the modern/traditional dichotomy, and (2) the notion of how history may move from tradition to modernity, both as these two stand out conceptually in a few central and well-known formulations by Weber himself and as transmitted to us through more or less authoritative and convincing interpretations of his work. [1]

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1. The writings by Weber to which I will be referring are all found in Gerth and Mills (1946, reprinted in 1969), who have also translated them from the German originals. The texts in question are: 1. "The social psychology of the

The modern/traditional dichotomy

In his famous 1918 lecture at Munich University, *Politik als Beruf* (Politics as a vocation), Weber was concerned most specifically with "charismatic" authority, as a special form of authority legitimizing political domination in the eyes of those who are dominated. But in order to define "charismatic" authority he had to set it clearly apart both from the first type, which according to him is **"traditional"** , and from the type that comes "finally", which is **"modern"**. The essence of "modernity", as far as power and domination are concerned, is elaborated by Weber in much greater detail in such a text as the chapter on bureaucracy found in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Economy and society) (in Gerth and Mills, pp. 196-244),

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world religions" (Gerth and Mills, pp. 267-301). This is an introduction, published in 1915, to *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen* (The economic ethic of the world religions), a collection of essays presented by Weber in serial form 1915-1919, in turn included in the *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (Collected essays on the sociology of religion) published as a collection of texts under that title after his death in 1920 and spanning the whole period from 1905 till then. Although using the English translation by Gerth and Mills for all quotations, I have also been consulting Weber's own original German language version (Weber 1989), in order to check for nuances. 2. "Politics as a vocation" (Gerth and Mills, pp. 77-128). Originally a speech, *Politik als Beruf*, at Munich University, 1918, published in 1919. 3."Bureaucracy" (Gerth and Mills, pp. 196-244). This is chapter 6, part III, of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Economy and society), published posthumously in 1921, but essentially written before 1914, according to Gerth und Mills (p. 159). The introductory chapters of their book (pp. 3-74), written by Gerth and Mills themselves, provide a wealth of significant background on Weber's work. However, for the purposes of the present essay I have found myself drawing most profoundly on the important interpretative essay by Friedrich H. Tenbruck on "The problem of thematic unity in the works of Max Weber" (in Tribe 1989, pp. 42-84). Tribe's own introduction to his anthology also provides a useful perspective. After almost finishing the present text, I received the 1991 edition of Gerth and Mills, with a new preface by Bryan S. Turner (pp. xii-xxx). Turner's concluding comments on "Weber as a theorist of modernity" (pp. xxvii-xxviii) are along similar lines as my own argument. So are important aspects of Vandergeest's and Buttel's (1988) plea for a "neo-Weberian" approach. After finishing the first version of this text, my attention was drawn to an essay by a Swedish philosopher (Åkesson 1923) who in the early twenties read Weber in a way surprisingly close to Tenbruck's much later reading.

but the forceful formulations given in *Politik als Beruf* stand out as classic.

Let me quote these definitions in full, in order for us to have our point of departure for the following discussion quite clear. Although our concern here will be only with traditional and legal-rational-modern authority, I include also the paragraph on charismatic authority, both in order to give the full context of Weber's three principal "justifications" for domination and in order to demonstrate that *charisma* (gift of grace) according to him can be associated both with traditional and modern types of power. We use the translation into English from the German original by Gerth and Mills (1946, pp. 78-79):

> Like the political institutions historically preceding it, the state is a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate (i.e. considered to be legitimate) violence. If the state is to exist, the dominated must obey the authority claimed by the powers that be. When and why do men obey? Upon what inner justifications and upon what external means does this domination rest?
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> To begin with, in principle, there are three inner justifications, hence basic *legitimations* of domination.
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> First, the authority of the 'eternal yesterday,' i.e. of the mores sanctified through the unimaginably ancient recognition and habitual orientation to conform. This is 'traditional' domination exercised by the patriarch and the patrimonial prince of yore.
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> There is the authority of the extraordinary and personal *gift of grace* (charisma), the absolutely personal devotion and personal confidence in revelation, heroism, or other qualities of individual leadership. This is 'charismatic' domination, as exercised by the prophet or - in the field of politics - by the elected war lord, the plebiscitarian ruler, the great demagogue, or the political party leader.
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> Finally, there is domination by virtue of 'legality,' by virtue of the belief in the validity of legal statute and functional 'competence' based on rationally created *rules*. In this case, obedience is expected in discharging statutory obligations. This is domination as exercised by the modern 'servant of the state' and by all those bearers of power that in this respect resemble him.
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> It is understood that, in reality, obedience is determined by highly robust motives of fear and hope - fear of the vengeance of magical powers or of the power-holder, hope for reward in this world or in

> the beyond - and besides all this, by interests of the most varied sort. Of this we shall speak presently. However, in asking for the 'legitimations' of this obedience, one meets with these three 'pure' types: 'traditional,' 'charismatic,' and 'legal.'

It is true that, in the quoted paragraphs, Weber only uses the word "modern" in passing to denote the type of authority that in his presentation comes "finally". His preferred term is "legal". From a somewhat broader reading it is still very clear that the quoted paragraphs are highly relevant four our purpose of illustrating how he opposes *traditional* to *modern. Legal* authority is *formally rational* which is also the essence of what he regards as *modern.* This is the conceptual structure of Weber's thought on the matter.

But at the very basis of what drives Weber into this realm of analysis during the final years of his life -- 1913-1920 -- is his concern with the dominant economic ethics of the great world religions, and more specifically the way in which those ethics affect action. This, according to Weber, is done by way of "ideas" and "world images" functioning as "switchmen" (*Weichensteller*), as he writes in 1915 in his introduction to *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen* (The economic ethic of the world religions) (in Gerth and Mills, p. 280), in a formulation loaded with theoretical and methodological significance:

> Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the 'world images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest.[2]

Under "the irresistible rise of rationalization and disenchantment" (Tenbruck in Tribe 1989, p. 60) arising from the human need and even craving for unified "world images", a specifically *modern* manner of relating to society developed in the West. This "switched" the interests of economics and politics into a likewise modern direction of social action (Weber's introduction to *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen,* in Gerth and Mills 1946, p. 299):

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[2] Let me give this quote in the original version too: "Interessen (materielle und ideelle), nicht: Ideen, beherrschen unmittelbar das Handelns der Menschen. Aber: die 'Weltbilder', welche durch 'Ideen' geschafffen wurden, haben sehr oft als Weichensteller die Bahnen bestimmt, in denen die Dynamik der Interessen das Handeln fortbewegte." (Weber 1989, p. 101.)

