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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DISCIPLINING METHOD: EVIDENCE, RHETORIC
AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE POLITICAL SCIENCES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY
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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
DECEMBER 1997

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To my mother,
who sometimes believed without evidence,

and

to my father
who sometimes reminded me of the evidence

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A dissertation is the *culmination* of an education, and so the debts incurred during its writing reflect not only the work itself, but the kind of person one has become. This is especially so in my case, since the dissertation before you is also the *embodiment* of my education so far. My personal and intellectual debts for this process are so extensive as to be both humbling and comforting at the same time: humbling because I realize how much I rely on others, and comforting because I have found that I can, in fact, depend on family, friends, and teachers.

My gratitude begins with my parents. In a sense, they were my first teachers—teaching me how to be a person through their example. From my father I learned intellectual and personal honesty: simple curiosity, the willingness to distinguish, and the reasonableness that allows one to be corrected. From my mother I learned passion, spirituality, and the willfulness that remakes identity as conscious self-definition, into a choice. Without their gifts I would not have become a person defined by his thoughtfulness. Of course, I am also extremely indebted to them for their emotional and financial support over the entire course of my education.

In writing this dissertation I have reflected on my debts to my teachers over and over again. The two greatest of these are to Amy Kass and J. David Greenstone (z"l). Mrs. Kass, as my freshman humanities teacher, taught me how to read a text and remains my model for what a teacher should be. David Greenstone was my undergraduate faculty

advisor. He not only taught me Wittgenstein and introduced me to Political Science, he had faith in my abilities when I did not. His active intellectual engagement with all his colleagues serves still as my model for what a scholar should be.

Almost as large are the debts to my teachers over the last few years, especially my committee. Bill Sewell guided this project from its inception as a qualifying paper over five years ago. His encouragement, close reading, and obvious interest in my work made him a fine chairman. It is a pleasure to express, in writing, my thanks to Susanne Hoerber Rudolph. She was also a reader of the qualifying paper, but my debts to her go back to my undergraduate days, when she taught me Max Weber. Her kindness, wisdom, and curiosity have benefited me for over ten years. Michael Dawson, who I only met at the beginning of this dissertation, provided a welcome balance to the committee: he truly is a methodologist, a positivist, and broad-minded all at the same time. This dissertation would surely be less without his insightful comments.

I would also like to thank Wendy Olmsted and David Smigelskis for introducing me to Aristotle, Larry McEnerney for introducing me to Toulmin's work, Gehad Auda for teaching me how to do fieldwork, and the members of my prior dissertation committee, Lloyd Rudolph, Daniel Brumberg, and Sue Stokes. All these experiences informed the writing of this dissertation.

I appreciate the comments of those who read draft chapters at the University of Chicago's South Asia/Middle East Politics and Society Workshop, Comparative Politics and Historical Sociology Workshop, and Interdisciplinary Social Theory Workshop.

I could not have completed this dissertation without my friends. First among them is Adam Danél, whose intellectual and personal integrity have helped me to nurture my own. Foster Marshall has stood with me through all the ups and downs since the first days of graduate school. Mark Mandle and Michelle Harris have supported me and

bolstered my self-confidence when I needed it most. Jamil Khoury's critical passion and political engagement continually demonstrates to me that organic intellectuals still exist. Through our often contentious friendship, Manuel Capellan has taught me my own strength, and that proved critical to my decision switch topics and begin this project.

Finally, my Bobé (z"l) did not live to experience this exciting time. But I know she would be overjoyed, and I know she never doubted it would come to pass. I send her kisses in the world to come.

ABSTRACT

Political science can transcend the divide between positivist and interpretative approaches by evaluating methodological choices from the standpoint of rhetoric, which means seeing methods as modes of argument. Methodological positions can then be evaluated by subordinating the cognitive aims of political science to its normative aims. The idea of communal agency is seen as the central aim of political science, and is used to critique historical, structuralist, rational choice and post-modern approaches to social science argument. This approach is implemented through the focused comparison of evidentiary strategies used in contrasting pairs of texts which address the same empirical subjects.

Chapter 1 lays out the insufficiency of analyzing methods in formal terms, then explains how we can evaluate methods by examining the use of evidence. In the process of making empirical arguments, social scientists necessarily employ implicit theories to render facts into evidence. These theories are implicit warrants that justify the linkage of data to theoretical claims. Making those warrants explicit enables them to be evaluated. Since research methods have affinities with empirical subjects, it is necessary to hold the subject matter constant by comparing evidentiary strategies in six texts which discuss three related cases involving colonial rule.

Chapter 2 compares the arguments of Fanon and Lustick on the decolonization of French Algeria, finding that values need not prevent empirically falsifiable arguments

because they influence claims at different levels of generality. Fanon utilizes his value commitments as a warrant for his empirical claims, but Lustick preserves the distance between value and analysis through his use of neutral neologisms and comparative political history. As a result, Lustick's work demonstrates that social science analysis can be both politically engaged and empirically rigorous.

Chapter 3 compares Tignor's and Mitchell's arguments about British colonial rule in Egypt. Two distinct notions of causation are elaborated. "Narrative" causation relies on causal chains, emphasizes contingency and human agency, and is typical of diachronic history. "Tautological" causation relies on invariant relations between factors, facilitates theoretical parsimony, and is typical of physical science. Conventional positivist notions in social science combine these two notions of causation.

Chapter 4 examines the Scott-Popkin debate over the causes of peasant resistance in colonial Vietnam, thus elucidating three different dimensions of collective agency: individual agency, institutions, and discourse. Scott links individual interests to shared discourse, thus explaining why peasants are likely to rebel. Popkin documents the devices needed to overcome the collective action problem, and thus shows what is needed for successful resistance. Neither addresses the links between institutions and discourse.

The conclusion argues that for political science to maximize collective agency it must: (1) link individual agency, institutions, and discourses; (2) avoid performative contradictions by acknowledging the reality of individual agency and the autonomy of discourses; and (3) avoid the dangers of an overdeveloped theory which achieves generality at the cost of a tautological determinism.

CHAPTER 1

QUESTIONS OF METHOD AND FOCUSED TEXTUAL COMPARISON

Said the man gently:

"I give you the words of a man of experience, who said: 'It is an indication of truth's jealousy that it has not made for anyone a path to it, and that it has not deprived anyone of the hope of attaining it, and it has left people running in the deserts of perplexity and drowning in the seas of doubt; and he who thinks that he has attained it, it dissociates itself from, and he who thinks that he has dissociated himself from it has lost his way. Thus there is no attaining it and no avoiding it—it is inescapable.'"

Then Abdullah al-Aqil went off in the direction of the city.

Naguib Mahfouz, Arabian Nights and Days

1.1. Introduction

The most important recent book in political science methodology is Designing Social Inquiry by King, Keohane and Verba.¹ The usefulness of KKV stems from its practical orientation toward method and the common sense assumptions that undergird their vision of social inquiry.

Like KKV, my dissertation is practical and occupies a middle ground of abstraction. Moreover, we agree that science is a social enterprise, that knowledge is

¹King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). Hereafter, referred to as KKV in the text.

possible but imperfect and partial, that social science should address topics which are "pressing", and that there is great value in specifying "rules of inference" that move from discrete observations to general claims. Finally, we agree that method *is* the way that social scientists argue.²

However, KKV feel it feasible and prudent to "sidestep many issues in the philosophy of social science as well as controversies about the role of post-modernism, the nature and existence of truth, relativism, and related subjects."³ By assuming knowledge of the world is possible but always uncertain, they deem it feasible to simply bypass issues of values in social science, and thus move directly to the task of developing rules of scientific inference which will improve the reliability of descriptive and causal conclusions.

I disagree. It is not possible to disentangle the substantive theoretical concerns about social life and merely address method as an abstract schema of inference. While their book clarifies any number of methodological issues, much of great practical concern in the social sciences is not separable from questions of value. As KKV acknowledge, social science is not just science, it is social, and hence it addresses questions that have *social* importance.⁴ The very notion that social questions are important implies criteria of importance, and these inevitably relate to the values we hold. Importance cannot be merely understood as referring to quantitatively "big" impacts on social life. For example, as KKV themselves suggest, the extinction of dinosaurs "was as important as any historical event for human beings," because without it consciousness would (arguably) not have appeared on Earth. As social scientists we have chosen not to study those phenomena that simply have the widest impact, but which have certain kinds of impacts on areas of life that

²King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, 3-16.

³King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, 6.

⁴KKV state that social science topics should have "practical applicability to the real world of politics and social phenomena and to the current and historical record of the events that shape people's lives." King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, 15.

we care about most. Weber's famous thesis about the Protestant ethic and the development of capitalism addresses the cultural forms that typify modern societies; but the importance of the thesis is not defined simply by the ubiquity of rational accumulation, but by our concern with the positive and negative consequences of capitalist life. In other words, social theories are not just important because they explain co-variation among variables, but because the variables are related to a story we deem relevant about social life. And those stories are intimately bound up with values such as democracy, prosperity, equality, and rationality.

Yes, the "content of 'science' is primarily the methods and rules not the subjects matter,"⁵ but, at the same time, method without substantive content is impossible, since to get any grasp on the world (the natural as much as the social) we must rely on some set of categories. Experience as a conscious activity relates particulars to more or less general categories. If empirical matters are bound up with the pre-existing categories and if those categories are bound up with normative concerns, then we owe it to our inquiry to admit that method has some content and to deliberate on its proper content as best we can.

Methods thus ground social theory in at least two distinct ways. Some methods ground claims by inferring certain formal relationships between discrete claims (facts) and broader claims (theory); these include comparative and statistical methods. This is the focus in Designing Social Inquiry. Other methods, by contrast, ground claims by the plausibility of some intuition about social life or human psychology; these include rational choice theory and the Foucauldian notion of power/knowledge. Rational choice theory begins with the simple assumption that society is made up of individuals who choose instrumentally to achieve some good; Foucauldian approaches begin with the premise that practices influence how people perceive the world and that those forms of perception shape who is empowered to decide for groups or society as a whole. And some methods ground

⁵King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, 9.

social theoretical claims by mixing these two types of warrants, e. g., conventional historiography. History traditionally insists on temporal sequence and written documentation. Causal claims entail (in common sense) that causes precede effects, while written documents establish that an event occurred according to the historian's interpretation of motives and effects. Thus, there are warrants "in" data, and warrants in psychology and sociology.

The central premise of this dissertation is that all social theory, insofar as it is necessarily grounded in common sense experience, inevitably relies on intuitions about human psychology and social life; methods are particular forms of this reliance and typify scholarly communities. My aim is to expose those intuitions, show how they affect method in the more traditional sense. I can then help us to evaluate the "substance" of methods, both on their own terms, and as they affect more "formal" methods.

The interpenetration of substantive and formal concerns leads me to an approach different from KKV. First, I must examine what for KKV are philosophical issues, because I find no tidy division between the "philosophical" and the "empirical." Although I too occupy the middle ground between philosophy of social science and applied methodology, my analysis must address (at least in a preliminary way) key issues in the philosophy of social science and in political theory. It is inadvisable to bracket philosophical issues, because they underlie much methodological choice in social science, and hence create important gaps between research communities.

I am also skeptical of the dichotomy between implicit and explicit methods. Obviously, the analytical distinction is not at issue. But much can be gained by a patient and generous reading of social science texts. By applying the principle of charity when interpreting social science arguments, I withhold judgment that a work has failed because it has not offered an explicit rationale for its mode of induction. Very often, implication is in the eye of the beholder: what is opaque to one reader is often perfectly clear to another,

simply because the second had been socialized or trained into the strategies of inference used by that community. While these justifications are usually unspoken, as in traditional forms of history, they nonetheless can still be teased out. KKV rightly point out that methods should be subjected to evaluation by the scientific community. But a key task of methodology is precisely to tease out implicit justifications for inference in social science; only then can we evaluate them fairly.

Third, my approach focuses on qualitative research, and I believe that it "will bring higher expected utility if statisticians learned [sic] the language of nonquantitative researchers, rather than the other way around."⁶ KKV move from quantitative methods to qualitative, arguing that the logic of scientific inference is more explicitly articulated in quantitative social science. While KKV may be correct with regard to the more formal side of methodology ("scientific inference"), their approach most certainly does not exhaust the realm of social science methodology: KKV leave out important substantive theoretical dimensions that constitute much of social science methods. Moreover, they fail to account for the linkages between the facts-to-theory warrants that make up traditional methodology and methods in the substantive theoretical sense.

As a result, my examination generalizes about method by looking at social science that is predominantly qualitative (although not exclusively so). While quantitative and qualitative researchers both rely on implicit warrants, I find that implied substantive warrants are more easily teased out from qualitative research. Quantitative researchers, because their formal facts-to-theory warrants are more explicit often feel less urgency in grounding the substantive theory that is equally crucial to justifying their inferences. Also, quantitative researchers seemingly hold a narrower range of normative and theoretical

⁶David D. Laitin, "Disciplining Political Science," American Political Science Review 89: 2 (June 1995): 454. Although I am wary of casting my project in terms of hegemonic and counterhegemonic struggle (with the unfortunate connotations of coercion), this dissertation is indeed a first attempt at creating the "alternative critical language of scientific evaluation that would be applicable in all domains of our discipline." *Ibid.*, 454.

commitments than qualitative researchers. Since quantitative researchers tend to view categories as valid if they meet some threshold of statistical significance, they are less inclined to ask the kinds of questions I deem most vital to social inquiry. Because they weave their warrants into the warp and woof of textual argument, qualitative research offers the methodologist greater opportunities for teasing out the substantive warrants that undergird social science inferences.

1.2. Studying the Substance of Method: Problems and a Proposed Solution

In short, the content of science is methods, but methods are not only formal, they embody substantive theory. This creates a variety of difficulties in the study of method. First, if theory and methods are bundled together, methods appear to presume their results. It then becomes very difficult to decide what method is appropriate in a given situation, let alone "correct" in general. Second, the substantive contents of methods create affinities with empirical subjects, which make it even harder to compare the strengths and weaknesses of different modes of inquiry. Finally, there is a social dimension to questions of methods. Social science methods are difficult skills to master, and so social scientists will have full knowledge of only a limited set of methods. Since methods outside that range seem strange to outsiders, methodological choice can appear an arbitrary preference among incommensurable alternatives.

Theory and Method Bundled Together. Category choice is both the start and the conclusion of social science research. It is the start of research, because categories are essential for asking questions and examining data. In this sense, category choice is method. But as categories are inherently relational, they imply theory. For example, rational choice theory presumes rationality methodologically, but then builds rationality into

its substantive findings.⁷ This has opened it up to the charge that rational choice theorists tautologically seek evidence that supports their theory.⁸ But the notion of free-riding does explain the frequency of select incentives. Marxism can be equally tautological with the functionalism of classes in a mode of production—but there can be strong reasons for accepting a functionalist account, provided a mechanism can explain why functions need to be served.⁹ In both examples, theorists begin and end with categories that, in between, explain what matters to them. Inevitably, we choose what to reify.

Since each category choice is highly dependent on the others, social science accounts appear to form coherent packages that include methods, substantive theory, and the meta-theoretical premises for both methods and theory. There can be no recourse to the "facts" as arbiters of appropriate method; as Milton Friedman put it in "The Methodology of Positive Economics": "Known facts cannot be set on one side; a theory to apply 'closely to reality,' on the other. A theory is the way we perceive 'facts,' and we cannot perceive 'facts' without a theory."¹⁰ The most skillful social scientists are aware (at least tacitly) of the interdependence of these choices.

⁷See chapter 4, below. Habermas criticizes economics for its presumption of instrumental rationality, noting that its "maxims of action" are technically only normative, and so can only say what someone *would* do if they followed the maxim. Jürgen Habermas, On the Logic of the Social Sciences, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen and Jerry A. Stark (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1988), 53-56. Of course, treated as a heuristic device, "normative-deductive" approaches to social theory have been quite productive.

⁸Donald Green and Ian Shapiro, The Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 6, 203.

⁹G. A. Cohen, Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 278-296.

¹⁰Milton Friedman, "The Methodology of Positive Economics," in Essays in Positive Economics, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 34. He further notes, "There is never certainty in science, and the weight of evidence for or against a hypothesis can never be assessed completely 'objectively.'" *Ibid.*, 30.

If this is all we can say, then we are in a deep quandary. Our methods decide how facts determine our theories, but our theories are already built into our methods. Ernest Gellner, playing the devil's advocate, put it this way:

[M]ethod, purporting to be more than mere logic must have some substance. But method, being method, must also be neutral, hence must have no substance . . . Hence no method is possible.¹¹

Not only are our values matters of blind choice, as Max Weber believed, but we lack his solace that social science is somehow neutral vis-a-vis those choices. The worrying implication is that social science cannot even clarify its own choices.

Affinities between Methods and Research Topics. A further difficulty arises from the links between methodological choice and substantive theory. The mix creates powerful affinities between research topics and methods. Certain methods allow one to use different kinds of data: despite the efforts of content-analysis, discourse is not very amenable to statistics, and, for practical reasons, historical topics are also usually resistant to quantitative methods. Thus, historical and discursive topics tend to require a more humanistic approach. Post-structuralist approaches, because they question the fixed meanings of identities, are therefore more appropriate for times of social conflict, and less useful when there is consensus among actors as to the definition of social actors and the terms of political debate. Positivist approaches are thus most helpful in situations like congressional behavior, interest group politics, and security studies in which both scholars and the people studied agree on the meanings of actions.

Since proponents of opposing methods tend to study different empirical questions, it is often difficult to distinguish the consequences of method from differences in the subject matter itself. It is hard to compare the relative strengths and limitations of rational choice theory and post-structuralism if the rational choice theorist focuses on voter

¹¹Ernest Gellner, "An Ethic of Cognition," in Spectacles and Predicaments, ed. I. C. Jarvie and J. Agassi, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 165.

preferences in U. S. presidential elections while the interpretivist examines the politics of meaning found in urban planning in colonial North Africa. In short, by choosing different substantive objects of inquiry, different methods appear incommensurable.

The bundling together of theoretical and methodological choices, plus the affinities between research subjects and methods, reinforce the social distance between methodological schools, making it difficult for political scientists to find common ground. Questions of methods seem unresolvable. Yet, we can make informed choices about method.

Outlines of a Solution. I will untangle this conundrum through a reconstruction of method. This reconstruction focuses on the evidentiary strategies in social science texts, because substantive theory and method are linked by the notion of evidence. For a statement or fact to be evidence, it must be relevant; criteria of relevance imply a pre-understanding of what makes a claim plausible. By examining the use of evidence in social science texts, we can uncover the implicit theory built into different methodological choices. Having done so, we can critique those positions that are inconsistent in practice.

I will take this approach one step further using an approach I call focused textual comparison. I will examine authors who analyze the same empirical subjects from different methodological angles. Focused comparison allows me to critique evidentiary strategies beyond the level of mere performative consistency: it enables me to explore the relationship between empirical content and theory. By juxtaposing dissimilar approaches to similar topics, I can show which aspects of empirical reality are highlighted—and obscured—by different methodological choices. In effect, this is a panorama of critiques, with each facet articulating what the others are silent upon. I will apply focused textual comparison to three sets of texts, which address related themes of modernization, colonialism, and resistance. Each set of texts will share an empirical topic and will thus highlight one or two dimensions of methodological choice.

In looking at social science practice, my approach towards methodology is rhetorical. The term "rhetorical" need not be pejorative. In the classical definition, rhetoric is simply "an ability, in each (particular) case, to see the available means of persuasion."¹² Rhetoric can thus persuade one of the validity of a true claim *as well as* a false one.

Rhetoric refers to

the study of all the ways of accomplishing things with language; inciting a mob to lynch the accused, to be sure, but also persuading readers of a novel that its characters breathe, or bringing scholars to accept the better argument and reject the worse.¹³

Moreover, rhetoric is not limited to extra-rational means of persuasion. While rhetoric includes appeals to an audience's emotions and the use of authorial voice to create credibility, rhetoric is also fundamentally about the ability to persuade on the basis of logical connections between statements.¹⁴ Rational argument is an especially large aspect of social science rhetoric, but it does not exhaust the subject.¹⁵

I thus look at rhetoric in both a negative and positive sense. On the one hand, methodological trade-offs are obscured through textual strategies. In this sense, rhetoric is merely ideology and science is constituted as iconoclasm—as the exposure of rhetoric.¹⁶ On the other, by revealing how these textual strategies evade their costs, I render implicit

¹²Aristotle, On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 36. (On Rhetoric, I. 2. 1). Throughout, my references to Aristotle only cite the title, book, chapter and section of the work, unless a direct quotation is made.

¹³Donald McCloskey, The Rhetoric of Economics (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), xvii-xviii.

¹⁴"Persuasion occurs through arguments (logoi) when we show the truth or the apparent truth from whatever is persuasive in each case." Aristotle, On Rhetoric, trans. Kennedy, 39. (On Rhetoric, I. 2. 6).

¹⁵My approach is greatly indebted to Donald McCloskey, The Rhetoric of Economics and ultimately, to Aristotle, On Rhetoric.

¹⁶Here I use the term ideology in the classical sense, as Marx used it: Ideology is false knowledge, the mask that hides the interests of one group or another. In this case, the interests are the claims of any methodological school that its method is the only or best way to conduct social science. Elsewhere I use the term in its more value-neutral sense, to refer to a systematic set of political beliefs.

rationales explicit, thus making them debatable to a larger community of social scientists. I suggest that we can clarify those choices by approaching social science method as an instance of rhetoric within a community. "In order for the categories to be contested at all, there must be a common system of intelligibility, extending to the grounds, means, modes, and issues of disagreement."¹⁷ I will make the case that the community of political science must be built around an open discussion of the aims of the discipline, which will necessarily be contextualized in the larger society. By describing both the unique subject and aims of political science, I can then present the concerns which method in political science must address if it is to succeed.

Since ultimately our meta-theoretical choices rest on value-judgments, all the social sciences are political. Such choices are not narrowly scientific, but rhetorical in the best sense, depending on the art of persuasion among members of a community. The more thoughtful the consumers of rhetoric, the more likely persuasion will be productive. The argument that follows—both in this introduction and in the chapters that follow—thus ultimately constitutes an attempt to articulate the diversity of methods within a common framework, the community of social inquiry.

1.3. Methodology: Logics-in-Use and Reconstructed Logics¹⁸

Methodology is literally the study of method. Since method is a way of doing something, an activity, social science methodology addresses the broad practical considerations of social science research. The issues are numerous: whether to do micro-

¹⁷Marshall Sahlins, Waiting for Foucault, 2d. ed., Prickly Pear Pamphlet No. 2 (Cambridge: Prickly Pear Press, 1996), 14.

¹⁸The term "logic-in-use" and "reconstructed logic" comes from the work of the pragmatist, Abraham Kaplan. Throughout this section I rely heavily on his analysis. Abraham Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for the Behavioral Sciences, (San Francisco: Chandler, 1964), 3-11.

or macro-analysis; when to emphasize structure or agency; whether to examine social processes top-down or bottom up; how to balance in-depth case study and broader comparison; whether one should examine discourse or political economy; to what extent one should privilege the actors' own categories in one's analysis rather than the categories derived from the literature. We are interested in these questions primarily because they wish to better understand the social world. Methodology is thus not only the study of those practical issues, but aims to be practical itself—to help the social scientist make better choices of method.

Specific practical questions affect different dimensions of methodological choice. Taken together, these questions come back to three broad areas of concern: (1) Reductionism and level of analysis—to what level should we resolve our descriptions, e.g. should we reduce all action to categories of individual choice (particular human individuals)? (2) Category choice—how general and abstracted from historical particulars should our categories be? How should we handle the intentions of the people we study? How should we handle our own values and commitments as they relate to our object of study? (3) Causality—What form of causality makes an account of social phenomena compelling, and how do we explain relations among social categories?

These are the real choices we all face in our research. The implicit rationale for such a choice constitutes the "logic-in-use" of the social scientist. But the social scientist is not accountable only to himself.

Every discipline develops standards of professional competence to which its workers are subject. There are certain acceptable ways of interpreting a projective test, of carrying out a dig, of surveying public opinion. Case studies, experiments, hypotheses, theories—all must meet certain conditions if they are to be taken seriously by the profession. These conditions are seldom made wholly explicit, and they differ for different disciplines . . . but in any case, their demands are likely to be firm and unyielding.¹⁹

¹⁹Kaplan, Conduct of Inquiry, 4.

A logic-in-use is thus the implicit standards that guide our practice. Recognizing our diversity, our arguments cannot just be made any way we please. Our diversity is seen in the way we choose to answer these questions differently in practice. Although we can certainly practice social science without methodology, when different methods within our own discipline seem incompatible, we require a meta-analysis to resolve those disagreements.

Methodology operates at a level removed from practice, but in order to make practical recommendations to the social scientist. Since social scientists explicitly aim at accounting for the data (as they see it), the only way to evaluate analyses which disagree on their methods is to abstract from the particulars of their practices. By doing so, methodology offers a "reconstructed logic" that we can then evaluate. The particular problematic of doing methodology is the difference between logics-in-use and reconstructed logic. The task of the methodologist is to reconstruct the logic of practice faithfully, while, at the same time maintaining a critical stance.²⁰ Through a textual interpretive use of the comparative method, I will attempt to navigate between those two poles, focusing on the role of evidence as producer of substantive theory and the implicit product of meta-theoretical choices.

In short, methodology is (to put it somewhat awkwardly) the theory of the practice of theory. Effective methodology requires paying close attention to the way different choices of method operate on the ground.

²⁰Kaplan, Conduct of Inquiry, 8-11.

1.4. Evidence and Implicit Theory

This practice-centered approach has been pursued profitably in several excellent studies.²¹ Some studies generalize about the interplay of substance and method, and then illustrate it with examples.²² Other studies examine the interplay one scholar at a time.²³ Finally, some have attempted to generalize conclusions by comparing the mix of substance and method in a limited number of prominent works.²⁴

This dissertation will take a similar approach, taking as central the characteristic ways evidence is used.²⁵ Since evidence is any statement that supports a claim, it implies both the actual process of finding and constructing empirical data and the meta-theoretical foundations for that process. Usually, these links are implicit, but the criteria can be reconstructed. In practice, questions of method turn out to be disputes over what sorts of evidence are relevant, and what sorts of accounts are considered plausible. And what is considered plausible hinges on both the practical and theoretical concerns of inquiry.

