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Introduction
State and society in theoretical perspective

The appropriate powers of the state in Western societies have become a crucial source of political conflict and a topic for theoretical debate. The scope of democratic participation, the capacities of public bureaucracies, the inefficiencies of a regulated capitalist economy, state responses to fiscal crises and structural unemployment have become hotly contested public issues. These political conflicts resonate in the seemingly more dispassionate world of academic discourse. As a result, the state has once again become a central topic for research and theoretical reassessment.

The state and theory

The modern concept of state was formed during the period from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries and represented a decisive shift away from the idea of the ruler maintaining his state to the notion of a separate legal and constitutional order – the state – which the ruler had an obligation to maintain.

One effect of this transformation was that the power of the State, not that of the ruler, came to be envisaged as the basis of government. And this in turn enabled the State to be conceptualized in distinctively modern terms – as the sole source of law and legitimate force within its own territory, and as the sole appropriate object of its citizens' allegiances. [Skinner 1978a, p. x]

Therefore, the state is a more fundamental concept than government, because it is not merely the specific regime in power at any one moment – the governing coalition of political leaders – but also the basis for a regime's authority, legality, and claim for popular support.

Political theorist Quentin Skinner goes on to argue that political life itself "sets the main problems for the political theorist, causing a range of issues to appear problematic, and a corresponding range of questions to become the leading subjects of debate." But these "ideological superstructures [are not] a straightforward outcome of their social

determined by its role in a capitalist society. The managerial and class perspectives were always more alive in Europe than in America, because of more centralized state intervention and strong labor and socialist political movements in the former. In the United States today, these traditions remain more marginally located. But the basis for a pluralism of theoretical debate has been laid.

Our main concern in this book is to develop a synthetic framework out of which a new theory of the state can be constructed from these three perspectives, rescuing and integrating the major contributions of each. Each perspective has something to offer to the understanding of the state: The pluralist perspective contributes to a partial understanding of the democratic aspect of the state; the managerial perspective contributes to an understanding of the state's bureaucratic aspect; and the class perspective helps explain the state's capitalist aspect.²

Our core argument is that each theoretical perspective on the state has a home domain of description and explanation. That is, the meaning of "state" depends upon whether the vantage point for analysis is individuals, organizations, or societies and also upon the fundamental assumptions made about the relationships among those levels of analysis. Their problematic relationship to each other makes the state an "essentially contested concept" (Gallie 1956). In this introduction we define the home domains of the three perspectives and outline their distinctive views of society, state, power, and politics.

We have not isolated any essence of the state independent of the theoretical perspectives. By superimposing, as it were, the perspectives on each other by means of a language both derived from and critical of each of them, we hope to enrich the powers of theory to understand the state in Western societies. Clarity on the theoretical issues may contribute to a more precise understanding of the potential for new leaders, policies, and social movements to significantly challenge the drift into economic crises, political and cultural repression, and war. We do not

² Our distinctions among perspectives are common in the social science literature, although the central descriptive terms vary. Sociologist Colin Crouch (1979) called them the "class," "elite," and "interest group" theories; sociologist Randall Collins (1968) the "Marxist," "Weberian," and "functionalist" views of politics; economist Robert Haveman (1973) the "radical political economist," "vested interest," and "pluralist" views. Political scientist Theodore Lowi (1968) distinguished the "social stratification" school that makes the "straightforward Marxian assumption that there is one-to-one relation between socioeconomic status and power over public decision" from the "power elite" school that focuses on the major "orders" of society ("military, industrial and political hierarchies") and the "pluralist" model exemplified by David Truman's *Governmental Process* (1951). English Marxist Perry Anderson (1980, p. 51) distinguished among theories that saw the source of social and political order in "norms and values" (Talcott Parsons), in the "command of a coercive state" with the "capacity to exercise violence" (Jean-Paul Sartre), and in the "dominant mode of production" (Louis Althusser).