> With the triumph of *formalist* juristic rationalism, the legal type of domination appeared in the Occident at the side of the transmitted types of domination. Bureaucratic rule was not and is not the only variety of legal authority, but it is the purest. The modern state and municipal official, the modern Catholic priest and chaplain, the officials and employees of modern banks and of large capitalist enterprises represent, as we have already mentioned, the most important types of this structure of domination.

The dynamics of movement from tradition to modernity

Concerning the question of what constitutes the thematic core of Weber's work, I follow Tenbruck's reasoning (in Tribe 1989, pp. 42-84), which appears to me highly convincing. Tenbruck singles out the introduction by Weber to *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen* (just quoted) as one of three essays where "the first systematic, though highly enigmatic, *summa* of his (Weber's) long term historico-sociological researches" is presented (*ibid.* p. 58). According to Tenbruck, that introduction also provides us with the key to Weber's view of how history has come to move from traditionalism to Western modernity. This has already been touched upon, but will now be somewhat elaborated. However fascinating the problem area, I will reluctantly limit myself here to a few minimal remarks, barely sufficient to enable us to carry our discussion forward as indicated in the introduction.

Tenbruck claims, importantly, that although the idea of a "rationalization process" is taken today "to be synonymous with occidental development," for Weber this was "a particular case of a more general class of events" (*ibid.* p.51), all arising from the fundamental need of human beings "to possess a rational answer to the problem of theodicy" (*ibid.*, p. 65). The following quote from Tenbruck (*ibid.*, p. 69) gives a good summary of how Weber linked this existential craving to inner-worldly action:

> The experience of fortune and suffering shatter(s) the purposive-rational categories of a pragmatic orientation to things; the elucidation and solution to these experiences can neither be explained nor overcome by technical or artificial means... For Weber, the purposive rational orientation encloses a perpetual need, a search for charisma that lies beyond the everyday; charisma promises an immediate deliverance from the uncertainty of action, and the desire that action should result in success goes hand in hand with the reality of the uncertainty of action.

> Weber proceeds from a constant and universal anthropological problematic: the experience of the world - possibly in its most simple form, that of acute suffering - is perceived as something senseless.

In *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen,* Weber strives to attain a unified conceptualization of the historical processes of rationalization. This is based on comparing how the different religious world images (*Weltbilder*) resulting from different ways of answering "the problem of theodicy" have implied different economic ethics. How have, in turn, those ethics "shaped the relation of man to reality" (*ibid.*, p. 64)? Weber's reasoning is based on the assumption that "certain ideas under the compulsion of an inner logic (*Eigenlogik*) develop their rational consequences and thereby effect universal-historical processes" (*ibid.*, p. 68). This is how the "switch" from religious development to, for instance, capitalist modernisation is affected (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 72-73).

In the following quote from Tenbruck (pp. 70-71) an attempt is made to explain Weber's view on why rationalization led to modernisation in some historical cases but not in all:

> The principal strand, outlined above, is only one branch in a multilinear 'genealogical tree' of religious rationalizations. As in a decision tree, this can run along several paths, some of which are 'blind,' others going further to higher levels which is why, in universal-historical terms, they were both successful and consequential. Whether a society remains stationary at one point, or whether it is embarked upon a particular path depends on circumstances. For every option taken, other future options are excluded. The 'genealogical tree' reproduces the specific logic of religious rationalization and the directional role (*Weichenstellung*) of ideas... There is a historical probability that some of the developments specified in the genealogical tree will in fact follow the direction outlined.

Religious disenchantment (*Entzauberung*) ushers in **modernisation**. Both processes are aspects of rationalization, although Weber, according to Tenbruck, obscures these distinctions by using the term "rationalization" somewhat indiscriminately:

> The conclusion of the process of religious disenchantment provides the spirit from which capitalism unfolds in its role as the rationalizing force of modernity. The emergence of the last stage of rationality is carried forward by new agents - science, economics, politics. Inner-worldly asceticism not only marks the end-point but also the internal limits of religious disenchantment. (*Ibid.*, p. 52.)

Weber conceptualized the way of development from **"traditionalism"** to **"modernity"** on the basis of Judaeo-Christian historical experience. Methodologically he did so by focusing on ideas, and more specifically on religious world images, linking these both to *interests* on the one side and *action* on the other, through a sophisticated multi-dimensional, causal-probabilistic mode of analysis.

Modernity, in the sense thus conceptualized, has proven its power of political and economic domination in the world. As should be obvious from what has been said, that kind of fact did not cause Weber to see such modernity as predetermined to be the only possible outcome of the historical processes of rationalization. Nor does it, of course, mean that he saw it as necessarily desirable. Let us end this part of our presentation by a few, very brief, words on the latter topic.

In the one of their introductory chapters entitled "Intellectual Orientations", Gerth and Mills point out that "Weber's liberal heritage and urge prevented him from taking a determinist position... Yet the possibilities of the future are not infinite..." (p. 70). Nor were they, in Weber's view, very encouraging. In 1906 he wrote, for instance, as quoted by Gerth and Mills (pp. 71-72) from an article published in the review *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* :

> It is utterly ridiculous to see any connection between the high capitalism of today - as it is now being imported into Russia and as it exists in America - with democracy or with freedom in any sense of these words. Yet this capitalism is an unavoidable result of our economic development.
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> ... certain conceptions of ideal values, grown out of a world of definite religious ideas, have stamped the ethical peculiarity and cultural values of modern man. They have done so by working with numerous political constellations, themselves quite unique, and with the material preconditions of early capitalism. One need merely ask whether any material development or even any development of the high capitalism of today could maintain or create again these unique historical conditions of freedom and democracy in order to know the answer. No shadow of probability speaks for the fact that economic 'socialization' as such must harbor in its lap either the development of inwardly 'free' personalities or 'altruistic' ideals.

As we see from our example -- and others could easily be given, up to the end of his life in 1920 -- Weber's normative stand with regard to modernity was not positive. He based this on a pessimistic evaluation of the chances for human freedom inherent in modern forms for economic and political domination. As summed up by Gerth and Mills (p. 73):

> For Weber, capitalism is the embodiment of rational impersonality; the quest for freedom is identified with irrational sentiment and privacy. Freedom is at best a tarrying for loving companionship and for the cathartic experience of art as a this-worldly escape from institutional routines. It is the privilege of the propertied and educated: it is freedom without equality.