For example, historians are trained to inquire about temporal sequences; the order of events is critical. Thus, the historian has proved a point when he can show the linkages

²¹ Andrew Abbott, "What Do Cases Do? Some Notes on Activity in Sociological Analysis," in What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry, ed. Charles Ragin and Howard Becker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 53-82; William H. Sewell, "Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology," in The Historic Turn in the Human Science, ed. Terrence J. McDonald (University of Michigan Press, 1996).

²² Andrew Abbott, "Positivism and Interpretation in Sociology: Lessons for Sociologists from the History of Stress Research," Sociological Forum, 5:3 (1990): 435-58; Catherine Boone, "Social Structure, Rules, Discourse: Theoretical Competitions in Comparative Politics," unpublished paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, California, August 29 - September 1, 1996; King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry; McCloskey, The Rhetoric of Economics.

²³ Andrew Abbott, "Transcending General Linear Reality," Sociological Theory 6 (1988), 169-186; Theda Skocpol, ed., Vision and Method in Historical Sociology, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

²⁴ Clifford Geertz, Works and Lives: The Anthropologists as Author, The Harry Camp Lectures at Stanford University. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

²⁵ Post-modern discussions of evidence can be found in James Chandler, Arnold I. Davidson and Harry Harootunian, eds., Questions of Evidence: Proofs, Practice and Persuasion across the Disciplines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

between events through documentation. This mode of inquiry constitutes both a methodology and an ideal of evidence. Likewise, measurement and formalizability constitute the method of proof for positivist social scientists, whether statistically-oriented researchers or practitioners of rational choice and game theoretic techniques. Thus, a paradigm is plausible when the model can be expressed formally so that statistical analysis of data can prove or disprove the formal model. For both groups, the inquiry is driven by a standard of evidence.

For many others, inquiry is implicitly driven by normative concerns, which means that relevance depends (at least partly) on categories selected with practical (value-laden) intent. For example, underlying security studies is the desire to avoid unnecessary war, and to win necessary wars. The category "conflict" is built into the field; in positivist terms, conflict or its opposite is always a variable in any security studies analysis. At a more abstract level, the Marxist preoccupation with class underlies a commitment to a certain kind of equality. That commitment serves to determine who is praised and who blamed, and ultimately to generate a program of political action, or at least a sense of whose actions and power must be changed to create a more just society. Whether driven by normative or epistemological ideals, a standard of evidence constitutes the logic-in-use of social inquiry. As a methodologist, I reconstruct these logics, rendering them explicit and thus susceptible to critique.

Almost forty years ago, Stephen Toulmin analyzed the forms that arguments take in practice. He stated that every argument, to be an argument, contains a claim, data that grounds the claim, and a warrant that connects the grounds to the claim. A claim is any assertion that can be debated, be it factual, normative, or causal. Grounds for a claim are what we normally call evidence. If we find no objection to proving a claim with a given piece of evidence (grounds), we say we feel the evidence warrants our assent.²⁶

²⁶Stephen E. Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 94-107. I have modified Toulmin's terminology somewhat, in what I normally call "evidence" he terms "data." For

Under normal circumstances the link between grounds and claims is understood, and so the warrant is generally left implicit. The warrant, once stated, makes explicit a general relationship that the kind of evidence cited supports the kind of claim made. Toulmin uses the example of the claim "Harry is a British subject," grounded by the data that "Harry was born in Bermuda." The warrant is implicitly that "persons born in Bermuda will generally be British subjects." The warrant includes both a statement as to the kinds of evidence relevant (whether a person is born in Bermuda) and the type of claim it grounds (persons are British subjects). While the types of warrants used to link grounds to claims varies from field to field, this schematic structure does not. Whether a warrant is stated explicitly or only implied, it is always there.

This is all very simple, but when we do not find a claim proven by a given grounds, we are often, in effect, asking for a warrant that will justify it as proof. In this way warrants themselves become claims. And, as claims they require backing.²⁷ For example, the Declaration of Independence states the claim that the American colonies have the right to separate from the British crown, on the grounds that the King was responsible for certain unjust actions, such as imposing unfair taxes. The warrant seems obvious to us, two hundred odd years later: unjust actions by a sovereign justify political revolutions. Yet a common objection in the eighteenth century was that the King's rule did not depend on his behavior, i.e., that he ruled by divine mandate. To this the Declaration backs up the warrant by stating that governments are instituted by men to realize certain rights. Likewise, a simple objection might be that the King's misdeeds were not sufficiently egregious to justify such a drastic measure. To this the revolutionaries responded by

an abridged but eminently readable presentation of Toulmin's model as applied to research arguments, see Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, The Craft of Research. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 85-148.

²⁷"Backing" is the fourth term in Toulmin's schema, but I generally use the term "grounds," since in a methodological analysis, the warrants for social science claims are generally are usually being treated as claims.

asserting that these deeds were extensive and repeated. Thus, warrants are provided to document the link between a claim and a ground whenever someone feels an actual or potential objection needs to be addressed.²⁸

Alternatively, we may dispute the data used as evidence. We may agree that persons born in Bermuda are British subjects, but assert that Harry was, in fact, born in Paris. Or we could agree that kings who levy unjust taxes ought to be overthrown, but deny that King George III had, in fact, done so. But most claims in social science are not grounded directly on discrete facts like Harry's place of birth. Rather, the "data" that ground most social scientific claims are already of a highly complex nature, such as Barrington Moore's claim that there was an alliance between the landed aristocracy and the bourgeoisie in nineteenth century Germany. To speak of a class alliance is not at all a matter of simple perception, but depends, crucially, on a complex aggregation of events which may or may not be accepted as an accurate treatment of the political relationships in nineteenth century Germany. (And, we can do this even without objecting to the theoretically-laden category "class alliance.") Thus, when we object to someone's evidence, we are usually treating their data as a kind of claim as well—and so again we are faced with the problem of warrants.

Both objections to warrants and to data are iterated processes. The process is iterated as long as one party keeps objecting to the reasons the other cites for holding a claim, or until one reaches a point where no more reasons are possible. The Declaration defines this point succinctly when it states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident . . ." To say that something is self-evident is to label it a self-grounding claim, i.e., it requires no warrant, and should simply be perceived as true. In this case, objecting to a grounds

²⁸I wish to thank Lawrence McEnerney of the University of Chicago's Writing Program for this example, which makes Toulmin's meaning extremely clear, as we shall see below.

means denying the possibility of rational persuasion; to deny a self-grounding claim is to put the other party outside one's community of discourse.

Toulmin's analysis is generic, but it enables us to get at the essentially rhetorical dimension of debates within social science over method. In general, a method is any way of doing something, and in our case, a method is a means of proving a claim about social life. But when we claim that a method is appropriate for political science, we are saying something more. Our use of the term "method" entails a systematic aspect, that there are specific strategies that enable one to make claims about social life that will be accepted. Method is thus a fixed set of general warrants for making claims about the social that can be used for a broad range of phenomena. These generic warrants are strategies by which we define something as evidence for a social scientific claim, and these evidentiary strategies constitute methods. In short, the practice of social science is making arguments about the social. In the process of making empirical arguments, social scientists necessarily employ implicit theories to render specific data (facts) into evidence. These theories are implicit warrants that link evidence (grounds) to empirical assertions (warrants). Methods are implicit theories that constitute a datum or an observation as evidence.²⁹ In this sense, our practice as social scientists is rhetoric.

In Toulmin's language, methodology (or logic) is "warrant-inferring," it reconstructs the reasons we consider data as grounds for a claim.³⁰ This sort of inquiry is inductive, because it asks why we accept particular claims, and then generalizes to the making of a class of claims. In practice, social science—like all other fields—tends to

²⁹Observations (and data for that matter) are not merely sensory, but are perceptions about situations, which are as grounded in a direct interface with the world as we experience it in general. While I reject the extreme ontological position that our perceptions constitute the world, a methodologist is professionally committed to acknowledging the problematic character of experiences. My point here is that there is no such thing as a "brute" fact, except in so far as the community accepts certain classes of perceptions as unproblematic.

³⁰Stephen Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 121.

proceed deductively, presuming established warrants in order to move from data to claims, ". . . wherever there are established warrants or set procedures of computation by which to pass from data to a conclusion, there we may properly speak of 'deductions.'"³¹ Methodology questions those warrants, and by subjecting them to analysis, attempts to infer what warrants are most appropriate and defensible in the general course of our work. Thus, evidentiary analysis enables us to reformulate a social science logic-in-use into a reconstructed logic that can then be evaluated.

1.5. Focused Textual Comparison

I will take this evidentiary analysis one step further, through a focused comparison of social science practices. This approach will examine the range of social science methods, while holding the empirical subject constant. Accounts can vary by their commitment to generalization and formalizability, emphasis on historical agency or theoretical parsimony, preference for large-N or small-N studies, and by disciplinary roots ranging from economics (rational choice methodological individualism) to anthropology (irreducibility of cultural forms). Yet cultural and economic accounts often exist for the same phenomenon, e. g., American family structures, the French Revolution, or the rise of Nazism. By holding the subject matter constant, I hope to see more clearly how contrasting methods influence substantive claims. That is, when the broad universe of facts is shared, the differences can only stem from how evidence is selected and framed.³² This sort of controlled comparison is used effectively in comparative politics. I will apply comparative method to social science itself in pairs of parallel accounts. Each set highlights

³¹Stephen Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 121.

³²I take it as given that social scientists do not derive their meta-theoretical premises, or their use of evidence from substantive empirical statements. While cognitive value commitments are bound up in interpretations and findings, professional norms do not allow a scholar to utilize the circle in that manner.

different dimensions of methodological choice, such as human agency versus parsimony, discourse versus socio-economic structuralism and elite versus subaltern approaches to social change. Each focused comparison reveals a deeper conceptual disagreement or tension than the one which is apparently posed by the initial methodological contrast. Focused textual comparison overcomes the final level of methodological incommensurability, that arising from the affinities between methods and research topics.

Two Versions of Focused Textual Comparison. My use of focused comparison can be viewed as making a strong claim and a weak claim. The weak claim is simply that by juxtaposing authors and their methods in analyzing the same topic, otherwise unobserved features of their argumentative strategies are brought into focus: what was familiar becomes problematic. By juxtaposing contrasting texts on the same subject, the implicit can be made explicit, and thus open to debate.

The strong claim for focused comparison is that by holding empirical subjects constant, I can make a case for how argumentative strategies generate substantive social theory. In other words, comparative method can be applied to the methodology of social science in order to show the ways that normative and ontological premises built into methods determine, or significantly constrain, the types of empirical theory that are possible in comparative politics. Conversely, a systematic comparison might show how theoretical claims about social life are determined, or significantly constrained, by the data available within given empirical subjects.

The strong claim would be bolstered by two kinds of comparisons not made (systematically) in this dissertation. First, one could select texts that vary on the methods used, yet come to similar substantive conclusions. For example, a comparison of works on the Iranian Revolution of 1979 would show the degree of convergence forced on practitioners of different methods by the need to account for a shared universe of facts.³³

³³For example, structuralists need to account for the fact that the revolution occurred before the collapse of the Shah's state apparatus, which requires an accounting for individual decision-makers within a structural

Second, one might choose texts that utilize similar methods but produce different conclusions when applied to different empirical subjects. As I noted earlier, comparing across empirical subjects tends to exaggerate the consequences of difference in methods, because there are affinities between research methods and subject matter. However, a comparison of similar methods applied to different cases would show the limits of method's influence on findings, to the extent that the findings, e. g., through rational choice methods, do not converge entirely on a single explanation.³⁴ While this is not the intent of anthologies that aim to showcase one approach or another, the power of a method is implied when it provides answers which bear a family resemblance, yet are context-sensitive. However, due to limitations on time and resources, this dissertation does not attempt such a systematic comparison.

Applying Focused Textual Comparison: Selection of Cases. My choice of specific texts is dictated by several criteria. First of all, I attempt to sample a broad range of methodological possibilities, from rational choice to post-modern. Second, I feel it prudent to restrict the search to texts in my own area of empirical expertise, broadly conceived. Discourses and institutions vary greatly across the divide between Western countries and those of the Third World. As a student of Third World politics, it is prudent for me to examine cases that do not require learning vast new literatures. Third, I have sought out authors who engaged each other in direct dialogue. Unfortunately, the deep divisions between approaches have made this difficult and often necessitated that I 'translate' one author to another. By making methodologically divergent texts commensurable I will

context. By the same token, materialists need to account for the prominent role played by religious figures in the revolution, if only to discount religion by describing the resources available through mosques and social networks that linked the ulama and the bazaar merchants.

³⁴This final set of comparisons could be easily accomplished by looking at anthologies that represent one or another social science "tool kit," e. g., Kristin Monroe, ed., The Economic Approach to Politics; Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, eds., Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Theda Skocpol, Social Revolutions in the Modern World. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

attempt to reconstitute a community of scholarship that transcends more narrow visions of social inquiry.

Some of these authors are prominent, others less so. But in every case examining their work for its methodological and meta-theoretical logics has heuristic value. Although I consider all these scholars first-rate, I would argue that even a second-rate scholar's work can usefully represent the logic-in-use of a school or tradition. Within each community, criteria of evidentiary plausibility do not vary much, nor do their linkages to normative concerns or notions of ideal knowledge. The quality of scholarship is reflected first of all in the actual internalization and usage of those criteria, and only secondarily in the explicitness with which scholars articulate those linkages.

I examine three sets of texts that look at a group of related themes—modernity or modernization, colonialism, resistance and revolution. Specifically, the three body chapters address the decolonization of French Algeria, the British Occupation of Egypt, and peasant resistance in Vietnam. All three discuss colonial rule and speak to the nature of modernity and modernization. Two of three discuss revolution and resistance, and finally, two of the three cases are Middle Eastern.

My comparisons begin in chapter 2, which addresses the issue of values in social science by looking at the breakdown of French colonial rule in Algeria, contrasting Frantz Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism* and Ian Lustick's *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands*.³⁵ These works differ markedly in literary style and political focus: Fanon and Lustick speak to very different historical actors (nationalists vs. the colonial power), to different types of audiences (radical intellectuals vs. academics), and at different historical junctures (the height of nation-state era vs. an era of increasing globalization). Moreover, the role of the Algerian example varies between these authors: Fanon reads colonialism in general through Algeria, while Lustick reads Algeria as one of two foils for evaluating the future of

³⁵My analysis of Fanon will also draw on *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*.

Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Finally, the two have radically different disciplinary backgrounds: Fanon from clinical psychology and Lustick from political science.

Yet they bear deep commonalities. Although their particular commitments differ, Lustick and Fanon engage in social analysis in the service of a practical political engagement. More importantly, they discuss the same process, but from different angles: the French exit from Algeria was both conducted by French actors and instigated by Algerian nationalists. Decolonization and nation-building are flip-sides of a dual-edged redefinition of society that occurred partly in Algeria, partly in France, and partly in their interaction. Finally, Fanon and Lustick are both deeply concerned with the relationship between state power and hegemony.

I take their main differences to be in the basic framing of the issue: Fanon's work describes a popular movement, an on-going process of nation-building; while Lustick examines the contraction of the French state. The deep methodological gap between them on the question of elite versus subaltern approaches to historical change is rooted in two very different attempts to overcome the problematic nature of social categories under highly politicized conditions. Fanon's answer is literary and existentialist, using a highly politicized vocabulary rooted in revolutionary practice; this vocabulary treats individual events and persons as instantiation of larger forces. Conversely, Lustick's solution is classically scientific: to construct a new vocabulary that transcends the old antinomies. He thus he develops the meaning of "state contraction/expansion" in lieu of the more common terms of decolonization and secession. My comparison draws out the advantages and disadvantages of different modes of incorporating political commitments into the social analysis of group conflict. Normative stands may or may not entail evidentiary strategies that foreclose contingency, depending on whether the analyst chooses a neutralizing or a value-committed set of categories. A contingent or necessitarian causality is reflected in

micro-macro linkages. Comparing Fanon and Lustick thus reveals how much the choice of top-down versus bottom-up methodologies is secondary to one's decision to use charged or neutral categories, and thus how the choice of research vocabulary may or may not dictate substantive theoretical conclusions.

The next chapter discusses the relationship between notions of causation in social explanation. I do this by looking at two works on modernization and colonization in nineteenth century Egypt: Robert Tignor's Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914 and Timothy Mitchell's Colonising Egypt. Mitchell and Tignor differ radically in how they utilize evidence to support general claims: Tignor is a historian of the old school, documenting the causal linkages between events, while Mitchell is a post-modernist who utilizes Foucault and Heidegger to interpret the complex of discourses and practices that embodied the modernization of colonial Egypt.

Mitchell and Tignor exemplify the tension between individual agency and structure, and between concreteness and parsimony. The outcome of these trade-offs turns out to hinge on divergent implicit notions of causality. Ideas of causality, willingness to generalize, and conclusions about the nature of modernity turn out to be bound up in each other. Contrasting positions along the inductive-deductive continuum and differing implicit notions of causation reinforce substantive claims about the nature of modernity and modernization.³⁶

The final pair examines the controversy over the nature of peasant struggles during the colonization and marketization of agrarian communities in Southeast Asia, i. e., the well-known debate between "moral economy" and "political economy" schools in the dialogue between James Scott's The Moral Economy of the Peasant and Samuel Popkin's The Rational Peasant. At first glance, this appears a classic case of discursive versus

³⁶This chapter is based on my qualifying paper. Marc Sable, "Making Choices About Method: Causation, Human Agency and Generalization in a Political Science," (Ph.D. Qualifying Paper, Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, 1992). Unpublished.

rational actor framings. On closer examination, Scott's work recognizes the importance of self-interest, which partly accounts for his work's power;³⁷ similarly, Popkin makes concessions to the role of culture that strengthen his argument. I argue that Scott and Popkin—and by implication all those Brian Barry called economists and sociologists—are divided by whether they feel individual interests should be reified or whether it makes sense to reify collective action, identity and discourses. My analysis explores the essential tension between individual and social action, highlighting the ramifications for *political* agency—both as limitations in these studies of peasant resistance, and also in social analysis generally.

Taken together, each group of texts should speak to the others based on the overlapping substantive questions, enabling me to build from one chapter to the next. At a minimum, my critique will show what different methods highlight and obscure for this one set of theoretical questions. Even if my study should prove unconvincing in its more general scope, it will develop criteria for evaluating how each approach can best be used to explore colonialism, modernization, and resistance in the Third World. These critiques will delineate when historical, interpretivist, structuralist, and rational choice methods are most helpful, by relating them to the substantive theoretical interests which they best illuminate.

1.6. Method, Rhetoric, and Community

As a set of evidentiary strategies, social science method is a form of rhetoric, and is thus highly dependent on audience. Whenever a set of evidentiary strategies is deemed persuasive by a community of scholars, we can deem it the method of that scholarly community. Practitioners of statistical methods are in agreement that a causal claim is

³⁷William James Booth, "A Note on the Idea of the Moral Economy," American Political Science Review 87: 4 (December 1993), 949-54.

borne out when the "N" is large enough, when the standard deviation is small enough, etc. Likewise, rational choice theorists will agree that a claim is proven when action has been resolved down to the choices of individuals acting to effectively realize certain ends (usually their own self-interests). Interpretivist social scientists cannot (or will not) articulate their method formally, but they will be able to agree when an interpretation is successful, based on whether it takes into account the most important aspects of a given phenomenon. In similar fashion, area studies specialists will judge an analysis as proven when original language sources are used, fieldwork in the region is extensive and as much documentation as feasible is attained. And so on. A method is thus a characteristic form of rhetoric underlain by a consensus among a specific group of scholars.

By the same token, our disagreements are highly dependent on audience. Obviously, quantitatively-minded positivists who study judicial behavior are unlikely to find persuasive a discursive analysis for a particular Supreme Court ruling rooted in Foucauldian categories. They won't, because for them claims about a court ruling are grounded in patterns that can only be warranted by analyzing large numbers of cases. Moreover, the Foucauldian is unconcerned with giving them the warrants they expect, and quite probably has not even made a non-quantitative claim for the case's representativeness. By the same token, our Foucauldian will find a large-N irrelevant, and so dismisses out of hand the most basic warrant of the quantitatively-minded judicial behaviorists.³⁸

Political science as a discipline lacks even a modicum of consensus about method, which is to say that we do not, as a whole, form a community. Almond has asserted that

³⁸To an extent, methodological divides also have substantive content with regard to empirical claims, since the plausibility of one claim is facilitated by others. For example, twenty years ago there was much methodological debate between Marxists and non-Marxists. Accepting class interest as a powerful explanatory factor for one type of phenomena, e.g., social movements, lent prima facie credence to using the same category to explain another, e.g., state policy-making. In this way, Marxists and non-Marxists tended to segregate themselves into communities of discourse.

most political scientists are methodologically eclectic,³⁹ while Diesing has argued that in political science, compared to the other social sciences, institutional spaces do not set up exemplary models of how the discipline should be practiced.⁴⁰ Rather, we tend to divide into isolated sects, inside of which our disagreements are productive, but beyond which we cannot speak. Unlike some other disciplines, political science has no regnant methodology. We tolerate this with an easy-going relativism that assumes we can only critique methods on the basis on their internal consistency and that rests complacently on a model of knowledge that *presumes* that the accumulation of research itself is progress. Different research programs and methodologies are presumed to add to each other without any collective attention to how they can form more than the sum of their parts, or indeed, about how the parts might actually be summed. In itself, our pluralism is a good thing. What is detrimental, however, is the lack of serious discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of different methods for studying politics.

An implicit knowledge of how categories work is present in all social science accounts, whether statistical, post-modern or the range of approaches that fall in between. How categories work constitutes a logic-in-use. Because we aren't socialized into the inferences characteristic of other approaches, others' work looks sloppy and simplistic; one doesn't know how those categories work in other systems. By baring these assumptions, social scientists who do empirical work will then be able to discuss important issues that precondition their work; that is, to discuss their work in the context of their larger purposes. Once we understand what meta-theoretical dimensions are implied by methods, we can talk about evidentiary strategies in terms of our purposes.

³⁹Gabriel Almond, "Separate Tables: Schools and Sects in Political Science," chap. in *A Discipline Divided: Schools and Sects in Political Science*, (Newbury Park (CA): Sage Publications, 1990).

⁴⁰Paul Diesing, *How Does Social Science Work? Reflections on Practice*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991).

In short, this study uses focused textual comparison to attain clarity and rigor. In positivist terms, by holding empirical subject constant we can treat substantive findings as a dependent variable with variation on the independent variable. Put in terms of the linguistic turn, by looking at interpretations that work off the same materials, we can see what different researchers are hiding and highlighting in the texts they author. To the best of my knowledge, no one has yet attempted methodological analysis through focused textual comparison.

1.7. The Arbitration of Methodological Claims

The social sciences can negotiate methodological issues through (1) an immanent critique of meta-theoretical pre-commitments implied by methods; (2) a technical attempt to combine evidentiary strategies; and (3) opening a discussion of extra-scientific values and their influence on substantive empirical generalizations.

Immanent Critique. At minimum, one can find methodological common ground through an immanent critique of meta-theory, based on what social scientists *do*: When a researcher uses a methodology that asserts *x*, but then utilizes a method which is contrary to *x*, this is a performative contradiction: the contradiction between utterance and performance disproves or defines the limits of her methodology. For example, when a post-modernist denies conventional human agency, but uses it implicitly to prove his argument, I then conclude that agency is essential to social analysis, despite his formal protestations. By looking at how social scientists rely, almost against their will, on the methodological infrastructure of their opponents, I conclude what are the unavoidable explanatory elements in any account of social life. Close textual examination enables me to reject methodological claims based on performative contradiction.

Performative contradictions show that most dichotomies are false. In the argument between prediction and understanding, we see that social science by its nature must do both; all of us do, in fact, use both. Historians must impose non-diachronic categories. Thus, historians need theory, implicit or explicit, derived from either social science or philosophy.⁴¹ Likewise, rational choice explanations need interpretation of subjective meaning, because without it they cannot reasonably characterize the values which an instrumental rationality is maximizing. Another example: case studies and general theories must utilize each other. In each of case, the practice reveals what must be done for plausibility: the dichotomies are matters of emphasis and rhetoric.

Technical Solutions. Immanent critique eliminates extreme methodological claims, but alone it will not be very helpful for the vast bulk of social science research which takes a more two-sided approach to the antinomies of structure and agency, elites and subalterns, case study and generalization, etc. The larger practical contribution will be to determine when it is more appropriate to use positivist approaches, and when to use interpretivist approaches.

Once we articulate the range of possible relationships between interpretive and explanatory forms of social knowledge, in practice, then we can articulate which combinations are most in keeping with our practical purposes in given types of research. One task is to determine whether the criteria of choice are defined by appropriateness to different questions, or to different empirical subjects. The attempt will be to uncover the advantages of each type of rigor, and then synthesize a statement of how trade-offs should be made. Hopefully, I will finish with methodological alternatives that synthesize aspects

⁴¹Hayden White finds all interpretive history to resolve into his grand four-fold typology. His analysis ultimately boils down to a deterministic account of how the need for 'plot' has a powerful affinity to types of causation, ideological slant and literary trope. For my purposes, it is sufficient to note that his typology asserts that all histories have implicit theories, if only in the form of emplotment in the narrative. Hayden White, "Interpretation in History," in Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 51-80.

of contrasting stances productively for the cases where none alone is sufficient to master the materials. This is the traditional province of methodology.⁴²

1.8. Values, Rhetoric and Community in the Political Sciences

Immanent critique and techniques of methodological synthesis, however, can only go so far. Ultimately, some questions of method hinge on extra-scientific values. It is here that we begin to see the relations among methods in terms of the community's authoritative values.

Rhetoric and Value. We cannot arbitrate claims of different methods without considering their disparate assumptions, yet when we do this we see that more than formal values are at stake. But we are not simply free to pick these values, since there are parameters given by our experience of politics and the social, and of reason.

. . . as Weber saw, we are always confronted with a choice of terms, whether. . . sociological or philosophical . . . [but this need not imply] that any such choice is inherently unarguable . . . It is in fact possible to attack or defend the application of particular terms to a given case in such a way that one or other of the parties to the dispute may be induced to change his mind. Moreover, this will require an appeal both to the sociological evidence and to the philosophical presuppositions underlying the praise or blame which it is suggested that the evidence should evoke.⁴³

⁴²My approach differs from many methodological efforts in that I do not aim to exclude one or another set of methods, either a priori or a posteriori. Instead, I wish to overcome misleading dichotomies. See, for example positivist exclusiveness by Carl Hempel in Aspects of Scientific Explanation and, more recently, Robert Bates, "Letter from the President: Area Studies and the Discipline," APSA-CP: Newsletter of the APSA Organized Section in Comparative Politics, 7:1 (Winter 1996). Critics on the interpretivist side can be equally dismissive. See, for example, Alisdair MacIntyre, "Is a Science of Comparative Politics Possible?," in Against the Self-Images of the Age. I am indebted to James Johnson for pointing out the stridency of interpretivist criticisms, cf. James D. Johnson, "Rational Choice as a Reconstructive Theory," chap. in The Economic Approach to Politics: A Critical Reassessment of the Theory of Rational Action, ed., Kristin R. Monroe (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 113-142.