Powers of theory

base," since the "intellectual context in which the major texts were conceived" have an important impact on both the included and excluded ideas (Skinner 1978a, p. xi). Skinner uses as an example John Locke's silence on the subject of the prescriptive force of the English Constitution; Locke's silence makes sense only when we know the leading issues of his day. As we shall see in later chapters what is not treated in a work is as theoretically significant as its explicit assumptions and hypotheses. Silence carries the corollary that the expected audience will accept or be blind to the absence of treatment of certain issues as historical realities.

According to Skinner, by the beginning of the seventeenth century the "concept of the state - its nature, its powers, its right to command obedience - had come to be regarded as the most important object of analysis in European political thought" (Skinner 1978b, p. 349). The transition to the recognizably modern usage of the term "state" first occurred in France. Skinner argues that this happened because the "material preconditions for such a development were all present: a relatively unified central authority, an increasing apparatus of bureaucratic control, and a clearly defined set of national boundaries" (p. 354). In other words, the state had to exist before the concept of the state could become accepted.¹

Skinner advocates that concepts be analyzed dialectically as ideologies, in order to connect their historical and theoretical use to political behavior and political practice (1978a, p. xi). Such a method does not presuppose that ideas are not useful or true or that they must mislead ordinary people. It does presume that concepts must be located within the context of a theoretical perspective in which they are used to describe and explain phenomena they abstract from reality. In addition, they play specific social and political roles in the life of the society.

Theories of the state have tended to derive from one or more major theoretical perspectives. The pluralist perspective, which dominates university research and public discourse in the United States today, emphasizes political consensus and the peaceful, evolutionary character of political modernization. Pluralist theories have been criticized by what we shall call the managerial perspective (or elite theory), which maintains that an alliance of elites in military, executive, and corporate bureaucracies has been taking power from traditional democratic institutions of legislatures, parties, and elections. And both perspectives have been challenged by the neo-Marxist class perspective, which sees the state as

¹ For a comprehensive review of the relative importance of the idea and the institution of the state in continental Europe in comparison with the Anglo-American countries, see Dyson 1980. Dyson goes so far as to argue that the English-speaking political tradition is "stateless" because it lacks a "historical and legal tradition of the state as an institution that 'acts' in the name of public authority" (p. viii).

major text

method for analyzing concepts
1) theoretical context
2) social context

believe that theories create politics. Theories motivate people to act and rationalize those actions afterward. Actions are understood in certain ways and are believed to have certain kinds of consequences. If the theory is correct and the conditions under which the action takes place are compatible with the theory, the intended outcomes are more likely than not. In this respect, theory has powers.

The home domain of each perspective

The pluralist perspective's home domain is the political behavior of individuals and groups and the influence their interactions have on government decision making. The empirical focus is upon interactions among citizens, representatives, and officials, particularly as these generate controversial issues that must be decided. The structure and functions of public and private organizations and the class relations that underlie them are taken as given. Only the interaction of visible actors - whether individuals or groups - on the political stage is taken into account. Immediate outcomes are explained by the interaction among the skills, preferences, and resources of the participants. The resulting political situations or "events" constitute the core of the pluralist home domain. This surface of politics glitters with issues and conflicts over who will be elected, who will be appointed, tried, and convicted. The headlines portray these events with a heavy emphasis on the ever-changing cast of characters in the spectacle, or, to change the metaphor, the shifting players in the political game.

Issues and conflicts are normally contained within the limits of organizational structures and class alignments in a given historical period. But if individuals, groups, and leaders refuse to remain within the rules of the game and develop alternative values by which to govern, the political arena may explode. Mass movements, disruptive demonstrations, rebellions are evidence of a lack of social integration and political consensus. An explosion of participation is seen as a pathological lack of appropriately developed political institutions. The pluralist home domain is thus the realm of "normal politics" in which individual actions in concrete situations can be observed.