Summed up in this manner, Weber's thinking would seem to be separated by light-years from the blueprints of modern modernisation theoreticians. Let us continue now by seeing how the carry-over from the one to the others was nevertheless accomplished.

The Pattern Variables of Talcott Parsons

Soon after Max Weber's death, Talcott Parsons, later to become the pre-eminent functionalist sociologist of the United States, arrived in Heidelberg as a foreign graduate student. His doctoral thesis, presented in 1929, was on the emergence of capitalism as viewed by European thinkers, including importantly Weber. His own major works, amounting ambitiously to a "general theory of action" (cf. Parsons and Shils 1952, entitled *Toward a general theory of action*), contributed besides their own considerable impact forcefully to shaping the image of Weber in U.S. social science.

One indispensable component of Parsons' theory construction is constituted by his "pattern variables" (Parsons and Shils 1952, pp. 76-91):

> .... an actor in a situation is confronted by a series of major dilemmas of orientation, a series of choices that the actor must make before the situation has a determinate meaning for him... Specifically, we maintain, the actor must make five specific dichotomous choices before any situation will have a determinate meaning. The five dichotomies which formulate these choice alternatives are called the *pattern variables* because any specific orientation (and consequently

> any action) is characterized by a pattern of the five choices. (*Ibid.*, p. 76.)

As mentioned by Mitchell (1967, p. 32), in his penetrating study on Parsons and the study of politics, a sixth pattern variable was later added by Parsons, thus providing us with the following set of apparently dichotomous possibilities of choice:

1. *Affective -- affective neutrality.*
2. *Self-orientation -- collectivity-orientation.*
3. *Particularism -- universalism.*
4. *Ascription -- achievement.*
5. *Diffuseness -- specificity.*
6. *Consummatory -- instrumental.*

These are meant to sum up the options available to human actors. We need not here go into a critical discussion of the variables. As pointed out by Mitchell (*loc.cit.*), among others, they can clearly be questioned "in terms of their exhaustiveness, their formulation, and whether they are in fact, as Parsons and Shils claimed, dichotomous or scalable into degrees of 'more and less'."

The pattern variables are still focused in the present context for two reasons: (1) because Parsons himself had been inspired by Weber in developing them, and (2) because of their genetic importance to the development of the modernisation school in development studies. On the first point, the conceptual affinity between Weber's traditional/modern variable and Parsons' pattern variables is quite obvious. Parsons himself was explicit on this, as for instance in the following statement from 1970 (in *Dædalus*, vol. 99, p. 842, quoted here after *Eliæson* 1982, p. 134): "The most important thread of continuity (from Weber to Parsons) lies, I think, in what came to be called the 'pattern-variable' scheme." As far as the second point is concerned, the link forward from Parsons to the modernisation school will soon be demonstrated. But let us first finish our brief presentation of the variables as such.

Parsons' comprehensive system of action included culture, social system, personality, and organism -- like a set of Pandora's boxes. But he devoted more effort to the analysis of the social system than to the others (cf. Parsons 1951, entitled precisely *The social system*). It is also within the social system that we find something resembling a political system, which can then be analysed in its own right with regard to how it resolves the four functional problems abstractly

posited by Parsons to confront every system, namely the problems of (1) adapting to the environment, (2) achieving collective goals, (3) maintaining latent patterns, and (4) integrating the actions of system members.

The *patterns* according to which social systems confront their inescapable functional problems are described and classified with the help of the pattern variables, which thus provide the basis for the classification of types of social structure. (Cf. Parsons 1951, pp. 180-200.)

Without having gone very deeply into the complex structure of Parsons' conceptual structure, we are still by now able to see how the pattern variables present any actor in a social system with a choice of action varying between two poles which can easily be summed up as *traditional* versus *rationalized, modern.* In each of the six dichotomies presented above, the left side is part of a "traditional" and the right side of a "modern" pattern. In some of the dichotomies, however, it is in reality quite unclear which side is most modern or traditional. This ambivalence is most marked in the case of self-orientation/collectivity-orientation, as many "traditional" societies are known to be highly collectively oriented. But some of the other dichotomies can also be turned around to fit empirical traits of various societies, which goes to illustrate their streak of arbitrariness.

The thrust of the construct is brought out even more clearly by considering the origin of the pattern variables in Parsons' work. As analysed by Buxton (1985) in his illuminating study of Parsons as an "activist" thinker, seeking to use professionalised social sciences to contribute to the rationalization of the capitalist nation-state, the pattern variables were originally conceived through studying the medical profession:

> According to Parsons, medicine embodied in its most highly developed form the elements of professional practice so critical for the maintenance and reproduction of advanced capitalism. (*Ibid.*, p. 84.)
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> One-half of the patterns - disinterestedness, universalism, affective neutrality, and functional specificity - defined the practical orientation of the professional. In contrast, self-interest, particularism, affectivity, and diffuseness referred to a residual non-professional practice. Since professionalization was intrinsically related to the process of rationalization, the presence of what one can

> call the primary half of the pattern variables was to ensure *modernity and progress* (italicized here). (*Ibid.*, p. 86.)

Gabriel Almond and Modernisation

The next decisive step in the process of "modernisation" ("rationalization" included?) of the traditional/modern variable was taken in 1960. The lead actor was Gabriel Almond, prominent political scientist in the United States, dauntlessly committed at the time to the task of developing "a formal theory of political modernization" on the basis of Parsons' pattern variables and sociological functionalism (Almond 1960, p. 63). As emphasized by Buxton (*op.cit.*, p. 211), this kind of theory-building was activist in the sense of intending to help bring about "modernization" by "espousing a theoretical framework grounded in the primary patterns".

In executing his role as, probably, founding father of the modernisation school within political science, Almond thus made conscious and explicit use of Parsons' pattern variables in order to differentiate between "traditional" politics on the one side and "rational" or "modern" politics on the other. He also explicitly made a point of the close affinity between Parsons and Weber in this regard (*op.cit.*, p. 22).

According to Almond (*op.cit.*, p. 17), all political systems are inevitably faced with the functional necessity of performing four "input" and three "output" functions: (1) political socialization and recruitment, (2) interest articulation, (3) interest aggregation, (4) political communication, (5) rule making, (6) rule application, and (7) rule adjudication. Put succinctly, without undue simplification, Almond's position is that this can be done in either a "traditional" or in a "modern" way.