⁴³W. G. Runciman, Social Science and Political Theory; quoted in Jürgen Habermas, On the Logic of the Social Sciences, trans. Nicholsen and Stark, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988), 192-3, n. 27.

In short, we move beyond immanent critique all the time. That our discussion must ultimately hinge on values outside research should not frighten us. We arbitrate choices on such matters all the time. By being explicit about the assumptions built into method, we can at least raise the level of discussion about the values of social science.

The resolution of tensions in practice, rests on rhetoric, in both its negative and positive dimensions. Rhetoric can be used to deny inevitable tensions by obscuring the trade-offs, thus making a method appear self-sufficient. Yet rhetoric can also resolve tension by grounding a method in deeper cognitive interests, appealing to an audience's core values and its bedrock intuitions about the nature of the social. By analyzing contrasting rhetorics, I will enable us to actively discuss the persuasion that takes place yet is hidden in rhetorical devices. To the extent that I reveal the values present in method choice, I open them up for debate.

My project will combine the self-critical virtues of interpretivist social science with the rigor of autonomous evidentiary standards which is the great strength of positivism. Thus, at one level, I use the comparative method (holding certain aspects constant and comparing) to treat writers as objects, while at another level I make the reflexive turn, and analyze social science as rhetoric whose evidentiary standards are dependent on one's audience. Where positivists see method, hermeneutic researchers see interpretation.

What both need is to understand social science as rhetoric, which is how one speaks convincingly to an audience about the social world. "Rhetoric" accepts the inherent limits of our objectivity, and that the grounding of our claims about the social world are dependent on values. And yet politics itself proceeds by the contestation of values, which may or may not result in consensus over how we can make authoritative choices in activity with respect to those values. In the practice of social science, these values usually operate only indirectly, through the more-or-less unspoken substance of methods. Nonetheless, communities are formed by reaching consensus on some principles, and by unearthing the

value differences in social science accounts, we will be able to discuss among ourselves which practices are most effective: we will be able to define criteria of value about different approaches to social explanation and understanding.

Neither positivist methodologists nor their interpretive critics have articulated criteria for evidence that take into account the way evidence is inextricably linked to substantive theoretical pre-commitments, values and purposes. "The scientific method" cannot do this, because it denies the purposiveness inherent in social explanation, and so makes it impossible to debate the values laden in evidentiary strategies and substantive explanations. "Interpretation" has not done this because its practitioners have caricatured the role of conventional standards in persuasion, often reducing the logics-in-use of scientists to various extra-scientific values, none of which can be debated within the scientific community. It thus appears unnecessary to engage positivists, or indeed, to articulate criteria of value for different social science projects.⁴⁴ In this way, "rhetoric" answers methodological quandaries that neither "method" nor "interpretation" can.

As a set of evidentiary strategies, method is a form of rhetoric. Whenever a set of evidentiary strategies is deemed persuasive by a community of scholars, we can deem it the method of that scholarly community. Method is a form of rhetoric underlain by a consensus. As Larry Laudan has shown, methodologies constitute one aspect of scientific paradigms, which constrain substantive empirical theory and are, in turn, constrained by

⁴⁴The paucity of criteria is probably rooted in our self-selection to be scholars of the social. Underlying our vocation is an impatience with pure theory: we want to get on with the business of explaining the social world. But the articulation of criteria about each others' projects is about us, and about ideas, and so does not directly engage the world "out there."

Yet some sort of criteria, however implicit, must exist for evaluating the quality of problem formulation. "Hard" positivists deal with the inevitable need for standards by accepting a program of quasi-naturalistic science. Interpretivists deal with it usually by grounding claims to relevance in interests in the outside world, but are not systematic about it. A vague left politics serves as the basis for not examining each others' social science projects: it makes different scholars trust each other's intentions, and thus live-and-let-live discretion is justified. "Soft" positivists grant such discretion even more widely, because they find useful work across a range of studies, and the vague sense that knowledge is cumulative allows them to be generous.

the aims of science.⁴⁵ This dissertation attempts to discipline method by formulating a rhetoric of political science that will persuade other practitioners of my discipline by revealing the implicit aims in a science which is aimed not only to *explain* politics, but to inform *political action* as well.

The Aims of the Political Sciences. Harold Lasswell distinguished between two standpoints on science, the contemplative and the manipulative.⁴⁶ To this I would add a third: the value of science in transforming the scientist. Thus, at this point, I see three general aims for political science in particular, and the social sciences generally: the contemplative, the technological and the inspirational-transformative. These aims are complementary.

By contemplative, I mean that social science seeks knowledge of the social world for its own sake and not as an instrumental value. KKV exhort us to design a research project which will "make a contribution to scientific progress" by being explicitly located within the framework of the existing social scientific literature.⁴⁷ This notion sees the social action as a puzzle, and when it is so perceived, social science's cognitive aims are indistinguishable from those of natural science. This view extends the proper respect for the autonomy of science into a vision for the enterprise as whole. The disappointing number of clear successes of social science for public life have made this the predominant ethos (if not explicit belief) of most contemporary social scientists.

And yet the instrumental-technological standpoint is far from dead. By instrumental-technological, I mean that social science stands in relation to public policy in roughly the same relation as basic scientific research to technology. By applying basic

⁴⁵Larry Laudan, Science and Values: the Aims of Science and Their Role in Scientific Debate, Pittsburgh Series in the Philosophy and History of Science, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 23-41.

⁴⁶Abraham Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry, 403.

⁴⁷King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, 16.

research, the policy sciences will be better able to realize the aims of the community, which are taken as external to the conduct of scientific inquiry. This vision of social science is not the exclusive property of doctrinaire Marxists or naive policy analysts: many prominent positivists also hold this position. For example, Robert Dahl has noted,

The answer to the question, "Why analyze politics?" is, then, obvious . . . The best reason for improving one's skill in political analysis is this: political analysis helps one to understand the world one lives in to make more intelligent choices among the alternatives one faces, and to influence the changes inherent in all political systems.⁴⁸

Likewise, Lichbach and Zuckerman state on the first page of their new book that researchers in comparative politics

want to understand the critical events of the day, a position that ensures that dreams of theory address the political world as it exists, not formal abstractions or utopias . . . The challenges of the current era — domestic conflict, state-building, the political bases of economic growth, and democratization, to name but a few — stand at the center of today's research, indicating that the need to respond to contemporary issues guides the field.⁴⁹

Finally, KKV state that social science should address topics that are "pressing;" it should have "practical applicability to the real world of politics and social phenomena and to the current and historical record of the events that shape people's lives."⁵⁰ Indeed, KKV argue that an "important topic is worth studying even if very little information is available," or when understanding rapid social change entails problems in gathering reliable data contemporaneously. They liken our need to understand social change as it occurs to the

⁴⁸Robert A. Dahl, Modern Political Analysis, 3d ed., Prentice-Hall Foundations in Modern Political Science Series (Englewood Cliffs (NJ): Prentice-Hall Inc., 1976), 12.

⁴⁹Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, eds., Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3-4.

⁵⁰King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, 15. See also: Charles C. Ragin, Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method, Sociology for a New Century (Thousand Oaks (CA): Pine Forge Press, 1994), 23; and Kaplan, Conduct of Inquiry, 42.

necessity of understanding why a distraught person is running towards us while swinging an ax.⁵¹

Finally, by inspirational-transformative, I mean that social science is valued as emancipatory because it transforms the consciousness of the researcher or educated reader by enabling her to see that social relations are constructed and therefore malleable. For example, imagine a scholar who demonstrates that inter-ethnic conflict is not only historically variable, but serves particular interests within a society or societies. The scholar is thus made critical of inter-group conflict within their own society, and more skeptical of forms of politics that play on such motives. Likewise, one upshot of Foucault's work on the history of sexuality is to render sexual and gender identity contingent and therefore contestable.⁵² I take this to be the political aim behind much that is post-colonial, post-structuralist and post-modern in the social sciences (and the humanities, as well).

As Laudan as noted, conflicting aims may nonetheless result in shared methodologies and substantive theories, because a single methodology may satisfy multiple aims, or a single theory satisfy the constraints of multiple methodologies. A good example of this sort of underdetermination is Marxism, which over its hundred odd year history has served social scientists of radically different temperaments and aims in quite varying ways, as a tool for political choice, as a mere description of the social world, and as a device for emancipating the minds of social thinkers from the tyranny of their immediate contexts.

⁵¹King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, 6.

⁵²Foucault's work is paradigmatic. According to Foucault, "one's 'sexuality' is a matter of socially and historically specific practices and relationships that are contingent and dynamic, and thus a matter of political struggle. In such a model of identity, freedom . . . [is] our capacity to choose the forms of experience through which we constitute ourselves." Jana Sawicki, Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power, and the Body, Thinking Gender, series ed. Linda J. Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1991), 42. From a social science perspective, the key fact is that Foucault achieves this effect not through abstract argument for its "model," but by historical narrative that is (albeit unsystematically) grounded empirically.

The primary rhetorical task of this project is to develop standards that are determinative enough to constitute an authoritative method, without arbitrarily dismissing or excluding approaches with which I am not deeply familiar or in fundamental sympathy. One aspect of this is to recognize the underdetermination of methods by the cognitive aims of science, i. e., some methodologies may satisfy multiple aims. But another aspect is extra-cognitive: to look at the three archetypal goals of social science as being interrelated, and to explain how different methodologies implicitly rank and articulate the contemplative, the practical and the transformative aims of social science. "Balancing" these aims entails that I explain how contemplative knowledge of the social serves knowledge for action's sake, and how it transforms the author's and the audience's self-understanding. I leave this task for my conclusion.

Throughout this dissertation, I will privilege the practical purpose of the political sciences, what might be called "the social uses of social science."⁵³ But this need not undermine the other aims of social inquiry, because the practical aim of political science depends on its autonomy.⁵⁴ Moreover, the study of pressing social issues with intellectual honesty does indeed transform the researcher, freeing one of opinions that cannot be grounded when subjected to a demand for evidence. The political values of the researcher are thus refined.

⁵³This telling phrase comes from Robert Redfield, The Papers of Robert Redfield, vol. II, The Social Uses of Social Science, ed. Margaret Park Redfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

⁵⁴If "practical" means "choosing well," then practical action depends, at least in part, on knowledge. An interest in practical action only undermines purely cognitive aims when the interest in action prevents one from questioning the validity of a claim. Obviously this occurs when interests in policy seek to validate a particular claim in order to justify a specific course of action, i. e., when knowledge is not truly sought, but only legitimation. In the opposite case, though, "relating the inquiry to practice has the advantages of providing anchorage for our abstractions, and data and tests for our hypothesis. For behavioral science these advantages are especially great, counteracting the tendency to empty verbalization characteristic of some sociologies, for example, or the self-contained formalism of certain economic theories." Kaplan, Conduct of Inquiry, 399.

Choosing Method: the Practical Aim of Political Science. One primary objection to this argument is based on Kuhn's seminal work, which is seen as proving that within scientific paradigms, methods are so inextricably bound up with substantive empirical claims that it becomes impossible to judge them, except in terms of their own coherence.⁵⁵ Larry Laudan has critiqued this view, breaking down Kuhn's notion of paradigm into substantive theories, methods, and cognitive aims. He has shown that in the case of specific paradigm shifts in the physical sciences, cognitive aims, methods and substantive theories, were not in fact transformed simultaneously, but that first one aspect of the activity changed, which influenced another, and then redefined the third. Each aspect of scientific activity is in a kind of dialectical relationship with the others. Thus, methodologies constrain substantive empirical theory and are, in turn, constrained by the aims of science. And the cognitive aims of science are informed by what the current state of scientific theory indicates is a feasible expectation for theory.⁵⁶

For my purposes, the relevant point is that the methods of science vary with the presumed cognitive aims attributed to science.⁵⁷ Aristotle, likewise, begins the Nicomachean Ethics with the simple statement that "Every art, and every inquiry . . . seems to aim at some good."⁵⁸ To choose something is to be aware of the good that one seeks in doing it. Being practical means choosing well; it does not mean instrumental, except insofar as choosing well *includes* matching means to ends. Aristotle distinguishes between

⁵⁵Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962). Kuhn would reject this highly relativistic reading of his work, but this is perhaps the most common interpretation, and the one that undergirds our current disciplinary laissez faire regime.

⁵⁶Laudan, Science and Values, 23-41.

⁵⁷Laudan himself acknowledged his analysis would be even more complex when moral and political value come into play, as in the human sciences. Laudan, Science and Values, 138. Thus I feel justified, for the sake of simplicity, in not addressing the nettlesome question of how the current state of social science should inform our expectations of scientific rigor.

⁵⁸Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, I.1.1.

theoretical and practical sciences, and the study of politics is very much a practical discipline.⁵⁹ Those studies that examine things that are necessarily so are not the object of choice, and hence are not practical sciences. Such knowledge is only of true and false, not of good and bad. Since politics is the art of the possible, it requires deliberation about contingencies and political science is thus a practical discipline.⁶⁰

Aristotle aside, it may seem odd to describe political science as having a purpose, but I cannot believe that our study of politics is, at its heart, a contemplative affair. For one, there are simply too many things to study in the world, the pure contemplation of which is so much more pleasurable.⁶¹ Who would choose to study legislative behavior or political corruption from a purely aesthetic interest in elegant theory? For another, political subjects are among the topics most charged with passion, partisanship, and personal commitment. If anything, the average political scientist is more abreast of political events and public matters than the average academic, let alone the man on the street. Most of us, I think, came to the study of politics because we were interested in politics, it seemed to make a difference, and perhaps we, by understanding politics, could also make a difference. Thus, throughout the discussion that follows, I will take it as a starting point that the purpose of political science is ultimately to help politically significant actors make wiser decisions—to say something not only *about* politics, but *to* politics.

Dewey has argued that the social sciences should enable members of society to constitute a "public," which can then act as a corporate unit in their common interest. For him, interactions between two individuals are private only in so far as there are no recognized consequences for a third individual. These conscious third parties are a public.

⁵⁹Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, VI.2 and VI.5.

⁶⁰Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, I.1.2 and VI.8.

⁶¹"Some people may wish to study politics in a purely detached and contemplative way, but surely there are fields more rewarding for pure contemplation." Dahl, Modern Political Analysis, 12.

The state is the instrument of a public which recognizes problems caused by interactions which have negative consequences for persons outside the interaction.⁶² He insists that the state is constituted by the attempt to deal with such problems. Publics "are constituted by recognition of extensive and enduring indirect consequences of acts."⁶³ It is the purpose of social science to help individuals recognize damaging but indirect consequences of private actions, and so constitute a public. Such a public is then capable of deliberating on what course will ameliorate the situation, and so decide on a joint course of action. (Usually, but not necessarily through the state.) A public thus constitutes a kind of collective agency.

In short, the most profitable way to approach the divide between methodologies is to carefully parse them as rhetoric—as efforts at persuasion that occur in a community, *our* community. Rhetoric, both good and bad, is persuasion. The appropriateness of implicit standards of evidence is not ultimately defined by technical criteria, but by the self-awareness of the author and the audience.

Rhetoric, Persuasion and Truth. This dissertation takes a rhetorical perspective on truth claims in social science. Rhetoric and science are often taken as mutually exclusive positions with regard to the possibility of truth. I want to make clear that I reject that dichotomy, because truth is more a process than a conclusion. For the last forty years, the lodestar for positivist philosophy of science has been the work of Karl Popper. In The Logic of Scientific Discovery he asserted the existence of an objective reality, but also held that we can never have a "verification" of a theory, in science or otherwise. Rather, according to his view, science proceeds on the basis of endless falsification of theories through critical tests; truth is found only in inability to prove a theory wrong, which is always temporary. Thus, Popper accepts that every theory is only a convention that enables us to capture some measure of objective reality. The conventional nature of

⁶²John Dewey, The Public and Its Problems (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1927), 65.

⁶³Dewey, The Public and Its Problems, 47.

scientific truth is thus present in the citadel of positivism. More importantly, the conventional nature of theory means that taking social science methods as forms of rhetoric does not entail a rejection of rigor or that there exist no valid means for deciding on truth claims. Recognizing science as a continuing, socially-conditioned, search for truth should provide a means for common ground among the proponents of "science" and my own advocacy of "rhetoric."

My difference with Popper and the "positivists"⁶⁴ hinges on how narrowly the conventions should be defined. Recognizing the substantive content that social scientific methodologies imply, I have argued that a more value-conscious approach is needed to evaluate methods, which necessarily implies a loss of precision. But as Aristotle pointed out so long ago, the nature of a subject determines the precision which we can expect from the science that studies it. Human society is not only more complicated than the natural world in degree, it has a greater complexity in kind, which results from both the social scientist's participation in the object of his study, and in the practical uses to which social science is ultimately accountable.

Since we are both authors of and audience for social science, I hope my dissertation will, in some measure, make us more conscious producers and consumers of knowledge. By disciplining method I am attempting to reconstruct the community of political science, recognizing both the diversity of our approaches and the complexity of the social world. This dissertation is, indeed, itself a political project and an exercise in rhetoric. But I hope to show that recognizing the rhetorical can be a source not only of destroying community but also for building it.

⁶⁴Popper denied that he was a positivist, and The Logic of Scientific Discovery is explicitly meant as a refutation of the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle. Here I refer to the mainstream position in postwar social science that has typically embraced Popper's falsificationist philosophy of science. A better label might be "neo-Popperians," but for the sake of clarity I use the conventional term. Karl R. Popper, The Logic of Scientific Discovery, (New York: Basic Books, 1959).

CHAPTER 2

LEVELS OF ANALYSIS AND THE PROBLEM OF POLITICAL COMMITMENTS: FANON AND LUSTICK ON ALGERIA AND FRANCE

To achieve being objective the thinker must proceed boldly from his own subjective situation. The single condition imposed upon us by objectivity is that we survey the whole horizon; but we are not obliged to make the survey from any position at all. Our eyes are, indeed, our own eyes; yet it would be folly to imagine we must pluck them out in order to see straight.

Franz Rosenzweig

2.1. Introduction

This chapter begins my inquiry into the substantive content of evidentiary strategies by examining how value commitments affect the relations between categories of analysis and substantive empirical conclusions. The influence of value commitments is examined in two studies of the breakdown of French colonial rule in Algeria, Frantz Fanon's A Dying Colonialism and Ian Lustick's Unsettled States, Disputed Lands.¹

By focusing on studies of the breakdown of colonialism, three interrelated methodological issues immediately become salient: the contingency of social categories, the relationship between categories of analysis and those of the people studied, and the

¹Frantz Fanon, A Dying Colonialism, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1965); Ian Lustick, Unsettled States, Disputed Lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza, The Wilder House Series in Politics, History and Culture (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

political nature of categories. First, the breakdown of colonialism rapidly affects large numbers of people; it thus raises the issue of social change. And because the transformation is so major, the breakdown of colonial institutions renders social categories themselves problematic, by revealing their contingent nature.² In the case of Algeria, both the definition of France and the meaning of Algerian identity were transformed.

Second, the breakdown of colonialism generates different perspectives on its causes. From the formerly colonized we get one set of explanations, which uses certain categories to interpret action by themselves and the former colonial authorities; from the metropole we get another. Algerians are likely to view decolonization as being forced on the French, as a national victory and as an example of peasant mobilization, popular war, etc. French people, by contrast, are likely to see this event in terms of civil conflicts and the collapse of the Fourth Republic. If we choose the categories of one group we are likely to predecide the explanation in important ways, but if we attempt to avoid using any of the actors' categories, how can we know if our explanations apply?

Finally, evaluating the causes of decolonization forces the social analyst to decide where causal agency lies—whether with one individual group or another, or in a cause that lies beyond all of them. Since decolonization pits different actors against each other in open political conflict, category choice has normative consequences. There are very different repercussions if we decide French colonialism was destroyed by the skilled organizing of the FLN elite, Charles de Gaulle's political maneuvers, or the spontaneous action of anonymous Algerian peasants. Not only is each explanation rooted in the perceptions of particular actors, but assigning causal agency implies political responsibility. The choice of categories is thus a normative political statement.

²Charles Taylor makes this observation in his claim for the superiority of hermeneutics in "Interpretation and the Science of Man," in Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2. He claims, rightly I think, that massive social change entails a paradigm shift for participants.

This is a daunting set of issues: the substantive side of methodology threatens to overwhelm us. But my analysis of evidentiary strategies enables me to break down the problem into more easily digested pieces. By looking at how Fanon and Lustick make their arguments in detail, we can see that although categories imply theory, and values are implicated in both, categories and values operate differently at different levels of generality. Not all claims are equally general, and not all warrants rely on values in the same way.

Thus, my analysis of Fanon and Lustick proceeds on two tracks. First, I argue that discrete particulars ("facts") are not *directly* linked to general theoretical frameworks. Rather, facts and general theories are mediated by middle-level descriptions. General claims are grounded in more specific claims, and the most specific claims are grounded in discrete particular perceptions. Category choice thus operates in two separate stages: that linking facts to descriptions, and that between descriptive generalization and theory proper.

Second, my comparison of Fanon and Lustick shows that micro-macro linkages are matters of substantive theory which are at least partially separable from the evidentiary strategies used to link general categories to particular acts. Social science must take into account both collective entities (e. g., institutions and culture) and individual choices. Yet a variety of evidentiary strategies can be used to ground mechanisms which explain collective outcomes in terms of individual choices—or individual choices in terms of collective forces. For example, Lustick's mode of interpreting French elite policy on Algeria can highlight either the way those choices shaped the political environment, or the way the political environment constrained those policy options. Likewise, Fanon describes action in stereotypical terms (e. g., "the Algerian"), which can be read either as showing that individual choices (e. g., to bomb a café or drop the veil) transformed identities, or that collective identities in transition transformed the individual's self-definition.

Fanon and Lustick thus warrant their general theoretical frameworks in two steps, one linking facts to descriptions of actors and their self-understandings, and a second step

that links those descriptions to their general theoretical frameworks. During their two-step evidentiary strategies, Fanon and Lustick approach political engagement differently. Fanon uses his political values as an integral part of his evidentiary strategy, using his own commitments as a means to warrant his interpretations of intentionality. Because his mode of analysis (through stereotypical figures) conflates descriptive categories and broader theoretical claims, his values have an almost deterministic influence on his choice of data. Lustick, by contrast, segregates his political values from both his interpretation of the actors' intentions, and (less completely) from his selection of which interpretations are relevant to his overall theoretical framework. In this way, Fanon's evidentiary strategy is profoundly and directly political, while Lustick's successfully preserves the objective perspective needed for political science as science.

My inquiry begins by demonstrating that Fanon and Lustick are comparable in the in that they address the same phenomenon.³ The French exit from Algeria constitutes a single complex event and ultimately defines a universe of facts. A second aspect of their comparability is the political interest of both works. Both see social theory as practical, are explicit about their values, and are committed to national self-determination as a general principle. Although the focus and content of their commitments differ, Lustick and Fanon engage in social analysis with practical political purpose. Third, Fanon and Lustick are both deeply preoccupied by the nature and causes of fundamental social change. Moreover, they emphasize the cognitive and discursive dimension of change; both recognize categories as socially constructed. This results in a shared concern with describing micro-macro linkages; they both draw structural changes down to the motivations and perceptions of individual actors.

³For this reason I focus on Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism*, rather than *The Wretched of the Earth*; the former is concerned exclusively with Algeria in its particulars, while the later work only views Algeria as an exemplary archetype of nation-building.

Section 2.3 examines aspects of Frantz Fanon's rhetoric in A Dying Colonialism. Despite the paucity of specific individuals in his sociological analysis, he succeeds in making a persuasive case for his central explanations. To achieve this, he employs a strategy I call "stereotypical explanation," which elides the difference between anecdote and mass causal process, and erases the distinction between particular individuals and classes. The second aspect is his use of polemic: heated prose, normative characterizations, and comments on the psychology of violence. Polemic grounds his authority as an analyst of Algerian subaltern motives by demonstrating empathy.

In section 2.4, I go on to analyze Ian Lustick's approach in Unsettled States, Disputed Lands, which fits the pattern of much qualitative social science. He constructs a new vocabulary that transcends old antinomies. Separating theory and data, he dives deeply into historical examples, piling up one concrete particular after another. General paradigm and narrative appear in tension; yet his analysis sifts through the plethora of data using a device I call "strategic location." By noting the strategic position of actors, texts and practices in society, an author can convince us that phenomena are relevant to his argument. I will demonstrate this evidentiary strategy is ideally suited for analysis of elite causation.⁴ Moreover, his account depends on an implicit substantive theory of motives and incentives that is partly rational choice and partly discourse-centered. Close attention to discourse renders convincing the explanations from self-interest.

In section 2.5 I draw out the consequences of the authors' modes of linking categories through implicit warrants. These linkages ground general claims about social phenomena in particular actors and events. Fanon links categories through authorial and

⁴Only with actors, it's utility with discourses and practices is apparent from a reading of Timothy Mitchell's post-modern Colonising Egypt. See my discussion in section 3.4, below. While Lustick uses strategic location only with actors, it's utility with discourses and practices is apparent from a reading of Timothy Mitchell's post-modern Colonising Egypt. See my discussion in section 3.4, below.

narrative voice, constituting decolonization as an aggregation of heroic moments in individual lives. The resulting narrative overcomes the gap between micro- and macro-level analysis, but at the cost of a necessitarian causality. By noting that Fanon treats metropolitan and Algerian elites as ciphers, we see how the combination of stereotypical explanation and a heated, empathic prose style has distinct limits as an evidentiary strategy. By contrast, Lustick's inductive, neutralizing evidentiary strategy retains contingency and recognizes the differences in kind between micro- and macro levels. While he too presumes where causal primacy lies—with elites, through his untheorized use of strategic location to select events as evidence—this shortcoming is an unavoidable result of the deductive aspect of social theorizing.

Their respective political interests ground a pre-theoretical choice of emphasis on elites or subalterns, so both presume agency. Yet Fanon's overt political commitment exposes the dangers of a direct political engagement in category choice, while Lustick shows the advantages of a neutralizing vocabulary. While category choice in social analysis necessarily speaks to political values, it matters deeply whether those values are mediated or not.