When widespread political participation and group competition are possible, and only "dispersed inequalities" (Dahl 1961) exist in a democratic decision-making system, pluralist concepts are appropriate. Because citizen participation and group contest for influence are not always

conditions for stability of institutions

possible and democratic institutions are not always effective, the pluralist perspective has serious analytic limits.³

managerial perspective

The managerial perspective's home domain of explanation is that of single-state organizations, or "interorganizational networks" seen as constituting the state. Such a unit of analysis assumes that organizations have a significant degree of autonomy from society and the individual and group relations that compose them. The empirical focus is upon organizational structures - both inside and outside the state - and the domination of the elites that control their relationships. Immediate outcomes of controversial issues do not necessarily reveal anything about the structure of those organizations. Rather, the managerial perspective focuses on the ways these organizational structures of power protect themselves both from unorganized participation and from the kinds of issues that they cannot manage or control. Explosions of participation are the result of temporary shifts in the balance of organizational power, fragile moments when the structure of state domination has crumbled.

When the organizational boundaries of the state are clear and state bureaucracies have the capacity for control necessary to achieve their goals, the managerial perspective is appropriate. To the extent that the state is bureaucratic and has achieved both sufficient autonomy from and control over the economy and the culture to rationalize its internal operations, managerial concepts are useful. Because state autonomy, control, and rationality are limited in every Western society, the utility of managerial concepts are also limited.

The class perspective's home domain is the relationship among capitalism, the state, and democracy. The social relations between labor and capital are contradictory and ultimately depend for their stability neither upon societal consensus nor upon state legitimation but upon class power to maintain the institutional boundaries between capitalism, the state, and democracy. Explosions of participation - in the voting booth, in the factories, or in the streets - are treated as manifestations of societal contradictions. Modes of production evolve via the contradictory social relations that simultaneously reproduce ideological hegemony and create the conditions for societal transformation via class struggle.

Under historical conditions in which human labor is sold to private

The pluralist perspective assumes, we think correctly, that democratic institutions maximize the possibilities for political participation and for all groups to influence state behavior. However, the pluralist perspective, like the class and managerial perspectives, is applicable to societies without such democratic institutions to the extent that political participation is possible at all.

applicability

limit

owners of the means of production who exploit that labor to accumulate capital, and capital accumulation and class struggle shape state policy, concepts from the class perspective are useful. To the extent that capitalism limits both the efficacy of democracy and the rationality and autonomy of the state bureaucracy, the class perspective is appropriate. It must, however, be adapted to take account of powerful state intervention into the economy and the seemingly paradoxical rise of trade unions and working-class parties without socialist transformation in advanced capitalist societies, as well as nonclass factors in both state and society.

Our view of the state

Each perspective's home domain emphasizes a particular level of analysis: For the pluralist perspective it is the individual; for the managerial, the organization; and for the class, society. We believe that an adequate theory of the state must incorporate all three levels of analysis.

The state must be understood first in terms of the contradictory relations among its capitalist, bureaucratic, and democratic aspects, which constitute the state at the societal level beyond the visible appearances of legal structures, governmental decision making, and political behavior. Second, the state also can usefully be seen as composed of organizational networks, as structures that differ in their political and legal capacity to control internal and external resources: funds, personnel, and political support. Third, the state is also a decision-making arena within which multiple groups contend for influence, with varying outcomes depending on what interests are at stake, how successfully they mobilize, and the specific mechanisms of access of those making political demands upon political leaders.

Our principal task in this book is to analyze the contribution of specific empirical and historical works that exemplify each theoretical perspective. We shall use each perspective as a source of critical judgment, to show the logical and empirical disjunctures that appear when different levels of analysis are not properly distinguished. Almost no works selected for analysis exhibit concepts or hypotheses drawn from only one perspective.

We limit ourselves primarily to theories and empirical studies of states in societies considered modern, industrialized, and capitalist. How these characteristics are related to each other and how they are changing are the subjects of intense theoretical debate. Although our mode of inquiry can be applied to societies other than the capitalist democracies in West-

note
everywhere
in stages

ern Europe and North America, we will not, except in passing, consider studies of non-Western or either precapitalist or socialist societies.⁴

Power and contradictions in the state

Each perspective locates a primary level of analysis at which power operates. For the pluralist perspective, power is situational and is measured by influence over the outcomes of conflictual participation. For the managerial perspective, power is structural and is observed in the capacity of politically biased state and corporate organizations to dominate each other. For the class perspective, power is systemic and is inferred from the reproduction of exploitative social relations.