Highly conscious as he was of the "dualism" created in real political systems by the "persistence" of "primitive" or "pre-modern" features within "modern" systems, Almond was nevertheless able to conclude in 1960 (*op.cit.*, p. 63):

> We have characterized the "modern" solution of the problems of cultural dualism as a penetration of the "traditional" styles of diffuseness, particularism, ascriptiveness, and affectivity, by the "rational" styles of specificity, universalism, achievement, and affective neutrality.

Although the heydays of the first wave of the modernisation school were over before the end of the nineteen-sixties, this quote from Almond underscores his role as precursor of the "good-governance" school of the nineteen-nineties, historically as well as conceptually.

Before getting to that last act of our presentation, however, it is necessary to offer an interlude. This will include a few more remarks on the dynamic rise of the modernisation school during the nineteen-sixties, followed by its more temporary and apparent than real decline.

Political Development Studies Modernised

Gabriel Almond's introductory essay from 1960 (*op.cit.*) was intellectually appealing to many at the time, not particularly because of its use of the pattern variables of Talcott Parsons, but because of the methodologically and overall fresh way in which it applied functionalist sociology to the task of comparative political science. In that sense it was truly innovative.[3] The study of politics at the major universities of North America and Western Europe was in fact becoming marked in the nineteen-sixties by a strong convergence of sociology and political science, evoking in the minds of some the vision of an integrated academic discipline. Although many participated, Almond was probably the most influential key figure on the political science side of this movement, matched on the sociological side by Semour Martin Lipset. On this, Buxton (*op.cit.*, p. 181) comments as follows:

> In seeking to develop and consolidate the theoretical basis for cumulative research of empirical and normative relevance to the growth and spread of American democracy, Almond and Lipset adapted and elaborated the framework for social-scientific activity developed by Talcott Parsons.

[3] In my own doctoral dissertation in 1967, for example, I even brandished it as a point of departure (Rudebeck 1967, pp. 9-22).

Buxton (*op.cit.*, p. 235) also quotes Lipset as having written in 1969[4] that by "specifying the value system in the United States as contrasted with that in other countries... the Parsonian pattern-variables formed the most useful set of classifications" for the task of comparing the U.S. experience with that of the developing nations.

Lipset, however, never went as deeply as Almond and many other political scientists and sociologists into the comparative study of "political modernisation" in the third world. In his major work, *Political man* (1960), Lipset brings in "the newly independent nations" for illustrative purposes only into his analysis of the conditions of democratic legitimacy, while focusing on the experiences of the industrialized countries. The pattern variables, too, figure only implicitly in his treatment of political culture. (Cf. *op.cit.*, chapters 2 and 3, pp. 45-96.) I still bring up Lipset here because of his important role in affecting the convergence of political science and sociology around the theme of "political modernisation" in the nineteen-sixties. This is certainly not unrelated to his re-emergence in a similar role in a different conjuncture at the end of the eighties (cf. Diamond, Lipset, and Linz 1986, 1988, 1989:I, 1989:II) to which we will return.

But let us take a shorter stride first, moving from the early to the late nineteen-sixties. By then the crises alluded to by Buxton were causing intensive debate among academics concerned with "development". The modernisation school was under fire. Marxism was being taken seriously. The dependency school in various shapes was occupying the forefront of debates around the world. Latin American, Asian, and African scholars were challenging their "Western" colleagues.

In the meantime, the modernisation school itself had undergone a change. In its most pregnant form, as given in textbooks pretending to present to students "the state of the art" rather than to advance it, the modernisation school was now showing a nakedly political face. Gabriel Almond himself took active part. In 1966 he published, together with Bingham Powell, a volume which was typical of the new tendency (Almond and Powell 1966) in offering a kind of vulgarized version of his 1960 position. I joined the debate on this myself in 1970, in a Swedish-language book on the concept of

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[4] Buxton's reference is to "Socialism and sociology," in Irving Horowitz (ed.), *Sociological self-images: a collective portrait*, Sage, Beverley Hills, 1969, pp. 143-175 (p. 163).

political development (Rudebeck 1970:I), using Almond's and Powell's textbook as an example. The thoroughgoing analysis presented in my book was summarised in a subsequent article (Rudebeck 1970:II, p. 34):

> By combining their key variables of "structural differentiation"-"cultural secularization" and "subsystem autonomy" into an ordinary two-dimensional typology of developmental levels (*op.cit.*, p. 308), Almond and Powell manage to convey the idea of political development as a roughly continuous and uniform process beginning with "primitive bands" and ending (?!) with the Anglo-American type of "modern" ("differentiated"-"secularized") "democracy" ("high subsystem autonomy"). It should be clear, I think, even without a more penetrating analysis, that this is a non-relativistic, non-historical, ethnocentric, and teleological way of viewing development, and that it thus falls far short of Almond's and Powell's stated ambition "to break out of parochialism and ethnocentrism" (*ibid.*, p. 6).

Even with twenty-three years hindsight, I find no reason to modify that conclusion. It appears to me as a fair one.

Still what caused the modernisation school to withdraw, temporarily, from the front of the academic stage at the time was probably not so much intellectual criticism as the disarray caused to its practitioners by the political challenges they were forced to confront. This is the interesting point made by Buxton, who sees both Parsons, Almond and Lipset as activist social scientists, committed to the capitalist nation-state as a framework for stability and democracy, seeking "actively to help *constitute* social and political reality through their contributions to social-scientific theory and practice" (*op.cit.*, p. 268). Thus, according to Buxton (pp. 265-266):

> Unlike the anomalies discussed by Kuhn, the upsurge of the New Left and movements of liberation did not represent merely unexpected violations of scientific expectations. It was only because political sociology[5] was premised upon the hegemonic view of

[5] "Political sociology" is the term used by Buxton to denote the type of integrated comparative study of politics, based equally on political science and sociology, which was typically represented by Almond and Lipset. Obviously there were many others. But selection for representation is different from ranking. As I tried to show at the time, it is for instance undeniable that David Apter (1965, 1968), to mention just one significant

> stable, de-ideologized political orders in the West, mirrored by benign 'modernization' in the third world, that widespread dissent was at all 'anomalous.' In other words, the anomalies confronting political sociology were as much political as they were scientific. They were not so much violations of scientific expectations as they were contraventions of metaphysical commitments.