2.2. Fanon and Lustick Offer Parallel Accounts

Despite their manifest differences, Fanon and Lustick discuss the same phenomenon. On the simplest level, they address the same subject matter, broadly defined: the Algerian Revolution of 1954-1962 *is* the demise of French colonialism in Algeria. While they address different aspects of this process, its dynamics and outcomes are central to each author. Moreover, Fanon and Lustick both bring strong political purposes to their social analysis: neither conceives their work as contemplative. On the contrary, each sees

his work as helping to transform society. As writers with political interests, each focuses on how social entities are reconstructed—in discourses, in collective practices, and in individual psychology.

Fanon and Lustick have come to examine the decolonization of French Algeria: what Fanon calls "the Algerian Revolution" and what Lustick calls "State Contraction in French Algeria" are obviously intimately related. The French exit from Algeria was a process that occurred both within the French and Algerian communities, and between them. It was state-contraction and nation-building, decolonization and popular uprising. Decolonization and nation-building are flip-sides of a dual-edged redefinition of national community that occurred partly in Algeria, partly in France, and partly in their interaction.⁵

Necessarily, each must address major factors in the process, such as the French settlers in Algeria (the *pieds noirs*), changes in the Algerian nationalist movement, and the role of military conflict. Specifically, each account includes: the 1945 Setif massacre,⁶ the shift in leadership from moderate nationalists to the militant FLN,⁷ the ineffectiveness of French anti-war forces,⁸ the rapid escalation of French military action and the subsequent use of systematic torture.⁹ Fanon focuses on the Algerian impact and genesis of these

⁵Thus, the French exit required changes in the French polity to enable "France" to exit; these changes could only be made within the community of Frenchmen. By the same token, Algerians gained a sense of themselves as a community with political agency and efficacy; this could not be given to them from outside. Decolonization occurred in the interaction as the changes in the Algerian and French communities shaped the options of the other. Thus the relations shifted from hegemonic domination to domination sustained by naked force to a formal equality between sovereign nations.

⁶Fanon, *Dying Colonialism*, 74; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1966), 56; Lustick, *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands*, 89-90, 132, 338.

⁷Fanon, *Wretched*, 99-102; Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 131-3.

⁸Fanon, *Dying*, 149-50; Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 119, 242-54.

⁹Fanon, *Dying*, 56, 137-8, 176-7; Fanon, *Wretched*, 211-2, 215-9, 227-30; Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 138, 254-5.

events, while Lustick explores their relationship to French politics, but they are still tackling different aspects of the same phenomenon.

They have different political agendas, but neither is an ivory-tower theorist. Fanon's goal is to document and celebrate the Algerian revolution, as part of a larger goal of teaching native elites their proper role in nation-building.¹⁰ Lustick's career has been devoted to analyzing relations between the Jewish state and Arabs, with the aim of facilitating a just peace between Israel and the Palestinians.¹¹ The political dimension of his scholarship is readily apparent from his opening admission that

the initial impetus for the analysis was the relationship of Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip . . . I began this project as an analyst in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State.¹²

In short, Lustick seeks to make the Israeli debate over the Occupied Territories more coherent and realistic, and so he develops a theory of territorial change in states.¹³

France's painful but ultimately successful withdrawal from Algeria serves as a model for how Israel may make peace with the Palestinians. Thus, Lustick's theoretical interests are ultimately in the service of his political purposes. That is, Lustick analyzes France and Algeria as a means to understand the Israeli struggle over its own boundaries and facilitate peaceful coexistence between the Jewish and Palestinian peoples.

Fanon's own political commitment is apparent in virtually every line of his writings, certainly on every passion-filled page: his theoretical purposes *are* political

¹⁰Fanon is quite blunt in his normative statements, e. g., "The political educator ought to lead them [the peasants] to modify this [racist] attitude." Wretched, 114-5.

¹¹This concern can be traced through Lustick's entire oeuvre: Arabs in the Jewish State (1980), State-Building Failure in British Ireland and French Algeria (1985), and For the Land and for the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel (1988).

¹²Lustick, Unsettled States, xi.

¹³Lustick, Unsettled States, 8.

purposes.¹⁴ His work is both instrumentally and constitutively political. He considers social analysis intrinsically political because it is itself a form of social action: "A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence."¹⁵ When he refers, in The Wretched of the Earth, to "the language of pure force," Fanon is not being metaphorical; he sees actions as meaning-laden, as communicative.¹⁶ Actions define who we are, and who others are. Thus the use of force tells the native what he can and cannot do. For example, the policeman and soldier "advise him by means of rifle butts and napalm."¹⁷ Conversely, when the colonized resist they redefine themselves. Thus, when he describes the alienation caused by racism and colonialism, he aims to change the consciousness of the oppressed, thereby undermining oppression.¹⁸ Fanon's intention applies equally to French colonialism in Algeria, and European colonialism in general.

Fanon's work is instrumentally political, because he wants to show other native intellectuals their proper role in contemporary politics. They are to celebrate nation-building, as he has celebrated the "originality and impatient richness of the Revolution."¹⁹

¹⁴As he says in his first work: "I find myself suddenly in a world in which things do evil; a world in which I am summoned to battle. . ." Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 228.

¹⁵Fanon, Wretched, 188.

¹⁶Thus, the settler "knows" the native because his actions have brought him into existence. Fanon, Wretched, 30.

¹⁷Fanon, Wretched, 31. Emphasis added.

¹⁸Racism "has created a massive psycho-existential complex. I hope by analyzing it to destroy it." Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 12.

¹⁹Fanon, Dying, 179. "We shall show that the form and content of national existence already exist in Algeria . . . [where] it is the national consciousness, the collective sufferings and terrors that make it inevitable that the people must take its destiny into its own hands." Fanon, Dying, 28.

They are to educate the masses: "political education means opening [the masses'] minds, awakening them, and allowing the birth of their intelligence" because "the nation does not exist except in a programme which has been worked out by revolutionary leaders and taken up with full understanding and enthusiasm by the masses."²⁰ Thus, Fanon examines decolonization and nation-building as an Algerian nationalist and revolutionary intellectual: his goal is to build up his nation and to liberate other nations.²¹

Yet Fanon and Lustick share more than a commitment to social theory as practical activity. At a theoretical level, their works examine the nature of fundamental social change. Decolonization and state contraction both characterize transformations in the political structure that defines the relationship between Algerians and French people. This structure is both political-institutional and psycho-cultural. For Fanon, the decolonizing process is

quite simply the replacing of a certain "species" of men by another "species" of men. Without any period of transition, there is a total, complete and absolute substitution.²²

For Lustick, state contraction is a change in the territorial definition of a state—with all that such a change entails. Obviously, the Algerian Revolution resulted in both a contraction of the French state and a "substitution" of the people holding political power in Algeria. In fact, Fanon and Lustick would readily agree that change in who held power in Algeria was predicated firstly on cultural and psychological change, and secondly on political struggle. As Lustick remarks,

²⁰Fanon, Wretched, 157, 161-2.

²¹It should be noted that "A Dying Colonialism" is a misleading translation of the French title of Fanon's book, "L'An Cinq, de la Révolution Algérienne." The French title focuses attention on the native, *anti-colonial* and *subaltern* aspects of the phenomenon, as well as on its particularity—at Year Five of the Algerian Revolution. Thus the French and English titles have contradictory, even opposite, connotations.

²²Fanon, Wretched, 29.

Boundaries specify who and what are potential participants or objects of the political game . . . territorial shape . . . thus helps determine what interests are legitimate, what resources are mobilizable, what questions are open for debate, what ideological formulas will be relevant, what cleavages could become significant, and what political allies might be available.²³

State contraction is not only a consequence of massive social change, it is constitutive of it.²⁴ Fanon agrees: "Decolonisation . . . influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally. . ." ²⁵ For this reason, "When the nation stirs as a whole, the new man is not an *a posteriori* product of that nation; rather, he co-exists with it and triumphs with it."²⁶ Fanon describes decolonization as a *tabula rasa*; Lustick describes a crossing of a threshold. In both cases, an event like the decolonization of Algeria is discontinuous change, a change in kind. In short, Fanon and Lustick recognize decolonization as fundamental, even transformative, because it reaches from the most collective level (sovereignty of the nation-state) to the individual level (identity).

Because Lustick and Fanon are both politically engaged during their research, we can assume that political engagement, *per se*, does not dictate the evidentiary strategies that underlie those conclusions. Since they further agree that the French withdrawal from Algeria was a just and prudent move, it is not the specific content of their political engagements that produces different conclusions and evidentiary strategies. Rather, it remains to be shown how their differences are caused by the more general content of their political aims and, most importantly, by the way they insert those engagements into their research. It is thus time to examine how their political values are reflected in the evidentiary

²³Lustick, Unsettled States, 41.

²⁴Lustick, Unsettled States, 2.

²⁵Fanon, Wretched, 30.

²⁶Fanon, Wretched, 250.

strategies they use to link individual level choices to macro-structures. First we will examine how Fanon's evidentiary strategies privilege the causal influence of "the masses."

2.3. Frantz Fanon: Masses, Stereotypes, and Empathy

A Dying Colonialism is not Fanon's most famous work. It is, however, his only book-length argument devoted exclusively to the Algerian nationalist movement. To my mind it is his most empirically grounded work, with the balance tipped toward description of social action rather than abstract theorizing. It is thus more commensurable with the work of social scientists than his abstract or occasional treatments of anti-colonial struggle. It extends the psychological insight of Black Skin, White Masks through a sociological analysis of Algerian cultural transformation during the first five years of the nationalist uprising.

Fanon demonstrates psychological change at the mass level by showing how activists are changed, as individuals, both cognitively and discursively, by their involvement in the struggle. Although he very rarely provides specific concrete examples to buttress his claims, Fanon does provide representative narratives. In these narratives, generally nameless individuals constitute stereotypical figures in the process.

Two main points are salient. First, Fanon's evidentiary strategy follows logically from his emphasis on (Algerian) mass as opposed to (French) elite action. Evidence for mass or subaltern agency depends for its relevance on its representativeness. Fanon finesses the question of representativeness in a very simple way: he presumes it. By invariably telling his stories in stereotypical form, he lays out a paradigm without providing explicit reference to particular individuals. Thus the stories are presented as self-evidently relevant. Second, he claims to understand the mechanism of transformation, which is

cognitive. Unlike his account of racism and black intellectuals,²⁷ Fanon cannot claim to have experienced the transformation himself, at least not in the same way as the average Algerian Muslim. His position is that of participant-observer, and his problems in documenting intentions are similar to the anthropologist's. To warrant his claim to know inner experiences he shows empathy. The implicit grounds for Fanon's empathy are his fiery prose, an indirect treatment of French atrocities, and a polemical defense of anti-colonial violence.

A word of warning is in order. Any analysis of method in Fanon is necessarily a reconstructive exercise, a drawing out of principles based on how he makes his arguments. Fanon himself has little patience for methodology, as he says in the earlier work: "I leave methods to the botanists and the mathematicians. There is a point at which methods devour themselves."²⁸ Nonetheless, Fanon does employ a method, if only in the form of a coherent rhetoric.²⁹

Fanon's General Argument. Fanon weaves together psychology and anthropology, reconstructed thought processes and tangible actions in order to make a relatively simple point: Algeria exists as a separate nation. "We shall show that the form and the content of national existence already exists in Algeria and there can be no turning back."³⁰ Of course, everything hinges on the meaning attributed to "the content of national existence."

The process of anti-colonial resistance both produces and is produced by a sense of Algerian national identity that rejects the colonial system. While the colonized never accept

²⁷Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks.

²⁸Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 12.

²⁹On the contrary, I would argue that Fanon's last work, The Wretched of the Earth, partly "devours itself" through his lack of attention to method. He utilizes the same rhetorical strategies as in A Dying Colonialism, but addresses problems where the limitations of stereotypic explanation and empathic prose are immediately apparent.

³⁰Fanon, Dying, 28.

colonialism, the organization and activity of militants transforms expectations, enabling the colonized to act positively, channeling the violence of the colonial relation toward nation-building resistance rather than onto themselves.³¹ "The same time that the colonized man braces himself to reject oppression, a radical transformation takes place within him that makes any attempt to maintain the colonial system impossible and shocking."³² In A Dying Colonialism, the simple fact of Algerian nationality is proven through mass resistance; resistance results in easier reception of Western technology and the restructuring of family and gender roles.

While recognizing the autonomy of French decision-making, Fanon believes Algerian choices are determinative. He did not live to see the formal independence of Algeria, yet he calls it "inevitable," sees "no turning back," and declares that Algeria is already "virtually independent."³³ The choices available to France are now fundamentally altered: once Algerians recognize the contingent nature of colonial rule, France can only choose to suppress the settlers or encourage genocidal oppression.³⁴ For a variety of reasons, genocidal methods are not viable.³⁵ Thus, "*colonialism has definitely lost out in Algeria, while the Algerians, come what may, have definitely won.*"³⁶ Changes on the Algerian mass level make change by French elites only a matter of time. His task is to explain how active resistance by Algerians has transformed the mass of individuals so that return to the status quo ante is impossible.

³¹Fanon, Wretched, 46.

³²Fanon, Dying, 179.

³³Fanon, Dying, 28.

³⁴Fanon, Dying, 29.

³⁵E. g., international support for Algerian independence on the material level, Fanon, Dying, 32; rifts in the settler community, *Ibid.*, 147-8; the economics of colonialism, *Idem*, Wretched, 51-2.

³⁶Fanon, Dying, 31. *Emphasis original.*

The process of nationalist resistance restructures the individual and, multiplied across thousands of individuals, restructures social life. Nationalist resistance both builds the nation (and destroys colonialism) at a psychic, individual level, and at a social, collective level. The two aspects of the process are mutually constitutive: "men change at the same time that they change the world."³⁷

For example, the FLN decided to use women in its terror campaign in 1957, first relying on unveiled women to carry small arms and explosives. Unveiled in order to escape detection by colonial authorities, these women came to experience veiling as a contingent aspect of culture.³⁸ When tactics demanded that veiled women carry explosives, Algerian women came to see both veiling and unveiling as merely a tool of resistance.³⁹ The need to fight colonialism took precedence over the father's concern for his daughter's honor.⁴⁰ In similar fashion, Algerians came to privilege revolutionary tactics over patriarchal roles that granted unquestioned authority to the father over the son and the daughter,⁴¹ the older over the younger brother,⁴² and the husband over the wife.⁴³ Authority in all these relationships became more egalitarian, as the ground for authority shifted away from ascriptive gender identities to its ultimate and true grounding in the good of the whole national community. In a literal sense, it suddenly became possible to question patriarchal authority.

³⁷Fanon, *Dying*, 30.

³⁸Fanon, *Dying*, 58-9.

³⁹Fanon, *Dying*, 62.

⁴⁰Fanon, *Dying*, 60.

⁴¹Fanon, *Dying*, 103, 107-9.

⁴²Fanon, *Dying*, 110.

⁴³Fanon, *Dying*, 111-2.

Fanon also shows how the exigencies of anti-colonial resistance led Algerians to accept Western technologies, in particular, radio and medicine. Previously, Western technology had been resisted as part of an undifferentiated colonial system—instruments of use only to the colonizers. When the FLN used radio to communicate information about the national struggle, Algerians began seeing modern technology as in their interest.⁴⁴ Its valuation was reversed, and it now became an *anti-colonial* instrument. This new valuation was ratified by the French ban on the sale of radios.⁴⁵ In a similar fashion, Algerians had generally rejected Western medicine as "an aspect of the French presence."⁴⁶ Doctors represented colonial power and values, so the native resisted, despite losing objective benefits. When the colonized began active resistance on the politico-military level, such attitudes were no longer necessary; Algerians became receptive to Western medicine and public hygiene.⁴⁷ As in the case of telecommunications, the colonial authorities practically validated the non-colonizing nature of medicine by banning the sale of medication, anesthetics, surgical instruments and even sterile cotton.⁴⁸ In short, revolutionary necessity dictates new courses of action that the masses embrace, thus transforming the consciousness of the individual Algerian,⁴⁹ and thereby forming a new collective unconscious.⁵⁰

⁴⁴Fanon, *Dying*, 75-6.

⁴⁵Fanon, *Dying*, 84-5.

⁴⁶Fanon, *Dying*, 126.

⁴⁷Fanon, *Dying*, 139.

⁴⁸Fanon, *Dying*, 139-40.

⁴⁹Fanon, *Dying*, 30.

⁵⁰Elsewhere Fanon argues that psychological archetypes are culturally, not biologically carried. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 10, 88.

Mass Change, Representation and Stereotypical Explanation. Fanon makes his account stick by grounding national consciousness at the level of individual consciousness. The evidence he uses to make this case thereby centers on individual choice and individual attitudes. A simple issue presents itself: which individuals?

Fanon relies on a strategy I call "representation." Specific individuals stand in for larger numbers of others because it is not practical to depict a large number of individuals one by one. As with any scheme of representation, one must decide how typical individuals are to be chosen.⁵¹ Positivist attention to this strategy generally consists in avoiding "selection bias," where representation is accomplished by following rules that gather information independently of one's own preferred theoretical explanation.⁵² Fanon's study shows that a work of social analysis can still be persuasive while ignoring the problem of selection bias entirely.

Fanon accomplishes representation through a literary device, stereotypical explanation, which dovetails with the way he elaborates theory.⁵³ Since particular individuals' choices are relevant when they are typical, Fanon tells stories that are stereotypical—or perhaps even typical. Because he is not a social scientist, Fanon does not use abstract categories of social science, like modernization, collective action, or ideology. Instead, he reifies particular types of individuals: the peasant, the colonized, the native

⁵¹Political representatives are (in theory) typical of their constituents in that the represent their views—consent of the governed makes it the task of the voters to select those candidates they feel are like them in this crucial aspect.

⁵²David Collier and James Mahoney, "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research," World Politics 49 (October 1996): 56-91; Kaplan, Conduct of Inquiry, 239-44; King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, 128-39; Ian Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias," American Political Science Review 90 (September 1996): 605-618.

⁵³A word about my terminology is necessary. I use the adjective "stereotypical" not because it invalidates Fanon's rhetorical solution, but because the term *problematizes* it. "Typical Explanation" would presume a congruence between Fanon's representatives and the social reality; such a presumption is undocumented by Fanon (and is probably undocumentable). On the other hand, "archetypal explanation" would connote an essentialist psychology that I do not see in Fanon.

intellectual, the settler.⁵⁴ As a result, his rhetoric slides easily from theoretical terminology to evidentiary terms.

The Radio and "The Algerian." A typical example of slippage is Fanon's incisive treatment of the reception of radio.⁵⁵ The transformation of Algerian attitudes toward modern communications did not occur instantaneously; rather it took place in four stages. Algerians initially rejected radio because it embodied the French colonial system and the French colonial message.⁵⁶ At this stage, "*Radio-Alger is regarded by the Algerian as the spokesman of the colonial world. Before the war the Algerian . . . had defined Radio-Alger as "Frenchmen speaking to Frenchmen."*"⁵⁷

With the Revolution's onset, Algerians suddenly found the news relevant to them for the first time. This led them to read the French opposition press which presented the colonial situation critically. Fanon describes this step:

Through the experience of a war waged by his own people, *the Algerian* came in contact with an active community. *The Algerian* found himself having to oppose the enemy news with his own news . . . During the first months of the war, it was by means of the press that *the Algerian* attempted to organize his own news distribution system.⁵⁸

⁵⁴This mode of theory formulation is "archetypal" because it presents ideas in the form of ideal types of characters who share features that we are to internalize as models. One can read Fanon's story-telling as a self-conscious attempt at "sociogeny" the social construction of deep psychological features. This reification is arguably caused by his enmeshment in political conflict, where identity is critical for distinguishing friends from enemies. It would also seem reifying rhetoric generates his anxiety about racist rhetoric in newly independent countries. See Fanon, *Wretched*, "On National Culture," 165-200. Labeling on the basis of prescriptive identities can result in racist thinking that opens people to exploitation by their own kind. Fanon's first assault on Algerian racism is the last chapter of *A Dying Colonialism*, where he describes support for the revolution by some European settlers.

⁵⁵Here I do what Fanon does: presume representativeness. As the author I have direct access to the sources of information that ground my account. Unless the reader happens to have her own independent access, she is forced to accept my familiarity with the materials as authoritative.

⁵⁶Fanon, *Dying*, 72-3.

⁵⁷Fanon, *Dying*, 74. Emphasis original. "Radio-Alger" was the French language radio station in Algeria; it broadcasted primarily to the French colons.

⁵⁸Fanon, *Dying*, 76. Emphasis added.

Censorship of the critical press,⁵⁹ led to the third step, when Algerians were forced to rely on word of mouth for objective information.⁶⁰ To provide such information and expand its base to the illiterate majority, the FLN leadership established the Voice of Algeria.

Finally, in the culminating stage, Algerians actively adopted the radio, not as modern communications, but as the indispensable tool for participating in the Revolution.⁶¹ Whole families would listen to the broadcasts together, "the Algerian family discovered itself to be immune to the off-color jokes and the libidinous references the announcer occasionally let drop."⁶² When the French began jamming airwaves, listening to the broadcasts became a form of direct combat with colonial power. Often only 'the operator' could hear, while the "other Algerians present in the room would receive the echo of this voice through the privileged interpreter;" at the end of the broadcast all would argue over the ambiguous signals, attempting to reconstruct the Voice of Algeria.⁶³

With the creation of the *Voice of Fighting Algeria*, the Algerian was vitally committed to listening to the message, to assimilating it, and soon to acting on it. Buying a radio, getting down on one's knees with one's head against the speaker was no longer just wanting to get the news concerning the formidable experience in the progress in the country, it was *hearing* the first words of the nation.⁶⁴

At each stage, a story is told of why Algerians reacted in changing ways with respect to modern communications. The stories in themselves are plausible, even powerful, yet specific, falsifiable evidence is found only in the responses of the French.

⁵⁹Fanon, *Dying*, 77, 80-2.

⁶⁰Fanon, *Dying*, 78. "On the level of news, the Algerian was to find himself caught in a network strictly confined in space." *Ibid.*, 79.

⁶¹Fanon, *Dying*, 83.

⁶²Fanon, *Dying*, 83.

⁶³Fanon, *Dying*, 83.

⁶⁴Fanon, *Dying*, 93. Emphasis original.

The very terms in which Fanon tells his stories elide the difference between theory and empirical evidence: the corroborative example is described in stereotypical terms, as, e.g., "the Algerian family". "The Algerian" stands in for any Algerian individual, Algerians taken collectively, and, to an extent, Algerian national consciousness itself.

Revolution in Family Values. A close analysis of one short subchapter on "The Algerian Family" should illustrate the way that Fanon brings agency down to the individual level by reifying his categories in powerful anecdotes. In "The Daughter and the Father," he argues that the revolution has made it possible for Algerian women to realize their personalities as equally responsible members of the nation.⁶⁵ The exigencies of fighting colonialism trump traditional Algerian family values.

The slippage between the archetypal explanation and stereotypical evidence occurs imperceptibly. Once again, there are no individuals with proper names. Instead we have, in a five page section, a proliferation of references to stereotypical figures: the father, the family and the girl-daughter-woman.⁶⁶ According to my count, there are thirty references to "the" or "an" Algerian girl, seven to her as daughter, and twenty-six to her as "the" Algerian woman. The family appears seven times, and "her" father appears as a character no less than seventeen times. The Algerian girl changes her relation to her father, at both an abstract and concrete level, yet because she exists as an ideal type, the reader can only evaluate the story's evidentiary value in terms of its inherent plausibility—i. e., whether the events described strike one as the kind of things that would happen.

Fanon's tactic is to tell a story of the stereotypical Algerian girl raised under traditional patriarchy. She does not disagree with the men, avoids appearing before her father after puberty, and is married off at sixteen. Even after marriage, she is a perpetual

⁶⁵Fanon, *Dying*, 107.

⁶⁶Fanon, *Dying*, 105-110

minor under the charge of her husband, brother or uncle.⁶⁷ But then we see the Algerian girl (or usually just "she") after her new role in the revolution has rendered the old roles irrelevant.

This woman who, in the avenues of Algiers or of Constantine, would carry grenades or the submachine-gun chargers, *this woman* who tomorrow would be outraged, violated, tortured, could not put *herself* back into *her* former state of mind and relive *her* behavior of the past.⁶⁸

Likewise, the old ways become irrelevant to the father.

After all the previous shocks—*the daughter* relinquishing the veil, putting on makeup, going out at all hours heaven knows where, etc.—*the parents* no longer dared protest. *The father* himself no longer had any choice. *His* old fear of dishonor had become altogether absurd in the light of the immense tragedy being experienced by the people. But apart from this . . . [c]hallenging the morality of a patriot had been ruled out long ago.⁶⁹

These transformations are plausible because we can readily imagine how the actions would influence our own attitudes under the circumstances: The Western reader (at least) will readily acknowledge that once a woman doffs the veil and knowingly risks her life in terrorist activity she would cease to find the veil important, or indeed feel that her father should be obeyed blindly. Likewise, one can easily imagine how a father might relinquish authority over his children if they rebelled in the name of a value he himself held sacred, in this case, nationalism.

By using stereotypical figures, Fanon obviates the need to go into detail linking examples to general categories. Intuitively, stories about the unveiled Algerian woman, the Algerian father, the Algerian couple add up to a story about "the Algerian." Rather than the brunt of Fanon's proof resting on the relevance of his data, it rests on the story's inherent logic or insightfulness. With each story, the non-technical but eyewitness Fanon presents a

⁶⁷Fanon, *Dying*, 105-7.

⁶⁸Fanon, *Dying*, 107. *Emphasis added.*

⁶⁹Fanon, *Dying*, 108. *Emphasis added.*

striking anecdote to demonstrate different dimensions of revolutionary transformation that are both widespread (because assumed in his utterance)⁷⁰ and plausible (because they are brought down to the individual level).

Fanon generates effective stereotypes because he presents a powerful "I-was-there" atmosphere. Fanon *was* there, lived through the Algerian Revolution and was active in the FLN. The reader can only presume that he did meet individuals who matched his stereotypes/archetypes.⁷¹ He did witness, firsthand, Algerian reactions to European-trained doctors, their radio-listening habits, and the instrumental use of veiling by FLN militants during the Battle of Algiers. In effect, Fanon's stereotyped stories count as evidence because we take them at face value. Fanon was there and we are not: his argument in *A Dying Colonialism* is a rhetoric of participant-observation, in which the author needs neither names nor specific information to achieve credibility.