These levels of power are similar to what Steven Lukes has called the dimensions of power. According to Lukes, the "one-dimensional view of power involves a focus on *behaviour* in the making of *decisions* on issues over which there is an observable *conflict* of (subjective) *interests*, seen as . . . policy preferences, revealed by political participation" (1974; p. 15; italics in original). This is the pluralist view of power as influence.

The two-dimensional view, Lukes says, "incorporates into the analysis of power relations the question of the control over the agenda of politics and of the ways in which potential issues are kept out of the political process" (p. 21). In our terms, this is the managerial view of power as domination.

The three-dimensional view, Lukes argues, compensates for the focus on decisions (whether taken or not taken) in both one- and two-dimensional views. The three-dimensional view emphasizes the way in which power is exercised in the absence of any political conflict at all, to benefit the real interests or different elements of the population *without any political participation*. Lukes describes the origins of this form of power in several rather general ways, as "social forces," "institutional practices," "collective forces," "social arrangements" (1974, pp. 22, 24). In Lukes's opinion, the three-dimensional view of power adds to the other

⁴ Some important theoretical debates concern the development of less advanced states as laboratories by which to understand the history of the West. Many controversies have occurred over whether or not the underdeveloped Third World countries can be expected simply to repeat the emergence in Western societies of democratic, bureaucratic, and capitalist states. Such "modernization" was one of the chief tenets of the pluralist perspective in the 1950s and early 1960s. The stability of many undemocratic regimes, and the inability of many new nations to create stable bureaucratic state structures, and the unwillingness of many of these societies to follow the capitalist path has fundamentally challenged those premises. We shall not deal with the controversy directly, although we believe that most of the arguments concerning the new states are still couched in the language of one or more of the theoretical perspectives on Western states.

two views the critical element of showing how the very wishes and perceptions of the population – their political consciousness – are shaped or stunted, so that their real interests are not served; they are not even aware of other possibilities. The “normal” functioning of a particular social order creates “subordination and intellectual subordination” among a population. In our language, this is the class view of power as hegemony.

Every contemporary political situation, we believe, always involves all three levels of power and cannot be fully understood without a synthetic analysis incorporating all three. Their relative importance in consciousness and action depends upon specific historical and political conditions. The meeting of the president’s cabinet, for example, to decide whether or not to invade Vietnam can be seen as simultaneously involving all three levels of power. Its situational component is the contest within a group (the cabinet) for influence over decisions. Personality factors, overt and covert bargains, career contingencies, and political skills all play a role in the immediate outcome. Its structural component is the conflict between government agencies – the army and navy, civilian and military, executive and legislature – over resources and the role of legitimate proponent of a popular policy (or opponent of an unpopular one). The decision would be seen as a competition for national prestige in a balance of power between nations or as an opening gun in a future electoral contest between competing parties.

The systemic component of the decision to invade Vietnam is the historical context of socialist development elsewhere in the world, which has long-term consequences for the possibility of reproducing capitalism in the United States. The decision at this level of analysis would be seen in terms of its consequences for international capitalist control over raw materials and labor markets in the Far East, and for the power of capitalism to expand into less developed areas of the world economy to compensate for domestic tendencies toward economic crisis. The exclusion of dominated classes from access to the decision would be taken for granted, partly because of the systemic consequences of the decision.

Such an event cannot therefore be understood adequately in terms of pluralist concepts of “decision-making” in groups or in terms only of the managerial language of “institutional conflict” between organizations. The context of a world system of capitalist production, creates the historical conditions in which certain institutions exist and therefore decision-making situations become more or less probable. As we shall argue in Chapter 17, it is a mistake to collapse levels of analysis (and therefore levels of explanation) into each other.