No wonder then -- granted that Buxton's point is valid -- that Almond found reason to withdraw into advocating theoretically eclectic historical studies (cf. chapter 1 in Almond, Flanagan, and Mundt 1973), while Lipset for the time being turned mostly to other fields of study than the third world. Their normatively based postulates (what Buxton calls "metaphysical commitments") had been shaken. This, however, does not go to say that there was any firm empirical basis for writing in the past tense, as Buxton did in 1985, about what he called "political sociology". The "modernisers" had merely been resting a bit, while remaining quite present all along.

From Weber to "Good Governance" -- a Case of Conceptual Denaturation

Cultural explanations

Writing in 1990 on "current theoretical attempts to explain the general weakness of state power in transforming the social and economic basis of accumulation in postcolonial Africa," I singled out two major strands of thought (Rudebeck 1991, pp. 30-32).

Those two strands cut across the conventional social science divide between actor and structure oriented explanations. The first uses the concept of political culture perceived as the aggregate attitudes of individuals. The second uses the concept of socio-economic group or class. Cross-tabulating culture/class with actor/structure yielded the two-dimensional matrix shown below (figure 1).

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example, "manages to present an extremely coherent theoretical view of political development by reasoning consistently within the restricted area of his functional and structural requisites - with particular emphasis on information and coercion as functional requisites" (Rudebeck 1970:II, p. 39).

	culture	class
actor	1	2
structure	3	4

Figure 1. Cross-tabulation of culture/class and actor/structure.

Block 1 in the figure stands for descriptions/explanations that focus on the cultural attitudes of actors as the primary independent variables in development. Within the modernisation school of political development studies, this type of description/explanation is typically combined with an emphasis on structural differentiation and specialization of political systems, as represented by block 3. *Note that in this type of analysis even the structural characteristics of the social system are culturally defined in terms of the values, goals, and preferences of the actors making up the system.*

The latter observation is italicized here because of its significance for our topic. It points to the tendency toward tautology and circular explanation inherent in modern modernisation analysis, but alien to the Weberian mode of multi-causal historico-sociological explanation discussed earlier in this essay. An illustrative example may serve to illuminate my point. The example is found in the paper by Diamond, Lipset and Linz (1986, p. 53), prepared for the 1986 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, where they discuss preliminary findings -- in several ways highly interesting -- of the work that was later to be presented in three substantial volumes edited by the same authors (1988; 1989:I, 1989:II):

> The evidence from our case studies supports in a number of ways theories about the relationship between political culture and democratic stability. While we are prepared to generalize in no more than tentative fashion, it does appear that in those countries which are the most strongly and stably democratic, political values and beliefs are markedly more democratic than elsewhere.

Conceptualizing "world images" as "switchmen" in historical contexts, as Weber does, is methodologically quite distinct from the reasoning implied in this passage. I chose it not out of ill will, but because I consider it revealing of an inherent inclination or temptation in what I call "modern modernisation theorizing". I do not pretend that all of such theorizing can be reduced to such banalities. But to the extent that the banalities are transcended, the theorizing also lets go of any attempt to *explain, within the terms of the dichotomy itself,* the transition in politics from "tradition" (conceived as religious authority, tribalism, ethnicity, authoritarianism, chieftancy, patron-client system, arbitrariness, violence etc.) to "modernity" and democracy (conceived as rationality, secular authority, universalism, broad participation, non-arbitrariness, less violence, etc.).

Just like many others, Diamond, Lipset and Linz offer numerous hypotheses and explanations on why democracy occurs in some instances and not in others. But only by abandoning what they call cultural explanations and venturing into historical, socio-economical, or institutional explanations, are they able to go beyond such banalities as the one quoted above.

Weber used the dichotomy differently, as we have seen. In his work it is theoretically integrated, serving thus to enhance understanding and explanation. Modernity, to him, is a possible outcome of the processes of rationalization of world images set in motion by the actual experiences of life in traditional societies. But to the modern modernisation thinkers, judging from their writings, modernity seems more often than not to be mostly a label stuck onto an idealized version of the kind of system they deem desirable.

In the essay referred to above (1991, p. 31), I noted also that despite two decades of critical discussion from 1970 to 1990, the emphasis on culture and culturally defined political structure, only weakly linked analytically to socio-economic structure, remains the hallmark of western political development studies.

There are nuances of course. Among the authors listed at the end of this text, for instance, David Apter (1987) moves along somewhat "post-modern" lines of his own in trying to synthesize modernisation and dependency thinking. As in the sixties, Apter's thinking is penetrating and critical, but without really seeming to achieve a break with his earlier paradigm of structural functionalism.

Richard Sandbrook (1986) does attempt a Weberian explanation of the nature of African state power, in terms of "personal rule". He presents this as a particular form of neo-patrimonialism (a modernised version of Weber's patrimonial sub-type of traditional rule/cf. note 7, p. 16/) which by linking power to society in improductive ways apparently makes economic development almost impossible. Sandbrook goes considerably beyond circular reasoning in theorizing a causal link between colonialism, decolonisation, post-colonial lack of state legitimacy, and the ensuing type of state power. But in the end, even this begs the question of *why* Africans would put up with such rule. "Personal loyalty and fear," is Sandbrook's answer (*op.cit.*, p. 323). But why would these be sufficient? Africans did not put up with colonialism, nor with South African apartheid. Why would post-colonial dictators succeed in installing loyalty and fear where great colonial powers and sophisticated racists with international support failed? In fact, as we now know, they did not succeed in the longer run. Many of those dictators have actually fallen, since Sandbrook published his article. How would his theory of personal rule account for that?

Similar problems are raised by the culturally defined "economy of affection" of Göran Hydén (1980, 1983, 1986, 1988), explaining according to him why African farmers "withdraw" from state and market. Thus they remain "uncaptured", which is why accumulation for development does not take place, Hydén reasons. But judging from what we know about the African state, including what Sandbrook and Hydén tell us, it would seem very wise for anybody in the position to do so -- traditional-minded or not -- to deal most cautiously with such a state. The same goes for markets of unequal exchange. How about those two insights for the beginnings of an alternative explanation? Besides, without denying that Africans sometimes withdraw from a threatening and unsupportive state, the opposite case of the state withdrawing from the people, leaving the latter to fend for themselves, would seem to be even more frequent. Such withdrawal, surely, has very little to do with human affection. Still it requires explaining. [6]

On using Weber today

[6] For a possible framework for such an explanation see Rudebeck 1991, pp. 32-43.