Empathy, Passionate Prose and Psychological Mechanisms. In ethnographic accounts we cannot know if ethnographers have faithfully represented the universe of observations, i. e., if their experiences were typical, or even what those experiences were. Participant-observation, then, depends on trust. Warranting such claims thus means literally establishing credibility. As Geertz puts it, "To be a convincing 'I-witness,' one must, so it seems, first become a convincing 'I.'"⁷² Since the cognitive and behavioral are linked by Fanon's intuition that political action heals the psychological scars caused by

⁷⁰Fanon, in fact, is not being cunning at all. He clearly considers his anecdotes to be well-known and not in need of specific corroboration. See Fanon, *Dying*, 50, n. 10, where he explain that he cannot use military secrets to bolster his argument, but has only described "realities known to the enemy." In fact, many of his anecdotes are part of the historical record, cf. Gillo Portecorvo, director, "The Battle of Algiers," written by Franco Solinas (New York: Axon Video, 1993 [1966]). Videocassette.

⁷¹"Stereotype" refers to his descriptions as explanatory; "archetype" referes to them as role models that should be internalized. See notes 50 and 51, above.

⁷²Clifford Geertz, *Works and Lives: The Anthropologists as Author*, The Harry Camp Lectures at Stanford University. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 79. His analysis of the dilemmas of participant-description mirrors my examination of Fanon here.

colonialism and racism,⁷³ to bolster that intuition he needs credibility as an "I-witness" to the healing and transformative nature of political action for the persons described. He attains this credibility through his polemical style, his offhand treatment of terror and his exaltation of violence. Together, these facets ground the reader's belief in Fanon's empathy for Algerians. Fanon's analysis describes cognitive change *through* behavioral change.

Fiery Polemic. Fanon's style is famous for its passion and vigor. Through heated language he conveys his commitment to the Algerian cause and his identification with the colonized Algerians.⁷⁴ For example, he clearly identifies French officials as the enemy, as holders of illegitimate power. Thus, before 1954, having a radio "was the conscious opening to the influence of the dominator," the radio was "part of the occupier's arsenal of oppression," and Radio-Alger was "the voice of the occupier."⁷⁵ Algerians listen for "the setbacks of the enemy hour by hour . . ." and the French set up "the enemy stations" which, after jamming *Voice of Algeria* "abandon their work of sabotage."⁷⁶ The people remember well the "ferocity of the French military and police" after which "the conquerer had settled in such numbers" as to induce fatalism.⁷⁷ After 1954, "the adversary cuts into

⁷³"Beside phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny . . . The black man must wage his war on both levels: Since historically they influence each other, any unilateral liberation is incomplete, and the gravest mistake would be to believe in their automatic interdependence." Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 10-11. I leave aside the question of whether, and to what extent, Fanon's explanation relies on his professional authority as a psychologist, and to what degree his arguments rest on warrants rooted in psycho-analytic theory.

⁷⁴Fanon considered himself Algerian and was buried as a citizen by the FLN.

⁷⁵Fanon, *Dying*, 92; *Ibid.*, 84; *Ibid.*, 94.

⁷⁶Fanon, *Dying*, 77; *Ibid.*, 88.

⁷⁷Fanon, *Dying*, 100.

the Algerian flesh with unheard-of violence."⁷⁸ By banning the sale of anti-tetanus vaccine, "the occupying power doomed [the Algerian] to a horrible agony."⁷⁹

He goes so far as to characterize their malicious intentions. French administrators in Algeria are "committed to destroying the people's originality" at "whatever cost" by breaking down the patriarchal structure of Algerian society.⁸⁰ During the French counter-terrorism campaign, authorities challenged, arrested and searched Algerians "pitilessly."⁸¹ When an Algerian acknowledges an objective benefit from French rule, such as improved sanitation, "the colonizer perverts his meaning" into an acceptance of colonialism.⁸² In general, the colonialists use "total violence" and he describes extremist settlers as "jackals".⁸³ "Any Algerian man or woman in a given city could in fact name the torturers and murderers in the region," because for five years, French colonialism has "avoided no extremist tactic, whether of terror or torture."⁸⁴

Conversely, Fanon characterizes Algerians as struggling bravely, at times even heroically. The Algerian woman becomes "wholly and deliberately immersed" in the cause.

[T]his woman who was writing the heroic pages of Algerian history was, in so doing, bursting the bounds of the narrow world in which she had lived

⁷⁸Fanon, *Dying*, 116.

⁷⁹Fanon, *Dying*, 139-40.

⁸⁰Fanon, *Dying*, 37.

⁸¹Fanon, *Dying*, 57.

⁸²Fanon, *Dying*, 122.

⁸³Fanon, *Dying*, 149; *Ibid.*, 152.

⁸⁴Fanon, *Dying*, 56; *Ibid.*, 119.

without responsibility, and was at the same time participating in the destruction of colonialism and in the birth of a new woman.⁸⁵

The patriotism of Algerian merchants is "tested" when they provide contraband batteries to their fellow Algerians "with exemplary regularity."⁸⁶ At the close of a *Voice of Algeria* broadcast, military music "freely fill[s] the lungs and the heads of the faithful."⁸⁷ When the FLN organized for public hygiene,

All question were dealt with in a remarkable spirit of revolutionary solidarity.

There was no paternalism; there was no timidity.

. . . The people involved in the fight against death have shown exceptional conscientiousness and enthusiasm in their observance of the directives.⁸⁸

In short, the seed of a new Algeria has been watered by the spilling of "innocent blood."⁸⁹

On the other hand, Algerian mistakes are understandable, the result of error, not malice. Excessive force by FLN militants is acknowledged, but labeled an aberration from national directives. Moreover, it is excused: "And yet what is psychologically more understandable than these sudden acts of violence against traitors and war criminals?"⁹⁰ After all, it is difficult to wage a revolutionary war, "after one hundred and thirty years of

⁸⁵Fanon, *Dying*, 107.

⁸⁶Fanon, *Dying*, 85.

⁸⁷Fanon, *Dying*, 88.

⁸⁸Fanon, *Dying*, 141-2.

⁸⁹Fanon, *Dying*, 27-8.

⁹⁰Fanon, *Dying*, 24. Fanon's rhetoric in the preface is very subtle, making numerous concession to European sensibilities.

colonialism, against a determined enemy."⁹¹ The world at large does not understand this situation, but there are multiple justifications for killing pied noir doctors.⁹²

Fanon makes his position in the conflict absolutely clear, on every page: the colonizers are wrong, the colonized are right, and Fanon is with the colonized Algerians. The moral charge of his language conveys that commitment. That commitment serves as a backing for his theoretical and empirical assertions; commitment to and identification with the Algerians act as implicit *prima facie* grounds that Fanon understands what Algerians feel, because he obviously feels so strongly.⁹³

Offhand treatment of terror. Fanon does not present torture and terror by the colonial system as a separate count in a more sweeping indictment. Rather, he presents torture as a natural outgrowth of colonialism, indeed, as its essence. When he interweaves almost casual references to torture, the very ordinariness of the violence leads the reader to see Fanon as someone who lives amidst it. And because he lives inside it, we can acknowledge that he has a privileged access to the motivations of other Algerians who are its more direct victims. Not only does Fanon feel *for* the Algerians, he feels *with* them.

Fanon brings up the issue of torture and medical experimentation, but only as a concession to a concession. To explain the irrational fear of doctors by colonized Algerians, he concedes the frequency of death in hospitals as normal, but then concedes that some Algerians did die in colonial hospitals from sinister causes:

⁹¹Fanon, *Dying*, 26.

⁹²This polemic occurs on Fanon, *Dying*, 135-9. Relying on Henri Alleg, *The Question*, he argues that "on a strictly technical level" the medical establishment has cooperated with the colonial administration in the interrogation of prisoners.

⁹³I use the term "backing" in Toulmin's technical sense. The claim is: "The identities of Algerians have been transformed through revolutionary action." The data grounding that claim are Fanon's stories, to which there are two sets of warrants. First, the stories are presented as self-evidently relevant, which is the ethnographer's take-it-or-leave warrant of trust. Second, the stories' theoretical insightfulness is warranted by Fanon's empathy (which is also typical of ethnography). Thus, Fanon's polemical rhetoric "backs" his warrant of empathy by *showing* that he feels for the Algerians. See section 1.4, above.

It needs to be said, too, although it is not the rule, that in certain hospital services experimentation on living patients is practiced to an extent that cannot be considered negligible.⁹⁴

Fanon raises medical torture as an aside, and neither substantiates it nor expresses outrage, except in a footnote.

Likewise, describing massacres is not an end in itself, but a means to explain militant anti-colonial attitudes. In fact, massacres account for a change in tactics: from guerrilla activity to urban terrorism:

Trains loaded with French soldiers, the French Navy on maneuvers and bombarding Algiers and Philippeville, the jet planes, the militiamen who descended on the *douars* [villages] and decimated uncounted Algerians, all this contributed to giving the people the impression that they were not defended . . . that nothing had changed . . .

Another part of the people, however, grew impatient and conceived the idea of putting an end to the advantage the enemy derived by pursuing the path of terror. . . [French ruthlessness] demanded that new forms of combat be adopted.⁹⁵

All this is a digression meant to explain why discarding the veil became politically useful. As with medical experimentation, Fanon brings in particular colonial brutalities only *en route* to another point, e. g., a change in FLN tactics. In deliberately focusing his exposé elsewhere, he shows the reader that, to him, inducing seizures in patients or massacring civilians at Setif are just not surprising. They are the normal nature of colonial rule. This numbing feels like the soul of someone who was there.

Exaltation of Violence. The final grounds for Fanon's implicit assertion of empathy for the colonized is part of his substantive argument. He "proves" his empathy for the colonized Algerians by justifying their violence. Having criticized the European Left for

⁹⁴Fanon, *Dying*, 124.

⁹⁵Fanon, *Dying*, 56-7.

inaction, he proves his emotional affinity by affirming the legitimacy of violence.⁹⁶ One aspect of his substantive argument renders another part plausible.

The clearest justification of violence in A Dying Colonialism occurs in the preface, where Fanon quotes a typically anonymous militant.

"Having a gun, being a member of the National Army of Liberation, is the only chance the Algerian still has of giving a meaning to his death. Life under the domination has long been devoid of meaning . . ."

Such statements, when they are made by members of the Algerian government, are not the expression of an error of judgment or of a "to-the-bitter-end" attitude. They are the plain recognition of the truth."⁹⁷

He "plainly recognizes" that violence is essential for national liberation, both instrumentally and psychically. Fanon "preaches the need for colonial peoples to shake off foreign oppression by force and violence, not merely as a military technique, but as an essential psychological precondition to independence."⁹⁸ By embracing and articulating that position he places himself outside the orbit of "good liberals" and in the camp of the angry, "irrational" natives.

Violence is an instrumental necessity, because reform efforts are doomed to failure: the problem of colonialism is in its essence. Colonialism is "not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when countered with greater violence."⁹⁹ "In the native's eagerness, the fact that he openly brandishes the threat of violence proves that he is conscious of the unusual character of the contemporary situation", i. e., that no

⁹⁶For the sake of brevity, I rely on The Wretched of the Earth for Fanon's substantive argument on violence, but the outlines of that argument are implicit in the earlier work, e. g. when an Algerian woman plants a bomb or carries a gun, the action is both a tactic and a transformative experience.

⁹⁷Fanon, Dying, 27.

⁹⁸Eric Wolf, Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, 244.

⁹⁹Fanon, Wretched, 48.

civilized power is capable maintaining a prolonged army of occupation.¹⁰⁰ What is irrational to the outsider has a reasonable foundation to the insider, which can even be expressed as instrumental rationality: "What is the real nature of this violence? We have seen that it is the intuition of the colonised masses that their liberation must, and can only, be achieved by force."¹⁰¹

But anti-colonial violence has sense not only as a means. To the insider it is a psychological end in itself. Violence "fulfils for the native a role that is not simply informatory, but also operative."¹⁰² Fanon the insider can see that murdering a pied noir "war criminal" or blowing up a cafe is culturally effective. Violence actually

invests their characters with positive and creative qualities. The practice of violence binds them together as a whole . . . the native's violence unifies the people . . . At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect.¹⁰³

Thus, an Algerian woman activist comes to recognize her own inherent value, as a member of the people, and no longer needs to rely on her father for self-worth. By the same token, the father does not expel the "liberated" daughter, but accepts her: "And the father would not turn his face away; he would not feel shame."¹⁰⁴

Having made the omnipresent violence of settlers and colonial authorities personally present to the reader, Fanon has set the reader up to admire his insight into the thought processes of even the most militant FLN activist. Fanon's credibility hinges on convincing the reader that he knows what it feels like to be the colonized. He has established his

¹⁰⁰Fanon, Wretched, 58.

¹⁰¹Fanon, Wretched, 57.

¹⁰²Fanon, Wretched, 55.

¹⁰³Fanon, Wretched, 73.

¹⁰⁴Fanon, Dying, 109.

partisanship and the "back-against-the-wall" atmosphere in Algeria. His apologia for violence is the final stroke that demonstrates his empathy. In short, Fanon credibly claims insight into the psychological mechanisms that constitute the birth of Algerian national consciousness.

2.4. Ian Lustick: Elites, Interpretation, and Detachment

Rather than rely on empathic prose and stereotypical explanation, Lustick presents himself as a detached, meticulous observer. He is aided in this effort by the complexity of his model and implicit notions of political action which are quite close to the reader's own "common sense" about the links between individuals and collectivities, and about how to understand political motivations.

First, he builds his substantive argument inductively. In chapters entitled "Where and What is France?" and "The Algerian Question in French Politics, 1955-1962," he lays out a detailed narrative before elaborating his theoretical conclusions, which appear in separate chapters. Lustick's argument includes both typological and causal components. His narrative amply documents the fruitfulness of his typology, but because his presentation is inductive, the reader tends to close gaps between the narrative and the much more demanding causal claim.

Second, he recreates the milieu of French metropolitan decision-makers, explaining both the personal self-interests and the ideological presumptions that frame their choices. He thus brings us inside the discursive conditions of a particular time and place. For this reason, it makes sense to analyze how Lustick renders an interpretation of motives plausible. Like Fanon, he has an implicit political psychology, only his is grounded in our intuitive sense of how discourse, values and self-interest interact, rather than in imaginative empathy for an experience of revolutionary commitment.

Third, although these stories are persuasive as acts of interpretation, they are made relevant because strategic location justifies Lustick's selection of empirical focus. Rather than give us an abstract description of the choices confronting abstract decision-makers, he tells the story of particular individuals who led various French governments, as well as figures who opposed them. These are the individuals directly responsible for delaying the French departure from Algeria. He also describes those individuals immediately responsible for France's ultimate withdrawal. In short, implicit in Lustick's account are criteria for selecting events that entail a notion of political agency that occurs primarily through state elites.

Finally, he designs a new vocabulary to describe the class of events to which the Algerian revolution belongs. This new vocabulary avoids predeciding the outcomes of struggles over state boundaries. He then tests the plausibility of this framework by applying it to two historical cases, of which French Algeria is the second. By creating a new vocabulary and applying it to far removed cases, Lustick positions himself from the outset as an unbiased observer.

Lustick's Gramscian Argument. Lustick develops his argument from Gramsci's notions of hegemony, war of position and war of maneuver. According to Gramsci, class warfare had not occurred in advanced industrial countries because workers lived under a capitalist hegemony that was discursive as well as institutional. In order for workers to transform society, they first need to develop the requisite self-consciousness that the capitalist order is not natural but contingent. The struggle to overcome this discursive roadblock is a war of position. Once the social order is viewed as contingent, political conflict becomes possible. Class struggle between institutions and social organizations is a war of maneuver. In the Gramscian schema, wars of position and wars of maneuver both have contingent outcomes.

Lustick abstracts these ideas from Gramsci's class analysis and applies them to the territorial definition of states. Normally, state boundaries are perceived as fixed; the territorial definition of the state is thus a hegemonic discourse. Since territorial shape decisively influences both the ideological and social balance of power, the boundaries of states are a central factor in setting the rules of the political game. Conflicts over national boundaries thus entail disputes over the fundamental structure of a national community.

Lustick calls his analysis a "threshold" model. This model divides political conflict into three kinds, based on the stakes involved. When fundamental ideas are at stake, this is a war of position. When social forces come into such intense conflict over an issue that the regime itself is at stake, this is a war of maneuver. When neither fundamental ideas nor the regime is at stake, only careers and incumbency are at stake. This is normal politics. Thresholds occur at the point where stakes rise from careers and incumbency, to regime survival, and from regime survival to ideological hegemony. A successful war of position results in pushing conflict over the hegemony threshold, creating an unquestionable consensus on the issue at stake; a successful war of maneuver pushes conflict across the regime threshold, so that no one can raise the issue without threatening the dissolution of the established institutional order. Thus, crossing a threshold in the direction of state-contraction means a reduction in the political costs associated with advocating withdrawal.

The French conflict over the Algerian question is both a war of position and a war of maneuver. The period 1955 to 1962 marked a war of maneuver between partisans of French rule, advocates of withdrawal, and de Gaulle.¹⁰⁵ Political choices about Algerian policy were calculated on the basis of regime-level stakes; this is exemplified in the collapse of the Fourth Republic over the issue. At the conclusion of the war of maneuver, de Gaulle

¹⁰⁵Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 240. Lustick has a problem here: De Gaulle plays a dual role, first as opponent of withdrawal who defeats the dovish parties of the Left, and later as the prime mover of withdrawal who defeats the hard-liners. In effect there are two wars of maneuver, not one, and each has two issues: the boundaries of France and the nature of the polity, whether parliamentary, presidential or fascist.

successfully minimized the political stakes of French withdrawal; the reduction of stakes below the regime level is seen in de Gaulle's ability to negotiate directly with the FLN and to implement the agreement despite a massive terrorist campaign by settlers inside France.

This war of maneuver occurred within a longer war of position that began during World War II and continued until 1962. Three successive hegemonic projects for Greater France failed. Exponents of the first two envisioned "France" as including all the French colonies as integral parts of the homeland. These projects failed to gain universal support, although there was widespread agreement (but not consensus) that Algeria was somehow especially tied to France. Hard-line forces attempted to make Algeria's Frenchness an unquestionable assumption of French politics, i. e., "Algérie française" was the third hegemonic project.¹⁰⁶ Ultimately, de Gaulle—as national hero, President and founder of the Fifth Republic—rendered a smaller definition of France hegemonic by convincing the majority of the French that withdrawal was not only expedient but consonant with French grandeur.

Lustick is most concerned to account for the shift past the regime threshold. He describes four strategies that political leaders can use to reduce conflict so that only incumbency—not the regime as a whole—is at stake. He calls these four strategies "rescaling mechanisms." The two primary rescaling mechanisms are problem decomposition and regime recomposition; the two subsidiary strategies are political realignment and political education. A politician can decompose the issue in time or space, e.g., proposing partial withdrawal or withdrawal in stages; this is the case of Britain's withdrawal from southern but not Northern Ireland. Likewise, a leader can force a regime recomposition, e.g. push the war of maneuver to its logical conclusion, and force a change in the rules of the game by coup d'etat or revolution; this was de Gaulle's strategy in

¹⁰⁶Lustick, Unsettled States, 120, 136.

bringing down the Fourth Republic. In Britain, problem decomposition was augmented by political realignment, when a shift in the party structure reduced anti-Unionist support for complete withdrawal. In France, de Gaulle's recomposition of the regime facilitated his charismatic capacity to change the French public's preferences in favor of withdrawal.

Causal Theory, Typology and Inductive Presentation. More than anything else, Lustick's framework is plausible because he builds his general point up from a mass of historical detail. Lustick's argument consists of a typology and a causal claim. First, he offers a tripartite typology of political conflict based on distinct levels of stakes: office-holding, regime-stability, and ideological hegemony. Second, he makes a causal claim that the shifts between levels take place in two patterns. The shift from ideological hegemony to regime-level stakes requires a "discrepancy," an alternative ideology, and political entrepreneurship. The shift from regime-level to normal political stakes requires the use of what Lustick calls rescaling mechanisms. The typology of political conflict rests primarily on organizing facts into a compelling description, and Lustick is very successful here. Proving the causal claim—about shifts between normal conflict, wars of maneuver and position—rests on more abstract levels of argument.

Documenting a Typology: Ideological Conflict and Regime-Struggle. Lustick's typological claim that political conflicts differ in kind—by their stakes—consists of two points in the French Algerian case. Both points are simple enough. In chapter 4, he lays out a chronological account of the French war of position over Algeria, which argues his first typological point: that the territorial shape of France was a political issue tied to the legitimacy of the Fourth Republic.

The post-World War II period was the first time . . . serious efforts were made to . . . endow the legal fiction of Algeria's integration into France with a sufficiently convincing basis . . . so as to remove questions about the territory's future from the French political agenda.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷Lustick, Unsettled States, 82.

This characterization of post-war history summarizes an amalgam of lesser events into a characterization that serves his general theory of state-contraction.

Lustick aggregates these lesser events into three hegemonic projects: this interpretation is grounded in the statements of wartime leaders,¹⁰⁸ colonial officials,¹⁰⁹ delegates to the Constituent Assemblies,¹¹⁰ and members of Parliament.¹¹¹ For example, the first draft of the Fourth Republic constitution declared France a union of the metropole and freely consenting overseas territories.¹¹² This draft was rejected.

A second project was embodied in the Constitution of the Fourth Republic, as it was later approved. It dropped language of free consent and concentrated power in Paris; As adopted, the Constitution enshrined France's "civilizing mission" and omitted both the right of self-determination and universal enfranchisement for colonials.¹¹³ This vision of France was only approved by a bare plurality in referendum. Even so, the Socialists dropped their support for the Union of Free Consent because they saw it could not form part of any winning coalition. "Thus the amount of "disruption" its abandonment triggered could be measured only in terms of the change in the opportunities of different parties or individuals to participate in governing coalitions."¹¹⁴ During these first two controversies, conflict took place within the normal political rules, i.e., in what he calls the "incumbency stage."

¹⁰⁸Such as de Gaulle or the Socialist Minister for Colonial/Overseas Affairs. Lustick, Unsettled States, 88.

¹⁰⁹Lustick, Unsettled States, 88-9, 91.

¹¹⁰Lustick, Unsettled States, 95-8.

¹¹¹Lustick, Unsettled States, 103-5.

¹¹²Lustick, Unsettled States, 96.

¹¹³Lustick, Unsettled States, 98-9.

¹¹⁴Lustick, Unsettled States, 119.

The third attempt to construct a hegemonic view of France that would include Algeria raises the stakes up to regime stability. It is evidenced by legislation, statements from premiers and foreign minister, and by extensive economic development programs advocated by the Governor-General of Algeria.¹¹⁵ The non-expert reader is initiated into French political discourse by a detailed chronicle. This account documents the ideological stakes—the contestation of national self-definition.

Lustick makes the second typological point by telling story of regime-struggle in a more or less chronological manner, which serves him well by sharpening the sense of crisis. The vast bulk of his empirical level claims occur in chapter 7, "The Algerian Question in French Politics"—his narrative of the war of maneuver between 1955 and 1962. As he puts it:

In this chapter I have examined the difficulty experienced by successive French governments in translating generalized desires to be rid of the Algerian incubus into policies that could be sustained by risking governments and careers rather than regimes.¹¹⁶

The claim is simple, but describes a massively complex event.

The "difficulty" is first documented by numerous cabinet resignations and coup attempts. Six short-lived Fourth Republic governments fell. None of these cabinets lasted longer than sixteen months and three last less than six. Five of them were brought to an end by the Algerian Question. These events are dispersed over the first half of chapter 7, nested inside detailed accounts of political maneuvering by prime ministers and party leaders. Lustick also describes the plots that overthrew the Fourth Republic and threatened the Fifth. Following his chronological structure, he elaborates the clandestine alliances among militant settlers, anti-negotiation officers, Gaullists and other rightist politicians.

¹¹⁵Lustick, Unsettled States, 120.

¹¹⁶Lustick, Unsettled States, 299. *Emphasis added.*

This coalition forced de Gaulle's investiture with emergency powers.¹¹⁷ He then describes the three extra-legal actions against the Fifth Republic. The first was Operation Veronique, an aborted coup attempt.¹¹⁸ Next was the Barricades Rebellion, during which settlers—with the approval of French troops—stormed government offices in Algiers.¹¹⁹ Finally, in 1961, prominent generals seized control of Algiers and threatened military action on the mainland.¹²⁰ Again—for the reader uninitiated into post-war French history—the power of Lustick's account is overwhelming.

Interpretations proliferate to support the claim of regime-level stakes. Such interpretations are quite straight forward and require little warranting on the part of the reader. When parliamentary governments fall, coups are attempted, and the nation ruled by decree, the reader *intuits* these events as high stakes political conflict. In this sense, Lustick's documentation of kinds of political conflict is "easy." It is in describing the shifts between those kinds of conflict that his account faces a more formidable challenge.

Induction and the Plausibility of Causal Claims. The dynamic, causal claim is more challenging to Lustick since he must argue that wars of maneuver and position are resolved in determinative ways, e. g., that de Gaulle won the struggle for the French regime because he acted in ways that are explained in terms of Lustick's theory. His style nurtures the reader's belief in his causal claims, because the narrative and analytic sections of the argument are presented separately, which, in effect, forces the reader to trust Lustick's framing of specific events when he moves up a level of abstraction and argues for his broader synchronic schema.

¹¹⁷Lustick, Unsettled States, 259-65.

¹¹⁸Lustick, Unsettled States, 276-7.

¹¹⁹Lustick, Unsettled States, 278-81.

¹²⁰Lustick, Unsettled States, 290-3.

Since his argument proceeds inductively, Lustick's interpretations function as evidence in his argument at least twice: first to document his typology, then for the causal argument. Thus his discussion of wars of position occurs in three chapters, with the first two grounding only the claim that conflict over national self-definition occurred. As we just saw, the evidence for ideological consensus/dissensus appears in the form of narrative, e. g., in chapter 4, "Where and What is France? Three Failures of Hegemonic Construction." However, the same data becomes evidence, in the theoretical chapter 5, for the ways that wars of position are won, both in the French case, and in general.¹²¹ Likewise, his analysis of wars of maneuver takes place in three chapters. "By documenting transformations in the order of magnitude of disruption contingent on the outcome of political competition over Algeria's disposition, I provide the basis, in chapter 8, for analyzing and explaining patterns in those transformations." The two narrative chapters ground his characterization of political conflict as a struggle over regime-integrity, e. g., in chapter 7, "The Algerian Question in French Politics, 1955-1962." Chapter 7 (also with chapter 6 on the Irish Question) then becomes evidence for the dynamics of wars of maneuver in the theoretical explanation, found in chapter 8.¹²²

Because he only theorizes these specifics into a general causal model after laying out the narrative of events, the reader is left with a gap between intermediate levels of description and conclusions at the theoretical level. In chapter 8, he finally articulates the more general categories of actors, institutions, social organization, ideologies and events that explain the outcome of the regime crisis. This synchronic account constitutes his theoretical point.