Although each perspective takes one level of analysis and thus one level of power as primary, each perspective recognizes that power has multiple sources. Accordingly, within each perspective there is an in-

ternal debate on the conditions under which the organizational instruments of the state are shaped either by their societal function or by political action. The functional and political relations between state and society, which constitute the central contradiction in the state within each perspective, are charted in Table 1. In the first three parts of this book, we analyze the aspect of the state and the contradiction within it that each perspective takes to be central.

In the pluralist perspective, moderate democratic participation (Chapter 4) within a consensual political culture (Chapter 3) leads to a governable state. Situational participation must occur within a functioning consensus. The tension between *participation* and *consensus* is mediated by the party system and by governmental leadership socialized to balance between group demands and the public interest. Excessive participation or a breakdown of consensus creates the key issue of the *governance* of the society. Then, Chapters 5 and 6 present the pluralist perspective on the bureaucratic and capitalist aspects of the state.

In the managerial perspective, bureaucratic centralization dominates the overall historical development of the state in industrial societies (Chapter 8). Powerful organizations and interests irrationally fragment the state at a time when the technical capacity of an autonomous state to monitor a fast-changing, increasingly complex society is most critical, creating a conflict between private and public rationality (Chapter 9). New, “corporatist” forms of interest aggregation arise to manage this conflict between *centralization* and *fragmentation*. The central issue for the state is *elite capacity* – finding mechanisms that can coordinate both pressures toward centralization and the capacity of organized interests to fragment state authority. Then, Chapters 10 and 11 present the managerial perspective on the democratic and capitalist aspects of the state.

In the class perspective, capitalist accumulation constrains state structure and state policy (Chapter 13). Class struggle – resistance, protest, revolt, or simply the strategic withdrawal of labor power – challenges the hegemony of the production relations between capital and labor (Chapter 14). The actual and potential power of the working class must be subordinated to the requirements of crisis management by the state. This contradiction between the imperatives of *capital accumulation* and *class struggle* is mediated by state fiscal dependency upon taxation of private incomes and by the structural segregation of functions critical to capital accumulation from those functions that absorb working-class political struggles. This contradiction within the society as a whole leads to the central issue for the state: the constant possibility of economic and political crises. Then, Chapters 15 and 16 present the class perspective on the democratic and bureaucratic aspects of the state.

Within each perspective, the contradictions between societal functions

Table 1. *Power and contradiction in perspectives on the state*

Level of power	Theoretical perspective		Class
	Pluralist	Managerial	
<i>Situational power</i> Specific strategies of political action to influence government decisions	Voters and diverse groups compete for influence in political situations	Organizational elites use resources at critical junctures	Agents of capital and labor struggle in historical conjunctures
<i>Structural power</i> The internal organization of the state	The state is a highly differentiated mosaic of agencies and programs accessible to influence	The state is an autonomous, coercive, technocratic administration with legal authority, negotiating with private organizations	The state has a distinctive form that reproduces capitalist social relations
<i>Systemic power</i> The societal functions of the state	A consensual value system defines the boundaries of state action	A complex, changing society creates technical and resource constraints on the state	Capitalist tendency to economic and political crisis limits the hegemony of both state and capital
	State structure		
in the state (functional versus political relations)	Tension between <i>consensus</i> and <i>participation</i>	Conflict between <i>centralization</i> and <i>fragmentation</i>	Contradiction between <i>accumulation</i> and <i>class struggle</i>
Central issue for the state	Governance	Elite capacity	Crisis
Central types of politics	Liberal and conservative	Reform and reactionary	Socialist and fascist

Note: In each perspective, all three levels of power are regarded as important, although each perspective focuses upon one level of power as primary. In each, the structure of the state is a consequence of both policy responses to political demands and societal constraints upon state structure.

and the historical possibilities for political action are accommodated, managed, or mediated by the structure of the state. The state is seen as the thermostat instrument for reproduction of the social order, as an agency managing social conflict, or as a potentially explosive focus of societal contradictions.