Taking Weber seriously -- rather than just borrowing labels that seem suitable for certain purposes -- might well help us both understand and explain the functioning of the state in societies where traditional and modern cultural traits are today meeting head-on. This is discussed with insight in a recent contribution by Jean-François Médard (1991) which includes also a useful overview of how Weber's concept of *patrimonialism* has been used and criticized in modern development studies, with particular reference to Sub-Saharan Africa (*op.cit.*, pp. 323-325).[7]

Médard (*op.cit.*, p. 328, translated by me) makes the point that it is ...

> the absence of a real distinction between the private realm and the public realm that characterises the notion of patrimonialism (in Weber's work). And it is precisely in departing from there that the notion of patrimonialism seems to us to be applicable to African politics .

Putting this observation -- which for our present discussion is an important one -- in the context of Yusuf Bangura's and Peter Gibbon's illuminating "introduction of some conceptual and empirical issues" to studying structural adjustment, authoritarianism and democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa (1992) makes for an interesting counterpoint effect, as we shall soon see.

In discussing how conventional political science analyses the politics of adjustment, Bangura and Gibbon identify two major perspectives (*op.cit.*, p. 9):

> The first seeks to understand political processes on the basis of public choice theory's postulation of the likely distribution of gains and losses among competing social groups. Political dynamics and their outcomes are deduced from a framework that assumes a transition from a structure of incentives based on state interventions to one where markets are believed to be fully liberated and competitive. It fails to analyse the social and institutional processes that link economic change with political behaviour, and opts instead for a short-term technocratic view of politics, which is concerned

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[7] *Patrimonial* domination is, according to Weber, the second sub-type of *traditional* domination, the first being the *patriarchal* one, while *feudalism* is a third sub-type developing out of patrimonialism (Weber in his introduction /1915/ to *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen*, in Gerth and Mills, *op.cit.*, pp. 296-301).

> with the modalities for creating the necessary political framework to successfully implement reform programmes.
>
> The second perspective is less tied to functionalist concerns with political order and recognises two significant processes of change in contemporary African societies, informalisation and the rise of civil society. However, it ignores the broad social and political contexts for understanding the dynamics of such changes. This leads to narrow and, at times, romanticised conclusions.

The first of the two perspectives identified by Bangura and Gibbon is the one that concerns us specifically in the pursuit of our present discussion. The second perspective is also important but would lead us into greater detail and sub-distinctions than necessary for holding on to our line of argument.

In analysing their first perspective, (*op.cit.*, pp. 9-19), Bangura and Gibbon distinguish three "political stances, on the part both of the international financial institutions and those political scientists sharing with them a commitment to manage the changes activated by the reforms" (*ibid.*, p. 11). The first was developed in the nineteen-seventies. It was "technicist" in assuming the political neutrality of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The second, which began to be expressed in the early eighties, was openly coercive in imposing adjustment policies. The third position emerging toward the end of the nineteen-eighties was more explicitly concerned with politics than the two first ones (*ibid.*, p. 12):

> A major question became how to create the necessary environment for competent and politically legitimate regimes to emerge which would also be fully committed to the goals of adjustment. The World Bank's document *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth* attempted to address this question by focusing on some of the issues that political scientists sympathetic to the goals of adjustment were beginning to identify as necessary for overcoming the crisis in Africa: *good governance, political accountability, the rule of law, and grassroots participation in government* (italicized here).

Although "a functionalist and technocratic view of politics" is shared by the holders of these three "stances", as pointed out by Bangura and Gibbon (*loc.cit.*), there are still interesting differences among them, and particularly among the holders of the last-mentioned one, between...

> those that look at the links between rent-seeking activities and political rigidities, and those that are concerned with the political management of adjustment.

Conceptually seen both of these views are concerned with the traditional/modern dichotomy including the pattern variables. The first defines persisting "political rigidities" as traditional, with the implications that have been made clear. This is shared by the second view, which however also focuses more openly than the first on how to actively bring about a transition to modernity (including democracy) in the third world, through so-called "political conditionality" (persuasion and pressure related to the implementation of structural adjustment policies through aid, credits, postponement of interest payment, and reduction of cancellation), and other means.

This brings us to the idea of "good governance", which can be seen as today's predominant mode of applying the traditional/modern dichotomy to the problems of development in the third world.

But first the counterpoint link referred to above, between Médard's observation on the essence of patrimonialism on the one hand and Bangura's and Gibbon's analysis on the other, will be brought out.

For in sketching "an alternative research agenda", the most important problem found by Bangura and Gibbon with the approaches they study is identified by them as follows (*op.cit.*, p. 24):

> The first - and overriding - problem of conventional political science-based approaches to the politics of adjustment has been their fidelity to transposing certain of the key categories of neo-classical economics to the political arena, and their use of these categories to designate watertight social institutions and groups of actors. *Hence we find rigidly dichotomised divisions between state and market, public and private, state and civil society and formal and informal. The systematic interpenetration of the relations designated by these categories, perhaps one of the defining features of African social and economic functions, is overlooked, and in the process the economic and political effects of adjustment are systematically misunderstood.* (Italicized here.)

While agreeing with Bangura and Gibbon on the quoted conclusion, I am also in agreement with Médard on what constitutes

the essence of that sub-type of Weberian "traditionalism" which is most often applied to Africa by social scientists, namely ideal-type "patrimonialism". That essence is "*the confusion of the public with the private*" (Médard, *op.cit.*, p. 328, italicized here). This does not seem different from Bangura's and Gibbon's "systematic interpenetration of the relations designated" by such categories as "state and market, *public and private* (italicized here), state and civil society and formal and informal."

The interesting point about this is not so much that Bangura and Gibbon do not refer to Weber for their conclusion, but that in spite of not doing so they indicate his relevance in a more profound way than many of his modern "followers".

Good "governance"

Talking about "governance" instead of "government" (or perhaps, on occasion, "governing" or "rule") has in recent years become fashionable in development aid circles and aid-related social science circles.[8] The call is for "*good* governance". This way of using the word gained wide usage with the World Bank's report *Sub-Saharan Africa. From crisis to sustainable growth. A long-term perspective study* (1989, pp. 60-62 and 192-194). The key passage is found under the heading "Governance for development". It begins as follows (*op.cit.*, p. 60):

> Underlying the litany of Africa's development problems is a crisis of governance. By governance is meant the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs.