¹²¹"Chapters 3 and 4 have shown how the British and French states failed to sustain the integration of Ireland and Algeria. . . In this chapter [5] I examine explanations for why and how this happened." Lustick, Unsettled States, 121. Chapter 3 documents the ideological hegemony typological claim for the case of British Ireland. Ibid., 57-80.

¹²²Lustick, Unsettled States, 240-1.

By presenting the synchronic view separately and afterwards, Lustick, in effect, asks the reader to trust his judgment in linking descriptions of events to his theoretical claims about rescaling mechanisms, such as regime recomposition and problem decomposition. For example, the reader must refer back to the narrative in order to document Lustick's claim that De Gaulle's "Machiavellian" or "Caesarist" strategy (which succeeded in recomposing the regime) is actually grounded in the facts of specific tactical retreats and institutional interventions. Likewise, it is up to the reader to ground the claim that settler interactions with metropolitan politicians determine the likelihood of decomposing the problem, e. g., that specific attempts to overthrow the Fourth and Fifth Republics succeeded or failed due to the kinds of relationships that persisted between pied noir and right-wing politicians. Last but not least, the dialectic between settlers and the nationalist movement greatly determines the possibility for decomposing the issue into smaller, more manageable problems. Yet Lustick offers this synthesis in chapter 8,¹²³ while the descriptions of events to support it are in the narrative about hegemonic projects, which appears in chapters 4 and 5.¹²⁴ Because he has separated synchronic from diachronic, he has left it up to the reader to link the levels of his analysis. Because the overall empirical evidence for the *fact* of regime crises is so powerful, one is tempted to accept at face value Lustick's assertions about the causal dynamics which determine the outcomes of regime crises.

Evidence, Interpretation, and Intentionality. The experience of these stakes is brought home through narrative that utilizes individual human agency, and interprets events as intentional. Like Fanon, Lustick thus makes an argument that addresses both political

¹²³Comparing "dialectical relationships between settler political action and native mobilization helps explain why problem decomposition was crucial in Britain and not in France." Lustick, Unsettled States, 341.

¹²⁴Lustick, Unsettled States, 109-12, 134-9 (the Algerian case) and 167-73 (the Irish case).

action and its motivations, and so must persuade the reader that he understands the psychology of his subjects. Unlike Fanon, Lustick's psychology is straight-forward: action is intentional, being derived from deliberation over possible choices. Because actions are intentional, actors make choices rationally, on the basis of incentives.¹²⁵

Obviously, proving that someone would benefit from doing something is not the same as proving that she did it for that reason: people do all sorts of things that are counter-productive. Lustick grounds his preferred interpretations in discrete facts by (a) presenting first-person testimony of their motives (b) making inferences about constraints by analyzing discourse, and (c) combining a plausible *prima facie* account of political motives with documentation that political actors saw their constraints as he does. The result is a "soft" rational actor explanation—"soft" because it is never formalized, because its view of rationality is not limited to self-interested motives, and because it is discourse-sensitive and contextual.

Participant Testimony by Rational Actors. When possible, he spices his narrative with the most compelling sort of evidence for intentional action: direct statements by the actors themselves. At each step he lays out the various incentives, then ultimately documents the actors' intentions by citing their own words. The clash of these calculi marks the shift from one level of conflict to another: for ideological hegemony, regime integrity and incumbency.¹²⁶

¹²⁵One can, of course, act rationally without basing a choice on self-interested incentives, e.g. for another's sake or to fulfill norms. Amartya Sen calls these last two "sympathy" and "commitment," respectively. Amartya Sen, "Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 6:4 (Summer 1977). Lustick would accept these other motivations as real. For example, hegemony and political education at least partly entail values that define group identities and dictate norms.

¹²⁶The incumbency level refers to "normal" political conflict, where office-holding and individual political careers are at stake, but the institutional and ideological matrix of conflict is fixed.

To prove that the Fourth Republic political system forced prime ministers to take a hard-line on Algeria, Lustick quotes Pierre Mendès-France, who asserted that he took a hard-line position at the outset of the FLN revolt because he feared his government would fall.¹²⁷ Mollet acted likewise, refusing to disavow the arrest of FLN leaders on their way to secret negotiations, because "my government would have fallen overnight."¹²⁸

Regime stability soon became the primary incentive for supporting repressive Algerian policies. To document how this constrained policy options, Lustick quotes French party leaders. For example, in June 1957, Mendès-France warned the new premier, Bourghès-Maunoury, that "the Algerian drama and the crisis of the republican regime are one and the same problem."¹²⁹ Likewise, Socialist Defense Minister "Max Lejeune argued in 1955, and Mollet agreed, that if France lost North Africa, 'the regime would disappear.'¹³⁰ Mollet is quoted again to document Socialist acquiescence. He "explained the Socialists' decision [in November 1957] to participate in the government 'because they feared the Republic was on the verge of collapse'" and again in March 1958, because they believed that "the system was so threatened that a continuing crisis provoked by the refusal of the [Socialist Party] to join the government might bring about its collapse."¹³¹ Bourghès-Maunoury's successor, Felix Gaillard, "urged National Assembly deputies to support him . . . because of the dangerous and open-ended political crisis that would result if they did not."¹³² And French political leaders support the Pflimlin

¹²⁷Lustick, Unsettled States, 242. This was not a contemporaneous statement, but from a 1980 interview. See also *ibid.*, 508, n. 6.

¹²⁸Lustick, Unsettled States, 247.

¹²⁹Lustick, Unsettled States, 253.

¹³⁰Lustick, Unsettled States, 253.

¹³¹Lustick, Unsettled States, 254.

¹³²Lustick, Unsettled States, 256.

government for the sake of the regime; when he was invested, the deputies rallied "briefly around slogans of 'the Republic in danger' and 'Fascism shall not pass!'. . ."133

Lustick also provides direct statements by politicians who sensed threats to the Fifth Republic. De Gaulle's first Prime Minister, Michel Debré, "described the [Barricades] revolt as a direct challenge to the state and an ordeal that had raised fears of 'the beginning of a civil war.'"134 De Gaulle himself knew the risks; he "warned his ministers that negotiating an end to the Algerian War would be 'an ugly business' and advised them to 'hang on to the mast, because the ship is going to rock.'"135

Paradoxically, he even uses participant testimony as evidence to support the claim that de Gaulle utilized dissembling as part of his successful strategy in the wars of maneuver and position. First, Lustick cites the man himself:

. . . he describes 'the main outlines' as having been 'clear in my own mind'. . . in his memoirs de Gaulle also portrayed himself as aware of the need to camouflage his ultimate intentions until his regime was solidly established, and until *military* victories over the FLN had been achieved, and until processes of political education . . . had reached fruition.

'I should have to proceed cautiously from one stage to the next . . . Were I to announce my intentions point-blank, there was no doubt that . . . the ship would capsize.'136

Lustick, of course, recognizes that politicians often give self-serving accounts—why should one believe that de Gaulle is truthful here, when believing him is to accept that he will lie when it serves his objectives? Thus Lustick bolsters his "Machiavellian interpretation" by quoting the assessment of de Gaulle's right-wing political enemies. He cites the lawyer for General Raoul Salan, who argued that de Gaulle had

133Lustick, Unsettled States, 258.

134Lustick, Unsettled States, 285.

135Lustick, Unsettled States, 287.

136Lustick, Unsettled States, 316. *Emphasis original.*

"... usurped the force of Algérie française and tricked all but a handful of his closest collaborators... by practicing his duplicitous gradualism." According to Soustelle in 1962, de Gaulle had inaugurated an Algerian policy in June 1958 whose "trickery was so skilled, so gradual (at least in the beginning), camouflaged with such astuteness, that it was difficult to penetrate."¹³⁷

Discourse and Motives. Lustick must often demonstrate motives without a "confession." One way he does this is by relying on the binding quality of language. The overall tenor of how participants viewed political stakes is reflected in the terms of discourse itself, because language usage adheres to norms that are inter-subjective.¹³⁸ Thus, how participants describe events indicates the changes in the level of conflict. This is most obvious when regime integrity is called into question.

When a politician speaks literally of treason, this means that substantive policy positions—not commitment to institutional rules—are now the criteria for loyalty. For example, rising threats to the regime are grounded by statements from leading conservative politicians, who described dovish policies in the language of treason. Bidault is quoted as calling negotiation a policy of "consent to suicide" and Debré said his party would not support a government with "any minister whose policy was that of Munich."¹³⁹ On the discursive level, talk of treason *is* a regime-crisis.

By the same token, a threat to use force *is* a regime threat; this is what the term means. Thus, "Challe made the fundamental nature of his challenge to the Fifth Republic

¹³⁷Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 317. Salan was a leader in the failed 1961 coup and Soustelle was the ex-Governor-General of Algeria who had convinced militant pieds noirs to support de Gaulle in 1958. He later went underground and supported OAS terrorism.

¹³⁸Here I follow David Greenstone's interpretation of Wittgenstein. J. David Greenstone, *The Lincoln Persuasion: Remaking American Liberalism*, Princeton Studies in American Politics, ed. Ira Katznelson, Martin Shefter, and Theda Skocpol (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 47. The inevitable theoretical ambiguity of following any rule, including linguistic norms, is resolved in practice. See also Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 3d ed, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, (New York: MacMillan, 1958).

¹³⁹Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 256.

explicit in a radio broadcast on the morning of the coup: "The command reserves the right to extend its actions to the metropolis and re-establish a constitutional and republican order

..."¹⁴⁰

One can reasonably infer the actors' perception of constraints from discourse. The reduction of conflict to incumbent-level stakes under the Fifth Republic is documented in the words of Guy Mollet, who announced that the Radicals would no longer "participate in a Gaullist government 'except, of course, if the nation or the Republic was subject to mortal threat' . . . this position shows that in 1961 he perceived the Fifth Republic was no longer at risk."¹⁴¹ In each case, the speaker makes a definitive statement that implies constraints, but does not make his motives explicit. Interpreting this discourse relies on our own pre-understandings of the self-evident meanings of terms like regime, treason and threat.¹⁴²

Constraints and Reasonable Actors. Lustick often argues that choices were made because of their effects, that is, a given politician pursued a course of action because it was aimed to achieve a given outcome. Assuming that the effects were intended, such claims have two parts. First, he must show that politicians perceived conditions as he does. Second, he must create a plausible case that those conditions are incentives; this plausibility is what transforms a condition into a constraint, or an incentive into a motive. When he relies on inferential evidence, he relies on simple calculus, such as desire to remain in office, to maximize policy preferences, or to preserve valued institutions.

¹⁴⁰Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 293

¹⁴¹Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 298.

¹⁴²Of course, the meanings of these terms is not strictly speaking self-evident, but for all purposes in the present instance these meanings are unambiguous. To demand unambiguity *in general* is "to misunderstand the role of the ideal in our language." Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 45, par. 100.

Fourth Republic politicians sacrificed preferences on Algerian policy in order to retain office.¹⁴³ Early on, "Socialists abandoned the idea of the Union of free consent in favor of the Union of tutelary subordination" because they calculated "that within the second Constituent Assembly and in the emerging Fourth Republic the Union of free consent could not form part of the platform of a winning coalition."¹⁴⁴ Initially, the Left supported Mollet despite his sellout on Algeria because of his expansive social agenda. They recognized that the Fourth Republic political system forced them—if they wished to preserve their incumbency—to choose between negotiations and other parts of their political agenda.

Prime ministers naturally preferred to remain in power and were willing to make compromises that preserved their incumbency, especially after constraints had narrowed in the middle nineteen-fifties.¹⁴⁵ The liberal Mollet abandoned his dovish stance for a self-contradictory policy that preserved the Algerian status quo:¹⁴⁶

Mollet's strategy of war in Algeria, expansion of the welfare state at home, and alternating majorities to protect the cabinet from defeat in the National Assembly kept him in power longer than any other Fourth Republic prime minister.

. . . The *immobilisme* of Mollet's Algerian policy prolonged his government's tenure by serving a variety of contradictory purposes.¹⁴⁷

His successors, Bourguès-Maunoury and Gaillard, extended the Mollet strategy.

¹⁴³Such calculations do not necessarily mean that politicians are purely self-interested. Some undoubtedly feel more committed to certain aspects of their agenda than other aspects, and thus are willing to "trade" policy concessions in one area for success in pursuing their agenda in other areas.

¹⁴⁴Lustick, Unsettled States, 119.

¹⁴⁵Lustick, Unsettled States, 113-4.

¹⁴⁶"Once faced with their political inexpediency, Mollet abandoned the idea of free elections which would lead to negotiations." Lustick, Unsettled States, 243.

¹⁴⁷Lustick, Unsettled States, 248.

Politicians may also sacrifice a substantive policy preference for the sake of regime integrity. A shift from normal politics to regime level conflict is indicated by an increase in the sacrifices made by important political groups. One example is the Left's support for Gaillard's reform of Algerian government structure, which left Muslims with no meaningful participation in the administration. While the content of the bill was odious to many Socialists, all supported it in order to prevent the fall of another government and the dangerous crisis it would produce.¹⁴⁸ Later the Socialist party supported de Gaulle's investiture for the sake of republican legality, after opposing it less than a week earlier for the same reason.¹⁴⁹ While it is possible that the Socialists' changed their policy preferences, major policy preferences in themselves do not change extremely rapidly, i. e., only their context changes. Since other parties' preferences would also be relatively stable, normal politics will not generate a new strategic calculation either. Thus the Socialists' change of heart on both Algerian policy and de Gaulle's investiture indicates a increase in the level of conflict—the rules of the game. This increase is further documented by changes in the discourse of political conflict.

Politicians acknowledged these high stakes in their own statements and acted as if constrained by these stakes. The May 1958 mutiny in Corsica was the final demonstration to Fourth Republic politicians that they could not win the war of maneuver. Lustick quotes one of Pflimlin's ministers, "We no longer have any power. The Minister of Algeria cannot cross the Mediterranean. The Minister of National Defense commands no army. The Minister of Interior commands no police."¹⁵⁰ The President of the Republic described

¹⁴⁸Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 252.

¹⁴⁹Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 269.

¹⁵⁰Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 268.

the country "as 'on the verge of civil war.'"¹⁵¹ These constraints led politicians to support de Gaulle's investiture: "Mendès-France . . . characterized the Fourth Republic as a 'disappearing regime' . . . and endorsed de Gaulle's leadership as the best available for France."¹⁵²

To document reduced conflict after de Gaulle defeated the last coup attempt, Lustick contrasts actions taken in late 1961 to those of the earlier period: Open negotiations began with the FLN, de Gaulle decided not to travel to Algeria, the Socialists began organizing an opposition, and Debré's hard-line government was dismissed.¹⁵³ In this case, actors' intentions are inferred by comparison. Regime stability had constrained de Gaulle from openly negotiating and forced him to visit Algeria; the same fears had constrained the Socialists from organizing a parliamentary opposition. Because this analysis of motives has already been made, Lustick can now turn it backwards and use non-actions to infer the absence of constraints.

Conclusion. Ultimately, Lustick is quite successful in documenting micro-motives that fit into his larger framework. His evidentiary strategy is one that relies implicitly on preexisting conceptions of political motivation that the reader brings to the text. In contrast to Fanon, whose psychological claims are grounded in empathy, Lustick would have us assume that we already know what motivates these actors, and what their actions mean. Partly he succeeds because French politicians are, in fact, more like Western social scientists than are Fanon's revolutionary Algerians. Yet the essence of the matter is that Lustick relies on what can only be described as our common sense notions of political motivations: a mushy but hard to contradict sense that politicians are driven by a

¹⁵¹Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 269.

¹⁵²Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 270.

¹⁵³Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 295-300.

combination of self-interested political expediency and genuine political values, and that actions are interpretable by triangulating among first-person statements, inferred rational calculations, and the plain sense meanings of words.

Strategic Location, Power and Evidence. Lustick's profound commitment to individual agency makes him rely on strategic location to designate relevant actors. As my presentation indicates, one cannot interpret the above events without referring to the actors' roles in the political system, whether as head of state, essential coalition partner, military plotter, or leader of mass demonstrations. These actors include literally every significant figure in the French polity during the end of the Fourth and beginning of the Fifth Republic.

On the left and center are Premiers Mendès-France, Mollet, Faure, Bourguès-Maunoury and Gaillard, as well as party leaders like Lejeune, Mitterand, Pineau, and Pleven. On the right, politicians include Bidault, Soustelle, Debré, Pflimlin, and Duchet. The founder of the Fifth Republic, Charles de Gaulle, naturally figures as central from 1958 onward. Military leaders include Marshall Juin, and Generals Challe, Ely, Jouhard, Massu, Miquel, and Salan. Activists among the pieds noirs include Delbecque, Ortiz, and Sérigny. This list is a veritable who's who of French politics between 1955 and 1962.

Through the strategic importance of the persons on this list, Lustick's analysis of intentions links his "soft" rational actor micro-analysis to his theoretical framework. Indirect analysis of intentions depends on recognizing who is playing the game. Thus, when politicians or rebels are said to pursue particular strategies in ideological, regime or incumbency struggles, the claims' relevance to his theory depends on defining those politicians or rebels as having a major impact in the political sphere. For this reason, his account abounds with references to the Socialists, because they were "more closely identified with the establishment of the regime and more invested in its continuation than

any other party."¹⁵⁴ Conversely, his references to Poujadists and Communists are few and always marginal, since under the tacit rules of the Fourth Republic, no government could be formed which depended on either for its parliamentary majority.

Likewise, direct evidence for intentions also depends entirely upon this list. He must assert the significance of these actors in order to make their perceptions relevant. Without it, the most startling facts are irrelevant, even "smoking gun" first-person testimony. For this reason, direct quotations are almost invariably taken from prime ministers, party leaders, or army generals. Many of these quotations come from Prime Minister Guy Mollet. Strategic location justifies extensive treatment of Guy Mollet's government in two senses. First, as the longest lasting Fourth Republic governments, Mollet's strategy had more effect than similar coalition governments. Thus Mollet's policies are strategically most important in analyzing the first half of the French war of maneuver over Algeria. More importantly, Mollet's government was causally more important, since it served as a model for succeeding Fourth Republic governments.

Considering the relative longevity of Mollet's government, and the extent to which both the Bourguès-Maunoury and Gaillard governments emulated (with decreasing success) [his] political strategy, it is worth laying out its logic with some precision.¹⁵⁵

The extensive treatment of Mollet's government is relevant both deductively (because it bolsters Lustick's substantive theory) and inductively (because it also develops his characterization of particular conditions under the Fourth Republic).

Behind Lustick's use of strategic location lies an implicit notion of collective agency that, fortunately for him, accords well with common sense expectations. Crudely put, nation-states are defined in his schema as first of all as states, and states are essentially

¹⁵⁴Lustick, Unsettled States, 253.

¹⁵⁵Lustick, Unsettled States, 248. Of the last six governments under the Fourth Republic, Mollet's was the only one to fall on an issue unrelated to Algeria.

given collective reality through the individual agency of their leaders. Ultimately, agency for Lustick is people choosing, and the most effective choosers are those who control the reins of state power. For this reason, the state elite's inability to take action is for him an example of failed agency. Likewise, he focuses on the rescaling strategies of national leaders like de Gaulle, Asquith, and Lloyd George. He takes it as theoretically unproblematic that state elites should lead their countrymen, rather than the other way around. At all points, Lustick views action or inaction as arising primarily from the top rungs of the state ladder.

Contingency and the Language of Objectivity. Lustick presents himself as an observer with detachment and perspective. To do this, he needs to disengage his work from his immediate political interest, Israel's relationship to the Palestinians. He articulates a theoretical framework which explicitly leaves open the single most politically charged aspect: the outcome. This framework translates common language terms with heavy political connotations into neutral-sounding neologisms. His starting point is Israel's Palestinian question.

Ambivalence motivated Lustick to develop a vocabulary that transcends narrow political commitments. From the perspective of the Irish, Algerian and Palestinian nationalist movements, their struggles were efforts to overthrow colonial rule by outsiders, i. e., decolonization. Yet, because Lustick's primary reference group is the Israel polity, he recognizes that from the metropole the situation looks different: those movements aim(ed) at secession of territories that belong(ed) inside the British, French and Israeli polities. Separation of an outlying territory is either inevitable and legitimate, or avoidable and illegitimate. Thus, the same phenomenon can be viewed either as "decolonization" or

"secession" depending on whether one views the outcome as natural and inevitable or not.¹⁵⁶

For almost thirty years, the status of the West Bank and Gaza has been a matter of Israeli political contention. To position himself above that debate, Lustick designs a politically neutral vocabulary. He first characterizes boundaries as an institutionalized aspect of a state; he then labels boundary changes as "state-expansion" and "state-contraction."¹⁵⁷ Because these terms merely characterize geographic change, they can be applied with both positive and negative connotations. Thus, "state-expansion" can be either nation-building or colonization, while "state-contraction" includes both secession and decolonization. As he points out, "[s]ecession and decolonization are categories often used by politicians to label what they do to prevent or achieve changes in the shape of a state."¹⁵⁸ "State-contraction" is thus a neologism which avoids prejudicing the analyst's normative stand on the struggle.

Lustick also treats the definition of the problem as empirically problematic. Again, his frame of reference is Israel/Palestine. He introduces the empirical problem through the debate in Israel over the "irreversibility" of annexation.¹⁵⁹ Some opponents of annexation argued about whether settlement and infrastructure development made withdrawal impossible. This is Lustick's main concern. Note that the empirical and the normative bleed into each other: that which cannot be accomplished is generally considered wrong and, conversely that which is right is usually asserted to be practical. This is reflected in

¹⁵⁶Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 22.

¹⁵⁷It should be noted that Lustick often substitutes "state-building" for "state-expansion". Although the former term is value-laden, it does not present a problem, because his argument is focused on the state-contraction threshold.

¹⁵⁸Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 23.

¹⁵⁹Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 11-22.

the dual meanings of natural, as both inevitable and right. He resolves the tension by dividing state-building into stages. In crossing the "threshold" from one stage to another, the political costs of withdrawal increase in magnitude. His framework thus takes into account two aspects of state definition—permanence and historical construction.¹⁶⁰

Conclusion. Lustick has pulled off the difficult Weberian trick of segregating his strong political values from the terms of his analysis. This value neutrality results from his interpretation of actors' motives without referring to the collective outcome, which bolsters the plausibility of his political psychology within the larger theoretical argument. It thus warrants our belief in the accuracy of the stories as he tells them and justifies the more hard to prove aspect of his framework, which is the causal argument. Both the typological and causal aspects of his argument rely on common sense notions of political agency and motivation. The notion of state actors as leaders grounds his use of strategic location to select stories about members of elites at the center of Fourth and Fifth Republic political battles, while a common sense mixed notion of political behavior justifies the interpretation of politicians' choices.

2.5. Evidence, Linking Analytic Levels and Value Commitments

One can view social science arguments as consisting of two poles, facts and theory, linked by descriptions. The importance of linkages is clearest in empirically-grounded inductive comparisons like Lustick's, but it also matters greatly in Fanon's case study, and even in quantitative work. First, a theoretical framework is intended to hold across space and time, or at least to speak to other situations. Second, that framework is grounded in

¹⁶⁰Lustick, Unsettled States, p. 45-6.

some specific empirical context, e. g., French Algeria. Third, those two levels must be linked; the analyst needs to translate coherent descriptions of the particular case into the language of her theoretical framework. When linking levels of analysis, one key aspect is moving from individual agency to the causal agency of macro-entities, such as institutions and discourse.

Fanon and Lustick are both interested in the links among consciousness, discourse and individual action. Yet they undertake very different projects to overcome the problematic nature of social categories under highly politicized conditions. Fanon's answer is literary and existentialist, building empathy through passionate narratives of archetypal figures.¹⁶¹ The normative thrust of his work bleeds into and reinforces his empirical claims. Conversely, Lustick's solution is classically scientific: to construct a new vocabulary that segregates the normative and empirical, and transcends partisan antinomies. Thus he develops the meaning of state contraction within an outcome-neutral framework.

By comparing Fanon and Lustick, this section shows how explicit value commitments *may* serve to bolster particular interpretations that link particulars to general theories, and thus warrant conclusions about particular groups. But a warrant of empathy like Fanon's comes at a high evidentiary price: it ultimately cripples his capacity to analyze the overall phenomenon, by preventing either a credible interpretation of French motives or a nuanced account *contingent* actions by nationalist elites. Conversely, Lustick's neutralizing strategy, although elitist in its application, still leaves open the possibility of a more inclusive formulation and development of interpretations. Objectivity in the social sciences does seem to offer much in terms of leaving open the plausible telling of stories.

Ironically, value-neutrality has much less to offer in terms of selecting out what stories should be addressed by theories. The tautological aspect of theories means that

¹⁶¹Clifford Geertz has noted that the ethnographer's task of establishing credibility is "not psychological in character. It is literary." Geertz, Works and Lives, 78.

within themselves, the stories selected cannot be questioned, except in terms of internal consistency.¹⁶² Fanon's selection of stories is equally as valid as Lustick's, since the centrality of French state elites is neither more nor less proven empirically by Lustick than the centrality of Algerian subalterns is demonstrated by Fanon.

Values, Empathy and Objectivity. Neither Fanon nor Lustick adequately captures the interactive dimension of the redefinition of Algeria's status vis-a-vis France. Fanon's argument focuses almost exclusively on Algerians, and with no meaningful account of even the Algerian nationalist elite, let alone the role of French leaders. Lustick's account is also one-sided, treating Algerian actions as merely reactive to French moves. However, Fanon's bias appears entailed by his value commitments, while Lustick's bias, although actual, need not have resulted from his political agenda. Fanon's bias is built into his rhetoric, because his political values are incorporated directly into his evidentiary strategies of empathic prose and stereotypical explanation, while Lustick's "common sense" interpretation of motives *could* be applied to subalterns as easily as elites, and to Algerians as easily as Frenchmen. In other words, Lustick's interpretation of the micro-level is decoupled from his political values, and so could be used to ground a more interactive (hence less elitist) view of the French withdrawal, but Fanon's micro-level plausibility requires enmeshing value commitments in his interpretations, in ways that will always prevent understanding elite motivations.