In Chapter 17 we stand back from the perspectives and deal with the underlying issue of powers of theory to analyze the state in society. We shall use our exposition and critique of each perspective to consider the requirements for an adequate framework for a theory of the state in Western societies.

In Chapter 18 we use this theoretical framework to consider critically the types of politics that seek to control the state. The dominance of particular strategic coalitions must be understood in the context of specific historical conditions that create the possibilities for particular kinds of political actions.

In Chapter 19 we analyze the internal and external contradictions in the state. Our argument is that at the societal level of analysis the state in these societies is best understood in terms of contradictory relations among capitalism, bureaucracy, and democracy. These relations can only be explained historically. In brief, capitalist growth requires autonomous bureaucratic and democratic institutions and yet limits their functioning. The capitalist, bureaucratic, and democratic aspects of the state are insulated from each other and yet depend upon each other for their own internal functioning. Power at the societal level inheres in contradictory institutional interrelationships.

By this argument we do not mean to imply that bureaucracy requires either democracy or capitalism or that democracy requires capitalism or bureaucracy. We believe that the relations among these three institutional logics are both symbiotic and historically limited. One of the fundamental silences of all three theoretical perspectives – one that is perhaps inevitable – concerns the limits and conditions of these relations.

The logics of capitalism, bureaucracy, and democracy

A concrete example may help clarify the logics of capitalism, bureaucracy, and democracy and make clear that our distinctions are not purely academic but apply in public discourse. By a "logic" we mean a set of practices – behaviors, institutional forms, ideologies – that have social functions and are defended by politically organized interests. Individual actors may not be aware of these logics.

In 1979 a conflict erupted over whether or not a California state agency (the Department of Transportation, CALTRANS for short) should sell homes it had acquired several years before back to the local residents –

some of whom still lived in the same houses – at below-market prices. (A planned freeway had been abandoned.) While approval was being debated by the agency, inflation pushed housing prices up past the point where the residents could afford to buy them back. Which should prevail – the logic of capitalism (market prices), the logic of bureaucracy (agency jurisdictions), or the logic of democracy (the rights of citizens to participate in critical decisions)?

The actual headline of the *Los Angeles Times* article (January 22, 1979) that described the incident illustrates the logic of democracy: NEIGHBORHOOD FIGHTS FOR ITS HOMES. The implication of this headline was that community residents have an inalienable right to maintain their neighborhood and to appeal to their legislative representatives for support on that basis. Their political participation therefore has a claim superseding bureaucratic rules and law, as well as any market rights. The community residents called upon the state bureaucracy to “understand the simple fact” that they were only protecting their basic human rights and asked them to act as if they were “public servants,” recognizing the supreme value of what people need in their daily lives. The community residents activated the city council, their representatives in the state assembly, and even other state agencies to support their appeal to CALTRANS to allow repurchase of their homes at below-market prices.

If the *Times* had chosen to emphasize the logic of capitalism, the headline might have been: PUBLIC MONEY USED TO PREVENT MARKET COMPETITION IN HOUSING. The market values had already risen on the houses. Because the residents no longer owned them, they had no special claim on the housing if they did not have the income to purchase or rent them when they came back on the market. Markets are impersonal and should operate independently of state action. The state should not interfere with the housing market, which will in the long run operate efficiently to increase the supply of appropriately priced housing if only freed to operate. CALTRANS acted appropriately in building highways as an infrastructure for transportation but should only use the market to deal with the new situation by having the houses appraised and sold at the market price to the highest bidder.