There is nothing in the World Bank's way of using the term "governance" to substantiate any claim that it would have come up with a conceptual innovation. In describing what is meant by "governance" as taking place in Africa, the key passage just quoted goes on to give a conventional image of patron-client government (*ibid.*, p. 61):

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[8] It is interesting that a wordbook such as *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1990) gives identical first definitions of the two words *governance* and *government*, namely "the act or manner of governing." As second meanings, the dictionary emphasises in the former case "office or function" of governing, and in the latter case "system" of governing. An illuminating substantial discussion of what good governance is all about, coupled with a well informed study of its application in Kenya, is found in Henning and Schill (1993), an undergraduate paper on *Good governance - and Kenyan politics*.

> Because countervailing power has been lacking, state officials in many countries have served their own interests without fear of being called to account. In self-defense individuals have built up personal networks of influence rather than hold the all-powerful state accountable for its systemic failures. In this way politics become personalized, and patronage becomes essential to maintain power. The leadership assumes broad discretionary authority and loses its legitimacy. Information is controlled, and voluntary associations are co-opted or disbanded. This environment cannot readily support a dynamic economy. At worst the state becomes coercive and arbitrary.

The only way out of such a mess is "dedicated leadership", the bank claims, which Botswana (alone in Africa?) is said to have enjoyed (*loc. cit.*).

My point here is not to question the World Bank's description of how Africa is governed. It is frequently governed as described -- unfortunately for Africans.[9] What I want to do, however, is to note that the World Bank's image of bad "governance" is very much like *neo-patrimonial* rule. The opposite of such rule, as seen by the bank, is indistinguishable from *modern* rule, as typically described within the modernisation school of development studies, namely...

> a pluralistic institutional structure, a determination to respect the rule of law, and vigorous protection of the freedom of the press and human rights (*loc.cit.*).

Later World Bank documents on the subject, where the need for institutional reform in third world countries is elaborated (1991,

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[9] What can, on the contrary, be justifiably questioned is the World Bank's apparent contention in the quote, that patron-client based rule cannot, ever, support a dynamic economy. A lot of contrary evidence is available, for instance from Indonesia and India. Cf. Olle Törnquist's important conceptualisation of "the rent capitalist path" to development on the basis of the experiences of those two countries (1989, chapter 5, "The role and basis of the state in the transition to capitalism," pp. 79-107). Törnquist criticises the "Weberian approach" for neglecting the material basis of the patron-client relations such development rests upon (*op.cit.*, p. 101). If my argument in this essay holds, however, such criticism should rather be directed at what I am here defining as "modern modernisation analysis", which is a shallow and partial application for descriptive purposes of the Weberian mode of analysis.

chapter 7, "Rethinking the state," pp. 128-147; and *Governance and development*, 1992), offer interesting illustrations but do not add much, from a conceptual point of view, to the original formulations. As far as defining a concept of *governance* different from *government* is concerned, no real progress can be noted. The bank's own concern to move "beyond building the capacity of public sector management" still involves the typical function of state authority to provide "rules and institutions... for the conduct of public and private business..." (1992, p. 3). Thus the bank's conceptual position, judging from the most authoritative sources available, still does not extend beyond "government". The following is a characteristic sample (1992, "Introduction and summary," pp. 1-2):

> In this booklet, governance is defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development... (italicized here).
>
> —
>
> ... good governance is central to creating and sustaining an environment which fosters strong and equitable development, and it is an essential complement to sound economic policies. Governments play a key role in the provision of public goods. They establish the rules that make markets work efficiently and, more problematically, they correct for market failure...
>
> -----
>
> Yet there is no certainty that institutional frameworks conducive to growth and poverty alleviation will evolve on their own. The emergence of such frameworks needs incentives, and adequate institutional capacity to create and sustain them....
>
> -----
>
> When government commitment to sound development management is in doubt, the Bank's encouragement of an intensive dialogue on the overall development program can be an important precursor to change. When that dialogue is not fruitful, it inevitably affects the Bank's analysis of the country's overall development management and performance, and in turn the nature and extent of Bank support for the country.

The insistent question posed by Björn Beckman with regard to the 1989 version of the World Bank position remains relevant (1992, p. 104): "Where does 'good governance', rule of law and accountability come from?" No theoretical answer is given to such basic questions in the primary sources available on the meaning of "good governance" -- only wishes and exhortations for good leadership, plus the "public choice" inspired carrot of incentives coupled with

hints of the stick of disincentives in the case that "dialogue is not fruitful".

The political scientist most eagerly making use of the terminology of "governance" is Göran Hydén (1988 and 1992). In a lecture published by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (1988) he speaks in a general way of "the need for initiating more appropriate mechanisms of governance" in Africa (*ibid.*, p. 145), but does not deal with the conceptual issue. In the text there is however an inclination to include "institutions other than the government" (*ibid.*, p. 155), foreshadowing his later efforts to theorize a concept of "governance" (Hydén 1992).

Hydén vacillates between several different definitions of a "governance" concept, but seems to regard the following formulation as the principal one (1992, p. 7, italicized here):

> Governance, as defined here, is the conscious management of regime structures with a view to enhancing the legitimacy of the public realm.

As far as definitions go, this is etymologically arbitrary (cf. note 8, p. 18) and conceptually unclear in compounding description and intention. It is striking, furthermore, that Hydén's overriding concern is not with defining a concept as such but with trying to formulate a "governance approach" to the study of politics which "sits somewhere between" the two extremes of methodological individualism and various forms of structuralism, Marxist or non-Marxist (*ibid.*, p. 8). In defining "governance", at the end of his essay, as "*the study of how to improve politics and the conditions determining that effort*" (*ibid.*, p. 25, italicized here), Hydén confirms this observation.

This same impression is further strengthened from trying to understand Hyden's central argument, which is about how the "governance realm" (*ibid.*, pp. 12-14) relates to the "public realm". The latter realm is characterized as follows (*ibid.*,p. 6):

> The notion of a public realm encompasses both state and (civil) society and draws the line instead between private and public.

The "governance realm" and how it relates to the "public realm" is outlined in the following manner (*ibid.*, p. 12):

> ... it is now possible to suggest the existence of a governance realm that is bounded by the four properties that we have identified as particularly important to *good politics* (italicized here): (1) authority; (2) reciprocity; (3) trust; and (4) accountability. The governance realm should be seen in relation to the public realm in the way management is to organization: *as a means to an end* (italicized here)... At a time when there is growing interest in the ways politics can be used to strengthen the public realm and its role in social and economic progress, the notion of a governance realm takes on particular significance. My general proposition is that the more regime management is characterized by *the qualities associated with the governance realm* (italicized here), the more it generates legitimacy for the political system and the more, therefore, people will participate in the public realm with enthusiasm.