Functionalism, Political Commitment, and the Limits of Empathy. Fanon's evidentiary strategies fix one's attention on changes in mass consciousness and the links between social and psychological mechanisms. Although they persuasively explain the significance of anti-colonial revolution, they provide no account for its timing or outcomes. Having framed the issue as how the Algerians will end colonialism, stereotypical

¹⁶²See chapter 3, below.

explanation and empathic prose are incapable of handling other important aspects of the decolonization process. He can explain neither the mechanisms that will lead the French to depart nor how the nationalist leadership came to offer conditions for effective anti-colonial resistance.

By the time he wrote The Wretched of the Earth, Fanon had recognized that the nationalist leadership and peasant class interact in a contingent way, e.g., in some countries the nationalist leadership and peasant class have interacted positively, and in others, negatively. In Algeria, the nationalist leadership acted prudently and educated the peasant masses politically.¹⁶³ Yet the nationalist parties usually

make no use at all of the opportunity . . . to educate [the peasants] politically . . . The old attitude of mistrust towards the countryside is criminally evident.¹⁶⁴

The party is objectively, sometimes subjectively, the accomplice of the merchant bourgeoisie.¹⁶⁵

Because elites have acted in a variety of ways, Fanon needs a representation of class dynamics that does not presume nationalist elites will take action that facilitates revolutionary changes in consciousness.

Agency is thus needed to describe the contingent and dialectical relationship between the nationalist leadership and the colonial masses. Yet such an agency is missing. When the (elite) nationalist leadership does appear in the book, it is a cipher. Thus the move to urban terrorism is not a choice by the FLN, but a "decision [that] could not longer be eluded" and was made by "[a]nother part of the people."¹⁶⁶ Likewise, no explicit mention is made of the FLN's decision to begin radio broadcasts, merely that "tracts were

¹⁶³Fanon, Wretched, 152-4.

¹⁶⁴Fanon, Wretched, 94.

¹⁶⁵Fanon, Wretched, 138.

¹⁶⁶Fanon, Dying, 57.

distributed" announcing the new radio station, and its wavelengths and schedule "were given".¹⁶⁷ When the colonial health care system broke down, "the National Liberation Front [FLN] had to take drastic measures," orders "were given" to medical students, nurses and doctors, and "meetings were organized" to arrange a new health care system.¹⁶⁸ Thus, when the revolutionary leadership appears in the book, its actions are presented in the passive voice as inevitable necessity and literally agent-less.

This is a consequence of functionalism built into stereotypical explanation. In A Dying Colonialism, Fanon is a functionalist: whatever is needed to accomplish the revolution, that is done. "It is the necessities of combat that give rise in the Algerian to new attitudes, to new modes of action and to new ways."¹⁶⁹ If an action doesn't fulfill a revolutionary function, it fades away. Fanon can make this claim stick when presenting mass choices in stereotypical narratives. In so far as he succeeds, he does so because stereotypical explanation allows him to focus our attention on the actors whose agency best fits his functionalist mass psychology. And this "fit" is implicitly grounded in Fanon's explicit commitment to the Algerian struggle.

The analysis of choices by a national leadership requires a different sort of grounding. In particular, specific individuals become relevant, which necessitates a move beyond stereotypical explanation, and a consequent move away from revolutionary functionalism. Since specific leaders can choose contrary to the national interest, their choices can be based as easily on crass self-interest or traditional norms as on revolutionary necessity. One way of getting at the contingent nature of elite decision-making is the evidentiary strategy I call strategic location.

¹⁶⁷Fanon, Dying, 82.

¹⁶⁸Fanon, Dying, 141.

¹⁶⁹Fanon, Dying, 64.

Polemic, Empathy and Psychological Mechanisms. Fanon's fiery polemics do not serve him well when he seeks to explain the choices of groups who behave badly: He cannot demonstrate his empathy through polemic and simultaneously be plausible when interpreting the actions of groups on the other side. When treating one side as the enemy is essential to proving one point, one cannot then analyze the psychology of the oppressors with empathy.

His treatment of French motives is thus slight and two-dimensional.¹⁷⁰ In the five body chapters of *A Dying Colonialism*, French metropolitan politicians are mentioned exactly once, referring to "Guy Mollet's capitulation" in appointing Lacoste as Minister for Algeria.¹⁷¹ Metropolitan officials are only discussed in the introduction and conclusion, where the collapse of the Fourth Republic is not even mentioned. Likewise, De Gaulle is referred to only as an example of a French official who fails to grasp the reality of Algerian nationhood.¹⁷² The only other individual actors mentioned are two military and metropolitan politicians who support *Algérie française*, and each only once.¹⁷³ Moreover, the metropolitan government is not distinguished from the colonial administration in Algeria. Of twenty-eight references to French actions in the introduction and conclusion, twenty-seven refer to the French collectively; "France," "French colonialism" and "the

¹⁷⁰Fanon offers no full account of how colonial countries come to decolonize, except for a short Marxist analysis in *Wretched*, 61-3.

¹⁷¹Fanon, *Dying*, 149.

¹⁷²Fanon, *Dying*, 31-32. Interestingly, he is referred to as "General," not as "President" of the Republic whose constitution he designed.

¹⁷³Lacoste and Soustelle are mentioned as defaming the cause, and General Challe is quoted sarcastically. Fanon, *Dying*, 25, 30.

French government" appear to act without being comprised of individuals.¹⁷⁴ It is simply a question of when the French will heed the voice of the Algerian people.¹⁷⁵

Because Fanon relies so heavily on empathic prose and stereotypical explanation, he can present French actions only in terms of the responses of committed Algerians. Although he notes the closing of newspapers, banning the sale of radios or typhus vaccine, and the increase in the number of French internment camps, each of these is used only as evidence for the change in Algerian attitudes toward the radio, medicine or the family. In each case, French behavior is present only as evidence to document the process—within Algerian consciousness—of how the colonized react in opposition to colonialist oppression. Given the high level of popular support for the FLN, this is quite plausible. And that massive support is, itself, made plausible by the same telling facts, such as the ban on typhus vaccine sales to Algerians, leading to excruciating deaths.

An account of native or colonial elites is lacking in the book. But by avoiding the two-sided nature of the process, Fanon's account obscures the limitations built into the joining of stereotypical explanation and empathic prose. Revolutionary functionalism is plausible in *A Dying Colonialism*, because Fanon's focus is kept tightly on the masses of militant, anti-colonial actors.

Lustick and the "French" Struggle over Algeria. Although he systematically underestimates the degree to which French elites responded to Algerian choices, Lustick's

¹⁷⁴Of the 28 references, "France" appears seven times, "French colonialism" six times, and "the French government" five times. The one acknowledgment of division within the collectivity is his reference to "those Frenchmen who have dragged their country into this horrible nightmare." Fanon, *Dying*, 27.

¹⁷⁵One could accurately label this intellectual style "occidentalism," because it treats the Western other as a monolith and tends to essentialize the West's threatening, abusive or hypocritical features. In effect, Fanon accuses "France" of being backward and irrational by refusing to withdraw: irrational because they fail to take the reasonable course and backward because they are resisting the tide of history. This intellectual style is not limited to Fanon, but is characteristic of many post-colonial critiques, including that of Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978). Cf. my discussion of Timothy Mitchell's *Colonising Egypt* in chapter 3, below.

mastery of detail renders his interpretations plausible. His account falters not *because* his neologisms and contextual interpretation are tautologically elite-centered, but *despite* the separation he has established between his theoretical framework and his political values. Lustick's agent-event narrative is facilitated by strategic location, and criteria for strategic location necessarily presume theoretical content, but strategic location is autonomous as a standard of evidence from the threshold model of political conflict.

As described by Lustick, the French war of position seems to take place without the Algerians. In 1946 an Algerian delegation to the Constituent Assembly proposed full enfranchisement of Muslims. This event could be treated as evidence of Muslim support for inclusion in the French polity, and thus as Algerian participation in the ideological conflict. Yet Lustick relates it only in terms of settler opposition and metropolitan acquiescence to that opposition. Rather than treat Muslim support for the enfranchisement bill as one cause in the war of position, he treats it only as a symptom.¹⁷⁶ Likewise, violent resistance to French rule in 1954 constitutes the primary "discrepancy" between Algerian realities and French perceptions, yet he calls it only the "immediate impetus for [the] Algeria-centered hegemonic project."¹⁷⁷ Algerians are hidden participants in French ideological conflicts. While Lustick judiciously admits that Algérie française was not hegemonic before World War II, he asserts that the issue was not politically salient because "strain associated with Algeria's anomalous relationship to continental France was too small to attract attention or trigger controversy."¹⁷⁸ Yet "strain" was absent only because Algerians did not actively resist.¹⁷⁹ The effort required to erase the image of Algeria as

¹⁷⁶Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 109.

¹⁷⁷Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 110.

¹⁷⁸Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 83.

¹⁷⁹Lustick is sophisticated enough so that non-events do count as evidence in other places in his account. For example, he proves that the anti-withdrawal forces were not a regime threat in 1961 by noting that de

possibly separate from France "was so large and disruptive, *within the metropole*, that one of its consequences was to overwhelm initial dispositions to perceive Algeria as quiet, loyal and unproblematically French.¹⁸⁰ He then demonstrates how large and disruptive that effort was, by showing the financial cost, the use of conscription and the systematic practice of torture. But he never explains why these actions were necessary. Vigorous action was necessary because the FLN had mobilized Algerians.¹⁸¹ In short, by focusing almost exclusively on French (especially elite) choices, he presents French decision-making as, in practice, autonomous, rather than in a dialectical relationship to actions by Algerian forces.

Although the argument that Lustick actually makes is elitist and Franco-centric, it is possible to reconstruct his argument in a way that avoids this pitfall. Indeed, he offers the beginning of such a reconstruction when he discusses the differences between Irish and Algerian nationalism.¹⁸² In his brief comparison of the two nationalist movements, Lustick describes how the Irish nationalist movement learned compromise through Parnell's parliamentary activities and used it as the basis for influencing political events in Great Britain. By contrast, there was no way that Algerian nationalists could build popular support through a reformist program. As a result, Irish nationalists could (and did) negotiate with British politicians from the 1870s onwards, while the FLN in Algeria insisted from 1954 onward on a complete French withdrawal and recognition of

Gaule chose not to travel to Algeria after the General's Plot, despite the worst OAS terrorism against French citizens at the same time. Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 296-8.

¹⁸⁰Lustick, *Unsettled States*, 136. Emphasis original.

¹⁸¹Algerian agency is even less present in Lustick's account of the war of maneuver. Yet this is more defensible, because wars of maneuver are direct conflicts over the regime, rather than merely over ideas. Through armed uprising, the nationalist movement directly affected the plausibility of ideologies in France (with respect to the Frenchness of Algeria.) By contrast, the FLN played no direct role in the repeated attempts by settlers and Army officers to impose their policies on the metropolitan government.

¹⁸²Lustick *Unsettled States*, 339-41

independence. His discussion of the reasons for Algerian nationalist intransigence includes both reference to the disincentives for nationalist elites to advocate reform, and the reasons Algerian peasants were unlikely to support a reformist leadership.

Although Lustick applies strategic location only to French settlers and metropolitan politicians, he could have argued that the definition of France, although primarily a French matter, hinged also on the failure of Algerians to assert their interest in being part of the French polity. Strategic location could have led him to emphasize the political calculations of such figures as the moderate nationalist Ferhat Abbas between World War II and 1955. Likewise, there is no reason his interpretative strategy of reading motives through the plain sense of discourse could not have been applied to popular French perceptions of Algeria¹⁸³ and grass-roots Algerian attitudes towards the permanence of the French occupation and its legitimacy.¹⁸⁴ Lustick *could* extend his analysis and Fanon cannot, because Fanon's interpretation of motives rests on empathy, which requires his partisanship, and this grounding can only apply to one half of the overall phenomenon. By contrast, Lustick's approach can work equally well on both sides of the Franco-Algerian interaction.

Evidentiary Strategies that Bridge Fact and Theory. When linking general schemas to particular events, practices and persons, three evidentiary strategies are possible: summation, strategic location, and representation. These strategies depend on the practicalities of research, including the logical entailments of the researcher's substantive theory. Here the differences between Fanon and Lustick are less stark, and value neutrality is not relevant.

¹⁸³In fact, Lustick does use a variety of popular culture representations of France, such as maps, to show that the French did perceive Algeria as distinct from France. Lustick Unsettled States, 108.

¹⁸⁴Lustick does not make such an analysis, but it is logically possible, e. g., through the discussion of Algerian popular music (as Scott does in The Moral Economy of the Peasant), and as Lustick has done with other materials by Palestinians under Israeli rule, Arabs in Jewish State.

Summation is a rhetorical device that condenses information in order to describe a class of particulars as an explicit composite, such as a statistical summary. In the Algerian Revolution, this would mean measuring the frequency of revolutionary actions, changes in popular support for the FLN, and attitudes towards French colonialism and Algerian identity; it would entail measures of public support for various metropolitan politicians and parties and attitudes toward negotiating an end to French rule in Algeria. This evidentiary strategy is moves explicitly from the macro-level down to the individual.

Given the chaotic situation that occurs during revolutions, summation is not a viable strategy for Fanon, although Lustick does make brief use of French polling data. Thus, the indivisibility of France and her overseas territories is not hegemonic, because forty percent of the French polled in 1939 were not willing to fight for the territory absolutely.¹⁸⁵ Generalized desires for disengagement are documented briefly through aggregate polling data. He also notes Lacoste's reference to the potential for public support of vigorous pacification.¹⁸⁶ Between 1955 and 1957, polls showed large minorities in France as "favoring less tight bonds" with Algeria and opposed higher taxes to finance the counter-insurgency.¹⁸⁷

The second strategy that could link the individual level to the national level is the causal significance of specific persons. This device is strategic location.¹⁸⁸ Rather than documenting the changes in a composite or ideal type, particular individuals are described who are prima facie important by virtue of their strategic location in society. Typical examples in the Algerian case are the shift from reform to militancy by moderates like

¹⁸⁵Lustick, Unsettled States, 85.

¹⁸⁶Lustick, Unsettled States, 244.

¹⁸⁷Lustick, Unsettled States, 244-6.

¹⁸⁸See section 3.4, below. As we shall see, strategic location can also be used to select key institutions, texts, and events.

Ferhat Abbas, or de Gaulle's refusal to participate in the Fourth Republic. Such people count because their choices are more causally effective than other particular individuals. The evidence in an account of elite choice must necessarily concern itself with proving its examples are important, that the figures cited are decisive as individuals. Obviously, Fanon cannot utilize this device because his theoretical framework in A Dying Colonialism seeks to prove the causal primacy of mass action.¹⁸⁹ And precisely because his argument is about the behavior of states, Lustick's makes this the predominant strategy in Unsettled States, Disputed Lands.

The third strategy is what I am calling representation. I use the term "representation" in the old-fashioned sense of "representative government;" specific individuals stand in for larger numbers of others because it is not practical for a large number of individuals to speak for themselves. Such stories can be powerful in their particularity, if we take them as typical. A good example is Ronald Reagan's story about the "welfare queen" who buys steak with food stamps. Reagan's anecdote was powerful precisely because many people believed that the food stamp program was being widely abused, i. e., the "welfare queen" was typical. As with any scheme of representation, one must decide how typical individuals are to be chosen. Of course, persuasion depends on whether we reasonably believe that they really are representative.¹⁹⁰

This is Fanon's situation. He cannot poll Algerians, and the content of his thesis requires him to explore the feelings and actions of the masses, each individual of which

¹⁸⁹Under the right conditions, a mass of individuals collectively could obviously be more causally important. Although one might argue that Fanon sees the grassroots as the "strategic location" in the Algerian situation, this would make every assertion of causal primacy into a case of strategic location. My point is precisely that strategic location is an evidentiary strategy that does not logically entail one's substantive theoretical claims.

¹⁹⁰As I mentioned before, in some fields (such as ethnography) this is a matter of trusting the author, based not on their "sampling" procedures, but on whether they exhibit, in their work the requisite professional seriousness and familiarity with their sources. This is also the case with work in area studies of regions or materials we are not familiar.

taken singly might be irrelevant. Thus Fanon must show that typical changes in Algerians' behavior are linked to typical changes in Algerians' consciousness, and he must do so without random sampling or census, since these positivist remedies for selection bias are not feasible under his research conditions, even if he were inclined to use them.¹⁹¹ As we have seen, Fanon resolves this difficulty in a literary manner: his rhetoric takes representativeness for granted. Yet, there are moments when he does use independent criteria of representativeness, as when he notes the sudden shortage of radio sets and batteries, due to their purchase by Algerians. This fact documents that more Algerians were receptive to broadcasting, which is an essential first step in arguing that they became receptive as a result of the developing nationalist consciousness.

These strategies are not mutually exclusive. In fact, representation and summation work well together, and representation is logically related to strategic location. One could easily use a summation technique to prove that a particular individual was typical in important respects, and then go into detail. This is the classic combination of statistical inference and case study. Thus, a public opinion poll could be used to identify a typical Algerian, who very well might conform to Fanon's description in his or her attitudes and actions. Likewise, Lustick indicates the similarity between representation and strategic location, when applied to individuals. He argues that French attachment to its overseas possessions was intensified by the loss in World War II, and he cites as evidence Jean Doutard's autobiographical The Taxis of the Marne, which "reflected the deep sense of insecurity among the French."¹⁹² Its popularity can warrant its inclusion as evidence either as an accurate indicator of common French attitudes (representation), or as factor that is

¹⁹¹One could argue that Fanon elsewhere uses non-random sampling, e. g., his case studies of psychopathologies in the colonial context. Fanon, "Colonial War and Mental Disorders," chap. in The Wretched of the Earth, 201-51. According to this view, the stories included in A Dying Colonialism are actually warranted as data by more positivist forms of representation.

¹⁹²Lustick, Unsettled States, 153.

causally important in shaping those attitudes (strategic location). Another example is Guy Mollet's government in Lustick's analysis of the Fourth Republic. Although Mollet's government was causally very important as a model for later governments, it is primarily worthy of attention because it constitutes a typical example of how the Fourth Republic "rules of the game" dictated the parameters of policy towards Algeria. Thus, representation and strategic location, although analytically distinct, may bleed into each other in practice.¹⁹³

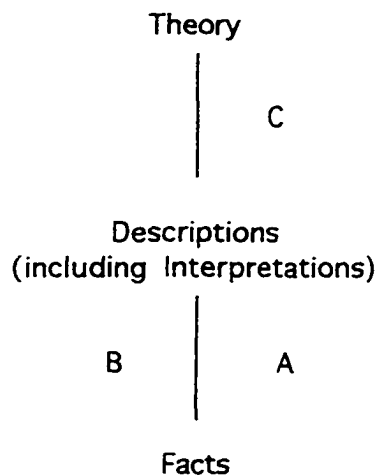
2.6. The Value of Mediated Political Commitments

Fanon's and Lustick's evidentiary strategies differ in three respects: (a) empathy versus third-person warrants, (b) the inductive or deductive descriptive categories, and (c) the strategy used to link descriptive claims and general theory. Their political commitments are reflected in these strategies, but not in the same manner.

Visualizing Evidentiary Strategies. A series of graphic representations will illustrate how these evidentiary strategies interact. Figure 2.1 shows that empathy versus third-person warrants for interpretations are primarily a matter of linking very discrete observations to middle-level descriptions. (This is marked as "B.") The inductive or deductive use of categories is also primarily an issue of how discrete observations ground claims for summary descriptions. (Marked "A," below.) By contrast, the other difference between Fanon and Lustick is over how to link the middle and top levels of abstraction (marked "C").

¹⁹³In the Mollet case, the example's representativeness stems from its causal important (strategic location). The distinction between strategic location and representation is clearest when we are choosing individuals for our narrative, and least clear when dealing with cultural artifacts.

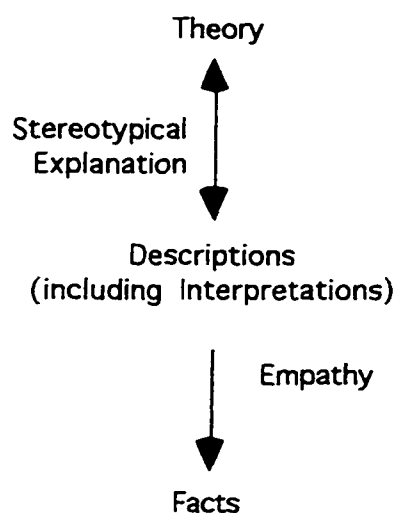
Figure 2.1—Three Aspects of Evidentiary Strategy



This figure, as it stands, is too abstract to be of much help yet, because it leaves the direction of linkage between levels unrepresented. Strictly speaking, an inductive strategy in this schema is one where the arrows point up, and a deductive strategy is one where the arrows point downward.

As we saw above, Fanon's argument relies on two basic warrants: (1) his use of what I call stereotypical explanation, which presumes in its descriptions that cases are relevant to his broad theoretical claims and (2) his implicit claim to empathy, grounded in his authorial voice, his normative characterization of French and Algerian behavior, and his psychology of violence. Figure 2.2 illustrates these relationships.

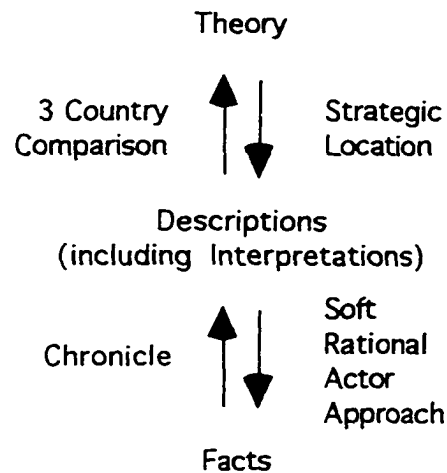
Figure 2.2—Fanon's Combination of Evidentiary Strategies



Stereotypical explanation conflates descriptive and theoretical categories. Strictly speaking, it cannot be said that Fanon's descriptions are determined by his theory, nor the opposite. Rather, Fanon's theory is his interpretations of the actors' understandings of their actions: theory and description stand, or fall, together. By contrast, since Fanon selects facts in order to tell his stories, the lower linkage is deductive. Interpretations control facts, because his empathy for the colonized defines how he perceives facts.

Lustick's argument has a much more complex evidentiary strategy, i. e., there are multiple kinds of warrants that link data to claims, and the linkages between kinds of claims move in both directions, both from general to specific, and vice versa. This situation is depicted as follows:

Figure 2.3—Lustick's Combination of Evidentiary Strategies



Lustick's work can rightly be labeled inductive, because his more general claims are significantly constrained by more specific claims. Thus, while his description of events interprets intentions through an implicit rational action framework,¹⁹⁴ that framework is not very determining, and his commitment to presenting events diachronically serves as an effective counterweight; this chronological account is the heart of his inductive approach. By the same token, middle level claims are not merely selected by the content of his general theory, but arise to challenge and modify it through his comparison of Algeria to Ireland and the Israeli Occupied Territories.¹⁹⁵ For example, a key middle-level claim is the

¹⁹⁴This would not be the case if he had used a more formalized rational choice model.

¹⁹⁵I have not explicitly addressed the comparative aspect in this chapter, largely due to my focus on the areas of overlap between Lustick and Fanon, which obviously do not include a discussion of the Irish Question or the Israeli debate over the Occupied Territories. Lustick himself, however, characterizes *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands* as a "comparative political history." Ian Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias." *American Political Science Review* 90 (September 1996): 614.

characterization of de Gaulle's political tactics as "Caesarist," which supports the theory of rescaling mechanisms. On the one hand, strategic location deductively selects de Gaulle's tactics as relevant to the broader theory. On the other, the absence of such a tactic in the Irish case, plus a partial rather than complete withdrawal, forces him to elaborate his theory of rescaling mechanisms to include settler-native dynamics and the relations between settlers and metropolitan politicians.

Having reconstructed and formalized the different types of warrants in each account, I am now in a position to explain how values come into play in each evidentiary strategy. While the role of values in analysis in the upper linkage is more intractable, we shall see that the insertion of political values into the lower linkage compounds those difficulties.

Empathic versus Objective Warrants. Obviously, when interpreting motives, Fanon is at the empathy pole and Lustick at the objectivity pole of the first choice. Fanon's account is at heart a description of how hegemonic conditions are overturned at the individual level. As we have seen, this account relies for its plausibility on Fanon's ability to demonstrate an empathy for the Algerian who resists French rule, which he shows through his normative statements, his polemical double standard towards French and Algerian behavior, and his offhand treatment of terror. We believe Fanon's account because he is present in the work as a participant. We believe his analysis of particular events because we believe Fanon the man.

Lustick, on the other hand, does not claim to get inside the minds of his subjects. Rather, he reports what they said and did in a neutral voice, the militant settlers as well as constrained advocates of withdrawal. Specific statements and actions are framed not as an experience that we need Lustick to show us, but as phenomena we are familiar with, as more or less conventional modes of political calculation that happen to occur under extraordinary conditions. The implicit message in Lustick's account is that readers already

know what motivates political leaders, and it is merely the conditions they live in that determines their actions. Lustick's role is thus to report those conditions. I have described this as a "soft" rational actor framework. Lustick's values are not operative here because the neologism of state-contraction leaves a broader variety of interpretations open.¹⁹⁶

Inductive versus Deductive Descriptions. Lustick's descriptions are inductive compared to Fanon because his interpretative terms differ from his theoretical vocabulary, which prevents him from reducing specific events to his theoretical constructs. For example, in his narrative he interprets events by referring to particulars, over and over again. Thus, his theoretical statement refers to "political entrepreneurs", but his narrative describes the behavior of specific leaders, such as Prime Minister Guy Mollet, and General Charles de Gaulle. Likewise, his theory calls for him to describe "serial decomposition" and "regime recomposition" as strategies used by those political entrepreneurs, but his narrative describes de Gaulle's intentionally convoluted phrasings of the status of Algeria, and his resolute refusal to participate in the political life of the parliamentary Fourth Republic.