If the *Times* had chosen to emphasize the logic of bureaucracy, STATE AGENCIES ASKED TO BREAK THE LAW might be the headline. State agencies cannot single out a particular group to benefit from its actions, unless that benefit is spelled out in the relevant legislation. Otherwise, as a CALTRANS spokesman said, they might get into endless lawsuits. And the state agency must not act outside the framework of its enabling legislation, precisely in order to render the agency more accountable to the public. Delays may indeed occur, because agencies must follow orderly procedures within the law, even if individuals and families are

hurt by the delays. Other state agencies that became involved could afford to be critical of CALTRANS because their own procedures and rules were not involved, but they would suffer the same delays if their own internal operations were being challenged. “These things take time,” when a new set of rules is being established. Agencies cannot operate as if every decision were unique but must make decisions in a way that will maximize the chances of routinizing future similar decisions. The delays caused now may speed up similar disposals of property if a set of rules can be devised that covers most contingencies. One bureaucracy (the Department of Housing and Community Development, pleading for the below-market sale) cannot simply ask another (CALTRANS) to use its own internal decision-making rules because the rules of one agency have an internal coherence – whether politically or administratively decided – that cannot instantly be changed without consideration of the consequences.

As events developed, a coalition developed among the residents (via the Route 2 Tenants Association), a state agency (the Department of Housing and Community Development), a community organization (the Los Angeles Community Design Center), and representatives of two legislatures (the state senate and the Los Angeles City Council), against another state agency (CALTRANS). The courts (in this case, the attorney general functioning as a judge) supported the coalition by ruling that the tenants’ claim to their homes overrode market-value housing prices as well as Article XI of the state constitution, which provided that highway trust funds cannot be used for anything except highway purposes.

The content of the *Times* article was consistent with the headline, favoring the logic of democracy. Criticizing the logic of capitalism, the writer referred to “windfall profits,” as if profits were bad. Criticizing the logic of bureaucracy, the writer referred to “bureaucratic babble,” as if most legal and official language were nonsense. The community was described as an “occupied territory,” as if the official state agencies did not have legitimate jurisdiction over the entire population and territory of California. If written from the point of view of the logic of capitalism or bureaucracy, the article would have used a totally different rhetoric, potentially evoking quite different responses in its readers.

Conclusions

Our argument, as we have already said, assumes that there is some validity in all three perspectives. Our concern is not with the politics of language – with the ideological content and uses of words to convince and mystify – but rather with the language of politics – the different

ways in which theories of the state are conveyed by the language in which they are couched, and the way language itself carries the content of the theories. What is seen and what is said are related. Both are theoretically constructed.

Theoretical perspectives as modes of inquiry

The home domain of each theoretical perspective comprises a particular level of analysis, world view, and method.¹ In addition, each perspective has a distinctive view of key societal dimensions, the state, and its most important relations with society. Table 2 summarizes these elements of the mode of inquiry of each perspective. We shall show through detailed critical examination of actual empirical inquiries where the analysis is strong on a particular home domain and how it becomes weak when it leaves that domain without the appropriate conceptual adjustments.

Our own position is that individual interests, motivations, and perceptions can never adequately explain individual behavior. Both organizational and societal factors must be taken into account in explaining variations in rates of individual behavior occurring in different types of situations. But the reverse is not possible – one cannot explain organizational or societal processes by theories of individual behavior or social interaction. Nor can organizational relations explain the totality of social relations.²



¹ What we are calling "world view" the late Alvin Gouldner called "domain assumptions" in his critical work on American sociology (1970). Gouldner's own domain assumptions led him, unfortunately, to consider sociology a far more autonomous intellectual and theoretical system than is warranted (chaps. 2, 13). His own work "resonates," to use one of his favorite words, much more broadly with social theory in general. Gouldner artificially and unnecessarily limited his critique to sociology.

² Sociologist Jeffrey Alexander has recently distinguished the "metaphysical environment" (which we call the world view) from the "empirical environment" (which we call the level of analysis) of science. He correctly refuses to make a sharp and qualitative distinction between them. Without suggesting that this is a rigid continuum or hierarchy, Alexander uses such words as "models," "concepts," "definitions," "classifications," and "propositions" to designate the intermediate stages between world view and level of analysis. As he says, every specific actual statement is influenced by metaphysical presuppositions, even when those are completely implicit (1982, p. 4). Because our concern is with applying these epistemological concepts to substantive analyses of the state in Western societies, we shall not deal in detail with this issue.