It should be clear from the passage now quoted that Hydén's primary concern is with how to *improve* governance rather than with *defining* it. He glides (or slides) easily between terms and definitions. "Good politics" and "governance realm" are made to appear as more or less synonymous. This goes well with the general tendency of the text toward confusing "governance" with "*good* governance".

Hydén's key effort, anyway, in the text we are dealing with boils down to identifying the basic characteristics of what he regards as *good politics* (or *governance*). These characteristics are postulated to be *authority, reciprocity, trust,* and *accountability*. Thus Hydén joins the long file of colleagues telling us, in more or less learned ways, that they deem such characteristics to be *desirable* as largely associated by Weber with *modern* rule. This is an honourable opinion. Hydén displays it with deep awareness of the complexity of fusion between "traditional" and "modern" in African politics. But his "governance approach" clearly remains within the realm of good wishes. The question is how far this holds as an innovative contribution to the fields of comparative politics and development studies.

On the Theoretical Heritage from Weber in Development Studies

In reading the introduction to the recent work on *Capitalist development and democracy* by Dietrich Rueschemeyer *et al.* (1992) I was struck by the following passage (*op.cit.*, p. 5):

> ... we employ, like most of the comparative historical work from Max Weber to Guillermo O'Donnell a "political economy" perspective that focuses on actors - individual as well as collective actors - whose power is grounded in control of economic and organizational resources and/or of coercive force and who vie with each other for scarce resources in the pursuit of conflicting goals. While such a perspective does recognize the role of ideas, values and non-material interests, especially when they are grounded in institutions and collective organization, *it differs sharply from the functionalist and culture-oriented premises of modernization theory* (italicized here).

What makes this passage stand out as particularly interesting in the context of our present discussion is the unequivocal way it distinguishes between a Weberian approach on the one hand and "the functionalist and culture-oriented premises of modernization theory" on the other. What then about the line, traced in this essay, straight from Weber, by way of functionalism, to the modernisation school of development studies? What about my initial claim that the core of Weber's contribution to the core of what we know today as development studies can be summed up under the traditional/modern dichotomy?

The brief answer is that Weber's work -- true in that sense to the multi-factor character of its approach to causality -- is at the origin of more than just one single way of studying development. Rueschemeyer is of course quite correct in noting that Weber's emphasis on the economic and organizational basis of power distinguishes his way of explaining from functionalist and culture-centered explanations. Still, as we have seen, nor was Parsons wrong when pointing in 1982 to the "important thread of continuity" between Weber and his own cultural pattern variables, which in turn were to become the corner-stones of functionalist-inspired modernisation theory.[10]

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[10] It is striking how Weber's work has been interpreted to suit quite differing points of view. With regard to Weber and Marx, for instance, both convergencies and divergencies have been noted. As pointed out by Turner in his new introduction to the 1991 edition of Gerth and Mills (p. xxiii), the careful arguments of Gerth and Mills were thus "a useful corrective to the tendency in radical social theory to separate them (Marx and Weber) in order to emphasize the notion that sociology was ideology when contrasted with scientific socialism." Hunt (1978, pp. 95-97) also comments usefully on this.

What I have here been calling the modern modernisation school, in an effort to single it out from the theoretically more pure functionalism of the Almond of 1960, does differ sharply from Weber in its lack of explanatory power as well as in its normative character.

With regard to the latter aspect, I am not saying that Weber's theoretical heritage is value-free, as opposed to the blatant normativeness of the modernisation school. For in spite of Weber's own insistence upon separating ends from means in social science, his work has obvious normative connotations as well as not dealing fully with the paradox of how rational means relate to irrational ends (cf., among others, Hunt 1978, pp. 100-101, on this). What I am saying, as already emphasized (pp. 7-8 of this text), is merely that the modernisation school's unambiguously positive view of modernism is very far from Weber's pessimistic evaluation.

With regard to the lack of explanatory power of such modernisation theorizing as now discussed, this can clearly be traced to its functionalist foundations. Pointing to the circularly descriptive way of functionalism in dealing with empirical observations is hardly controversial. In this the modernisation school is a faithful successor to functionalism.

In Weber, briefly, we meet with models, in the form of ideal types, as well as with coherent theorizing about change and transition. In Parsons, there is a sophisticated model of the social system, but hardly any theory of change/transition/development. In typical modernisation thinking, even the model is often quite weak.

Thus my suggestion so far will be that the juncture where the Weberian "switch" occurred between Weber's heritage, as available until then, and modernisation thinking, is precisely where Parsons grafted a functionalist mode of analysis onto Weber's historical sociology, by using the traditional/modern dichotomy and elaborating it into the pattern-variable scheme. There Parsons acted truly as a "switchman" (*Weichensteller*) in the development of modern social science.

In concluding recently my introduction to an anthology entitled *When democracy makes sense* (Rudebeck 1992, p. 8), I referred to the contribution to that book by Yusuf Bangura (1992, pp. 99-100). While democracy is "an ideal to be cherished", Bangura writes, it also...

> must make sense to the interests of the contending social groups. These interests do not have to be narrowly defined as economic; they can also be social and political. Linking democracy to the restructuring of the economy allows individuals and organizations to pose the question of democratic governance of public resources much more sharply.

I interpret this to be about *legitimacy* -- a Weberian concept. Democratic politics, which is also *modern* politics, cannot become historically feasible without making sense to the major contending social groups. But another point which also stands out from the various contributions to the anthology is that democratic legitimacy basically has *two* types of foundations. One concerns what people find useful and possible in their lives. The other concerns what is deemed by them to be right and just ("an ideal to be cherished").

There is an obvious parallel between this argument and the one by Weber on how "world images" enter in between "the dynamic of interest" and action. Thus, while "differing sharply" (in Rueschemeyer's formulation) from the modernisation school of development studies, which in this essay I have been tracing to Weber, I still seem to have come up with a Weberian conclusion to the anthology on democracy's sense.

This would be close to the middle of the matrix presented in figure 1 (p.14), which stands for a perspective guided by the view that social action occurs on a stage structured by class, institutions and culture. The "actors" performing on the "stage" do not merely act out given roles. In interaction between themselves they also create the play. The structure surrounding them as they carry on does limit their possible choices but is, at the same time, affected by the choices actually made. [11]

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[11] Such a perspective could possibly be labelled "neo-Weberian" (cf. the end of note 1 above). Whatever the label, the importance of the perspective lies in bringing culture fruitfully, in its independent "switchman" role, into our explanatory efforts.

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