Fanon's deductive style is inherent in his use of stereotypical explanation, rather than some other strategy, to evidence representativeness. Stereotypical explanation conflates his characterization of specific events and his theoretical vocabulary. His overall point is that an Algerian national entity exists. Thus, when he uses the terms "Algeria," "the Algerian," "the Algerian woman", etc., he leads the reader to see individuals as embodiments of more general categories. The resistance of a single Algerian woman becomes a representation of the broader resistance of the Algerian nation as a whole. Particular events are microcosms of larger, more macro-categories of action.

¹⁹⁶It is ironic that Lustick who has the historical record before him acknowledges the contingency of the conflict more than Fanon who did not live to see the outcome.

Lustick's inductive treatment of categories is bound up in the objective tone of his authorial voice; likewise, it is impossible to separate Fanon's preference for an deductive treatment of categories from his passionate authorial voice. We believe Lustick's argument because we trust his seemingly encyclopedic knowledge of particular events, and rely on his documentation of them. Lustick maintains the distance between historical analysis of events and theoretical conclusions through his inductive presentation and his construction of categories not used by the participants. By contrast, Fanon is led to utilize implicit empathy as the linchpin of his evidentiary strategy, because he has collapsed the distinction between political categories and analytic ones.

Linking Descriptive Claims to General Theory. Both representation and strategic location hinge on substantive criteria of relevance that cannot be determined in advance. Both Fanon and Lustick select evidence according to its relevance to their theoretical interest. Beyond the general plausibility of their accounts, neither has offered proof that either Algerian masses or French politicians were the decisive force for decolonization. The different shapes of their substantive political values drive the strategies they use to select particular facts. The subalternist content of Fanon's argument means that he has no real choice but to utilize representation, although his use of stereotypical explanation—within the range of representative strategies—is a real choice.

Likewise, when Lustick analyzes wars of maneuver, the focus on state elites naturally follows, and leads him to utilize strategic location. The contingency built into Lustick's categories doesn't help here, since "state contraction," while neutral vis-a-vis outcomes, is not neutral vis-a-vis the centrality of states. Moreover, his inductive style of interpreting intentions is also of little help, since the generalizing language of theory must (ultimately) transform those descriptions into instances. The logical entailments of theory have an irreducibly deductive dimension.

CHAPTER 3

CAUSATION, HUMAN AGENCY AND GENERALIZATION: TIGNOR, MITCHELL, AND BRITISH COLONIAL EGYPT

Only when the facts are allowed free play for the suggestion of new points of view is any significant conversion of conviction of meaning possible.

John Dewey

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, my evidentiary analysis showed that it is possible to analyze social change with explicit political aims, yet not have theory determined by the theorist's values. In particular, it was seen that substantive theory can be more—or less—determined by one's strategy for linking discrete facts to middle level descriptions. Much was made of how Lustick's inductive strategy depended on his diachronic presentation. Much was also made of how Fanon's categories collapsed the distinction between his theory, his values, and his data. It was left unclear, however, precisely why a diachronic account had this salutary effect. I believe the answer lies in the way substantive theory depends on notions of causality. This is the subject to which I turn next.

From Charles Merriam through political development theorists to Theda Skocpol, most positivists have conceived their goal as the generation and testing of law-like causal generalizations. According to this view, theories consist of general propositions which are applied to specific cases. Empirical facts are deemed analytically separate from theory. By

specifying a theory's empirical consequences, it can be tested. While my conclusions about the role of values in social science have a positivist cast, I believe the positivist preoccupation with law-like generalization threatens both the cognitive aim of falsifiability and the practical aims of politics. I approach this problem through a comparison of the warrants used to ground claims about modernization and colonization in two works about nineteenth century Egypt: Robert Tignor's Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914 and Timothy Mitchell's Colonising Egypt.¹

On a number of levels, these two accounts approach shared material from different angles. They differ in terms of tone and the evidence selected. Robert Tignor is a conventional historian and his monograph is narrative and roughly chronological. At times, in fact, he risks losing his general points in a welter of detailed events. Timothy Mitchell's essay is the opposite: thematic, tapped into general trends in social science and contemporary philosophy, he is the very image of the cutting-edge social scientist. Moreover, their aims are different: Tignor presents Egypt in its particularity, while Mitchell strives empirically to demonstrate a certain philosophic account of the modern world. In short, Tignor is inductive and case-oriented, while Mitchell is deductive and comparative.

On the level of basic substantive findings, they disagree on the nature of modernization. Tignor describes modernity as an aggregation of traits adapted in historically and culturally specific ways by each country. By contrast, Mitchell describes modernity as a whole—as an all pervasive phenomenon of which those traits are but the component parts. Also, Tignor sees a process in which Europeans and Egyptians interact in historically particular and contingent ways, whereas Mitchell sees necessary relations between forms of thought and social organization. These modern conceptual and social

¹Robert L. Tignor, Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914, Princeton Studies on the Near East (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); Timothy Mitchell, Colonising Egypt (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1989).

formations are inherently colonizing, i. e., they impose themselves on non-Western societies.

Finally, a third level of difference is meta-theoretical: implicit in their accounts are two divergent notions of causality. I describe Tignor's notion as "narrative causation," which is characterized by links in a causal chain with a fixed direction from cause to effect. I call Mitchell's notion "tautological causation," and it is characterized by invariable relations between factors.

Their contrasting positions along the inductive-deductive continuum and their differing implicit notions of causation reinforce their presupposed substantive claims about the nature of modernity and modernization. Ideas of causality, willingness to generalize, and conclusions about the nature of modernity turn out to be bound up in each other. Each approach seems to succeed on its own terms.

I will show that this success is partial in both cases, and exposes an enduring tension in social explanation. Neither notion of causation is sufficient for explanation in the human sciences, and each must borrow the other's preferred form of causality in order to convince, although Mitchell's account borrows more successfully. Upon examination, we will see that the prevailing positivism in American social science combines both notions of causation, in part accounting for its popularity. Specifically, every social explanation must combine human agency (which requires narrative causation) and theoretical parsimony (which requires tautological causation).

On the basis of the relationships between substantive and causal ideas, I will attempt to locate a common ground from which to evaluate these complexes of choices. My starting place is the potential value of social science for political decisions. Political action presumes human agency. Thus, although both types of causation are needed, narrative causation must ultimately take precedence.

As in the previous chapter, I first establish the comparability of my two studies. This is the subject of section 3.1. Then, in sections 3.2 and 3.3, I examine each work in detail, elaborating on the implicit criteria which determine how evidence is selected. Tignor's strategy highlights causal chains, while Mitchell's strategy operates more deductively. In section 3.4, I show how these evidentiary strategies are linked to implicit but very definite theories of causality. I explore the reasons why each type of causation is convincing, and how Mitchell and Tignor combine them in their accounts.

In sections 3.5 and 3.6, I conclude by articulating the links between the methodological and substantive positions of each author. I note the necessary dialectic between the two forms of causal explanation. These implied causal notions are compared with the idea implicit in positivism, which has a hybrid nature. I will leave until the concluding chapter of this dissertation my judgments on what sorts of evidence and theories of causation are most appropriate for political science. At this point it is sufficient to note that this perspective allows me to critique the fairly conventional historical account in Tignor's book, the post-modern approach used by Mitchell, and the positivist method predominant in mainstream political science.

3.2. Tignor and Mitchell Offer Parallel Accounts

Before I can clarify methodological capacities by examining accounts of the same topic from different methodological stances, I must show that Robert Tignor's Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914 and Timothy Mitchell's Colonising Egypt do, in fact, address the same subject matter. This allows me to infer their methodological stances as the origin of their substantive empirical conclusions, rather than forcing me to presume to know what "really" is important about colonial Egypt. I can evaluate their methodological stances without being prejudiced on the basis of my preferred empirical conclusions.

On a superficial level, both are explicitly concerned with British colonial domination of Egypt: "Colonising Egypt" and "British Colonial Rule in Egypt" are obviously intimately related. There are numerous specific topics which both discuss: Cromer's government in Egypt, the Urabi Revolt, the Nationalist movement, the British use of intimidation (e. g., in the Dinshawi incident), the British efforts at administrative reform, British reforms in agriculture, village administration, education, etc. Moreover, both accounts extend beyond the period of direct colonial rule, treating early nineteenth century military reforms² and the growth of educational institutions during the reigns of Muhammad Ali and Ismail.³ In short, the factual data which Tignor and Mitchell address overlap.

On a deeper level, they share common themes: the exercise of European colonial power and the development of modern Egyptian state and society. Together, these form a single inquiry into how Europe transformed Egypt in the nineteenth century. Mitchell attempts to show how Western conceptions of order and truth penetrated Egypt—"colonized" it—and so built the modern Egyptian state: "My aim is to examine this combination of order and certainty that I have referred to as the world-as-exhibition, in the attempts to construct Egypt as a modern or colonial state."⁴ He shows this in accounts of changes in urban planning, schooling, printing, and military discipline. Tignor, too, is concerned with the "elements of European civilization introduced into the non-European world; the interaction of the new with the established, or traditional, ideas and institutions; the new institutions that emerged from this interaction of the traditional and the European; and the response of the indigenous populations to the new and their attempt to restructure

²Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 35, 42-3; Tignor, *Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt*, 32-3.

³Mitchell, *Colonising*, 39, 68-9, 90; Tignor, *Modernization*, 38-9.

⁴Mitchell, *Colonising*, 14.

their world."⁵ His account describes changes in education, agriculture, political institutions, finance and administration.

What Mitchell calls "colonizing", Tignor calls "modernization." In both cases, pre-existing cultural conceptions and practices are altered by contact with European thought and practice. Likewise, both see Egyptian cultural and social developments as a process of becoming modern. The only difference is that Mitchell sees the modern as inherently colonizing, while Tignor analytically separates modernization from colonization. Thus, from different angles, they address the same issue: the transfer of Western ideas and practices to Egypt.

It has been necessary to establish the obvious world of facts which these two accounts share because they share almost nothing else. Working from a common storehouse of information, they still determine relevance differently, organize the information differently, and tell their stories in starkly different ways.

3.3. Robert Tignor: Positivism, History, and Narrative

Robert Tignor's Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914 employs the traditional techniques of the historian within a broadly positivist framework. In describing Tignor's monograph, I wish to make three points. First, his study mixes hypothesis-testing and source criticism. He uses Egypt both for its inductive and deductive values, and his concerns are as much the traditional historian's as they are the positivist social scientist's.

Second, this bivalence continues in the way he presents his story. Put simply, there is a discrepancy between the synchronic presentation of his project at the outset and

⁵Tignor, Modernization, 4.

what he does in the body of his book, which is largely diachronic. In practice, he seems less concerned with his general model, and more preoccupied with drawing out chains of events. By drawing out causal chains, he applies an implicit standard of relevance: Evidence is deemed relevant that shows links in a causal chain between events.

Third, his practice of causal chaining implies a whole idea of causation, which I will call narrative causation. Moreover, narrative causation, although it interferes with his positivist and synchronic framework, turns out to be essential for his broad theoretical claims. Thus, this first main section of the chapter shows the interrelationship between Tignor's use of the case study, his theoretical claims, his standards of evidence, and how he tells a plausible story.

Conflicting Methodological Rationales. In the opening and closing chapters, Tignor invokes developments in modernization theory (then) current in sociology, elaborates on the general model, and presents Egypt as an ideal case study. Methodologically, however, when he judges Egypt an ideal case study, he combines positivist and conventional historical rationales.

Tignor's synchronic account runs as follows: Modernization is a general social process which has certain effects.⁶ These effects are modified by a country's political situation at the time of modernization; a fundamental political factor is the difference between colonial occupation and national sovereignty.⁷ The impact of colonial occupation varies, depending on the primary interests of the colonial power. Tignor classifies these interests as economic, national security, prestige, and European settlement. For example, if a colonial administration wants to maximize the export of raw materials for profit, it will build infrastructure and encourage the migration of peasants as cheap labor. By contrast, if

⁶Tignor, Modernization, 5-6.

⁷Tignor, Modernization, 6-7.

the administration wants merely to maintain control of a key strategic location, it will limit infrastructure development and prevent social change whenever it deems this dangerous to the political status quo. (This is the Egyptian situation.) A third case occurs when colonial policies are designed to encourage and protect European settlement.⁸ Thus, from a positivist perspective, Tignor presents colonial rule as an intervening factor in the modernization process, and then typologizes this factor according to the primary interests of the colonizing power.

From a scholarly standpoint, Egypt is an ideal case study because we have ample factual documentation.⁹ Primary sources are readily available, both European and indigenous, and both classes of sources are plentiful before and during colonization. Contrasting authors are especially important for Tignor, because they enable him to come to independent judgements as to how important events occurred. He laments that Africa and the Middle East "have often been studied entirely from European documents" because this creates a skewed image of events. Events in these societies are portrayed as merely extensions of events in Europe. Establishing the nature of events—in all their factual detail—is a special concern of traditional history. By raising the question of bias as one of sources, Tignor speaks methodologically as a historian.

Not only is Tignor's data relatively complete by source, but it is also complete across time. Thus he can ascertain the effects of this type of modernization by comparing the situation before 1882 to the situation at the eve of World War I.¹⁰ The amount of Egyptian sources "enables one to generalize about Egyptian society before European

⁸Tignor, Modernization, 8-9.

⁹Tignor, Modernization, 7. This is a positivist concern, in the sense that it seeks criteria for evaluating statements that are separate from the theory itself.

¹⁰Tignor, Modernization, 375-6.

contact and the anticipated response of Egypt to British rule."¹¹ He utilizes these sources, for example, by examining the state of agriculture and irrigation in 1882 and 1914. He determines precisely how rapidly modern technologies, such as basin irrigation and fertilizers, had been adopted during the period and concludes that the pace at which irrigation agriculture replaced flood agriculture had accelerated.¹² Likewise, by comparing political institutions in 1882 and 1914, he concludes that the development of autonomous political institutions representing various social classes had been arrested.¹³ Finally, he concludes that the village had been substantially modernized, since the market mechanisms had expanded and the role of kinship structures had shrunk.¹⁴

Because the case is well-documented, simple "before-" and "after-" snapshots can document conclusions about modernization in Egypt. From a positivist perspective, Tignor contributes to the understanding of modernization by establishing that under one colonial administration, certain institutions modernized quickly, while others seemed not to modernize at all. Tignor asserts that this case represents one individual in a general pattern.

Although Tignor characterizes his project synchronically, as a positivist would, more is at stake here than merely testing a general model against a case, and indigenous sources do more than establish the facts at two points in time. Attention to source reliability is a staple of historians, and brings them back to events, again and again. Events, not sweeping generalizations, are what really concern Tignor. The before-and-after juxtaposition is adequately accomplished in just two chapters: chapter II, "Egypt in 1882" and chapter XII, "Egypt in 1914". If the correlation were sufficient for Tignor, he would

¹¹Tignor, Modernization, 7.

¹²Tignor, Modernization, 379-382.

¹³Tignor, Modernization, 384.

¹⁴Tignor, Modernization, 382-3.

not have needed to write the intervening nine chapters. For this reason, I now turn to the body of his book, and explain how he departs from the synchronic account with the diachronic history that dominates chapters III through XI.

Causal chaining strengthens Tignor's substantive claims. Tignor attempts to go beyond mere correlation and establish causation. He does this by establishing the links between events. Although modernizing changes in Egyptian society and British colonial rule coincide, that does not prove that British rule caused those changes. Tignor attempts to show how those changes were tied together through chains of particular events. Thus, he draws out the chains that link the British Occupation (his intervening variable) to the various government policies which influenced Egyptian social, technological, economic and political changes (his dependent variable). Likewise, he shows how British policies sprang from national security concerns in London (the independent variable). The vast middle of his book (327 pages worth) is devoted to elaborating these linkages, which fall under three broad headings.

First, he links Britain's security interests to the nature of the occupation. He documents how the British decided to occupy Egypt and their self-conscious motives in doing so. This created the permanent outlines of colonial policy: a broadly defined interest in "stability" in Egypt for the sake of securing the communications and supply route to India. For this reason, his account pays great attention to the first ten years of the occupation and the various individual decisions by which British governments, both Liberal and Tory, decided to remain in Egypt. British Egyptian policy pivoted on the pursuit of stability.

Second, Tignor shows how other apparent inputs into British policy were in fact assimilated to that pursuit of stability. For example, the need to maximize revenues from Egyptian agriculture resulted largely from the desire to preserve Britain's strategic investment despite domestic political considerations and international pressures, not from a

primary interest in profit-making. To the British, fiscal insolvency meant intervention by European powers, especially the French. "If finances could be set in order, France would no longer be able to harass the British through its power over the *Caisse*."¹⁵ (The *Caisse de la Dette* was the institution that implemented Anglo-French dual control over Egypt's finances, and by extension, administration.)

Third, he links the emphasis on stability to the actual policies developed by the Occupation authorities. He operationalizes the British interest in "stability", by documenting colonial officials' belief that stability meant preserving the status quo between social classes, especially in attempting to slow the growth of modern educated classes.¹⁶ He shows the unintended consequences of British policies for the development of modern institutions. For example, Cromer's high-handed treatment of the young Khedive Abbas II, helped encourage the nationalist movement to develop its own autonomous organizational and political resources. This shows how British rule undermined the influence which would otherwise have accrued to the Khedive. In like manner, the British altered their policy when faced with the threat of ministerial crisis or deposing the Khedive, because they feared the international crisis that would ensue. Another example is the various measures which affected the countryside. The extension of market mechanisms, village administrative reforms and agricultural technologies worsened class inequalities in the countryside, rather than merely perpetuating the pre-occupation class structure.

In short, Tignor shows the links in the causal chain which connect the British interest in Egypt to colonial policy, and from the colonial policy to its effects on institutional development and changes in social structure. I call Tignor's method of drawing out the linkages between events "causal chaining."

¹⁵Tignor, *Modernization*, 80.

¹⁶Tignor, *Modernization*, 105, 260.

Causal chaining disrupts Tignor's positivist framework. Tignor's positivist framing narrative is sidetracked by his commitment to follow up chains of events. At times this merely leads to annoying digressions, as when he describes the policy impact of the resident foreign and financial communities. At other times, following out causal trails actually violates Tignor's own overall theses. A salient example is his account of the lower level colonial officials' zeal for reform in the early years. He had specified the effects of colonial rule: in a "security colony" governmental policies attempt to limit modernizing changes for fear of instability. Thus, policies bolster traditional institutions and social groups while minimizing legal, economic or social reforms. But as he candidly admits, problems arose

from trying to restrain the reforming zeal of British officials in Egypt, who were often only interested in carrying out their own administrative reform programs. It was difficult to make them understand that their plans had to be tailored to the overall needs and goals of the occupation . . . [Schemes] of a more radical nature would have to be set aside because of their disruptive effects on Egypt.¹⁷

The causal chain goes: (1) British central government defines the occupation as a national security interest; (2) policy makers use security interests to determine conservative colonial administrative policies; (3) colonial bureaucrats implement policies; (4) colonial administrative policies alter modernizing trends in Egypt. Chaining through the administrators might have amplified his account; instead chaining turns out to have contradicted it.

The bureaucrats' autonomy contradicts, and while Tignor dutifully reports it, at the very least it muddies his synchronic account. It seems that narrative causation is a two-edged sword. Causal chaining proceeds from individual action to individual action, so it

¹⁷Tignor, Modernization, 68-9. The inertia of this "reforming zeal" tends to support Mitchell's account, because Colonising Egypt is devoted to explaining why British officials (as well as Western-educated Egyptians) found modern methods of organizing people so compelling.

has a dynamic of its own. At times this conflicts with the overall positivist deductive account.

Even at the most general level, Tignor uses causal chaining. Tignor's account is convincing when the reader can fit his causal chains into his positivist framework. It could be argued that Tignor is just confused and that he really ought to drop chaining as a criterion of relevant evidence. However, chaining also operates at the level of his narrative as a whole. It is the very structure of his argument. At different times, Tignor describes the British policy of attempting to maintain stability as both a cause and an effect.

As we have seen, Egypt was a "security colony". This meant that British imperial interests in preserving political stability (for the sake of the security of the route to India) affected the shape of British policies. Simultaneously, British policies (as a whole) affected modernization in Egypt, effects which were different from those under different colonial regimes, and under regimes in countries which were not occupied by European powers. The specific British imperial interest in stability led to policies which British officials felt would not transform the class structure or the balance of political forces among indigenous groups. Thus, their policies were designed to decelerate the development of modern indigenous sectors, even though this conflicted with the British interests in making Egypt profitable and with the interests of the European community in Egypt. In turn, these policies *caused* certain aspects of society to modernize more rapidly than others.

Even when looked at as a whole, Tignor's account is a chain, linking a cause to an effect, and then making the first effect into the cause of a second. Causal chaining is essential to his account—and not merely the quirk of a confused historian. It is essential to its success as a piece of scholarship.

Conclusion. Tignor's causal chaining is both in tension with and gives force to his overarching positivist schema. General categories give shape to his overall narrative, and, at the same time, we follow those causal sequences in preference to the merely asserted

covering law; they make the generalization plausible by deriving event from event. When causal chaining works, we see the links from before to after, and we perceive causation, not just correlation. However, when causal chaining fails, an account collapses into a mere chronicle of happenings, each of which connects to others, but leaving the reader without any framework to grasp the whole picture. It seems that causal chaining is a two-edged sword.

I now go on to examine how Mitchell sorts out relevant from irrelevant events and what renders his account convincing.

3.4. Timothy Mitchell: Interpretation, Comparative Method, and Deduction

Timothy Mitchell's Colonising Egypt utilizes recent developments in continental philosophy to analyze the forms of thought which underlay, indeed, constituted the spread of Western practices in the Third World. Unlike Tignor, Mitchell is both methodologically self-conscious and privileges his general theory over the particulars of the case. Upon completing Colonising Egypt, one feels one has learned something new and unexpected about modernity itself.

The power of Mitchell's argument comes from his rhetorical strategy. Three main points are salient. First, his strategy is deeply deductive. Second, his account utilizes striking contrasts between Western and traditional Arab ideas and practices, in order to drive home his analysis of modern praxis. Third, he bolsters his account by noting suspicious coincidences and the strategic location of actors, texts and practices. I will first go over his broad argument. Only then can I explain how the overall argument shapes his evidence, and how the substantive argument dovetails with his use of comparison, strategic locations and suspicious coincidences, to convince the reader.

Mitchell's General Argument. In the most general terms, Mitchell argues that modern conceptions of truth and order are inherently colonizing, i. e., coercively and aggressively expanding into new domains: "I will be using the word colonial . . . to refer . . . to the 'colonising' nature of the kind of power that the occupation sought to consolidate."¹⁸

He argues that these conceptions are created through new technologies which dichotomize the world, so that life is experienced through representation.

We need to understand how the West had come to live as though the world were divided in this way into two: into a realm of mere representations and a realm of 'the real'; into exhibitions and an external reality; into an order of mere models, descriptions or copies, and an order of the original. We need to understand, in other words, how these notions of a realm of 'the real', 'the outside', 'the original', were in this sense effects of the world's seeming division into two.¹⁹

This division leads to a whole system of splits: self/other, things-in-themselves/their-order-or-plan, material/conceptual, body/mind. This sense of the world is an effect of social practices.

Modern politics was to reside within a reality effect, a technique of certainty, order and truth, by which the world seemed absolutely divided into self and other, into things themselves and their plan, into bodies and minds, into the material and the conceptual.²⁰

The "reality effect" is created by the world-as-exhibition, which entails both modern concepts of truth and order, and certain social practices which organize space, people, and activity. In short, the reality effect—certainty—constitutes and creates modern authority, in the broadest possible sense.

¹⁸Mitchell, Colonising, 14.

¹⁹Mitchell, Colonising, 32.

²⁰Mitchell, Colonising, 171.

This cluster of ideas guides Mitchell's argument at all points in the book. In this sense he is deeply deductive. In part, this is what makes his account so convincing: much more than Tignor, Mitchell uses his thesis as a standard of relevance. Evidence which disagrees with his thesis is omitted. He makes no claim to test a theory; he goes out and attempts to render his interpretation convincing. His rhetoric of interpretation is consistent with his practice. This is the first point I wish to make about Colonising Egypt.

Mitchell's deductive orientation. Mitchell's goal is to elaborate his insights into the modern Egyptian state: Specifically, the state's relationship to ideas of authority and order, and to the social practices which constitute that authority. He is uninterested in delineating how this state came to be over time. Thus he admits, quite frankly, that the book

*is not intended as a history of this process [the spread of the world as exhibition], which remains even today something unaccomplished and incomplete. Instead, I will examine certain exemplary projects, writings, and events . . .*²¹

The book's empirical content is almost completely driven by his deductive claims, not by any imperative to cover the factual material as a whole.²² At the end of Colonising Egypt, Mitchell describes his project as a whole: "The exhibition, I hope, can serve as a motif for . . . a particular historical practice in which we are still caught up. My aim has not been to describe its history, even in relation to the Middle East . . ." ²³ This passage makes clear Mitchell's aims. Examining Egypt helps us to examine the order and certainty which *we* consider natural; it illuminates a historical practice in which *we* are caught up. He wants only to explain its nature as a modern entity. Ultimately, Mitchell cares about Egypt only because it helps him make certain points whose very essence lies outside Egypt.

²¹Mitchell, Colonising, 14. Emphasis added.

²²A telling indicator is his bibliography, which includes barely a single general history of nineteenth century Egypt.

²³Mitchell, Colonising, 173.

Mitchell and the Comparative Method. From a methodological perspective, Mitchell's great innovation—indeed his brilliance—is to employ a comparative approach to interpreting the implicit metaphysics behind modern practices. A well-executed comparison places certain aspects of two or more objects into bold relief. In this case, bold relief is meant primarily to illuminate modern phenomena which were colonizing Egypt.

Mitchell claims a shift in fundamental world view, by "colonized" Egyptians, and he justifies this claim by a series of striking and extended comparisons of European and Arab accounts of what initially appear to be cognate practices: urban planning and housing, education, and writing. He begins with contrasting accounts of the same phenomenon: great European exhibitions.

By reading from some of the Arabic accounts of the world as exhibition, it may be possible to understand a little further the strange objectness, and the strangely objective truths, that visitors from outside Europe encountered.²⁴

By presenting Western practices through the eyes of nineteenth century Arabs, he renders those practices problematic, questions their naturalness, and makes them appear contingent to his Western audience.

Next he describes how Europeans experienced Middle Eastern cities and then contrasts architecture and urban geography. European travellers often had difficulty grasping the order of Middle Eastern cities because they saw order as something which stood apart from contents; they could not see its plan.²⁵ A nineteenth century Egyptian account describes the difference between Cairo and Paris, and Mitchell affirms that the Khedive Ismail cut broad boulevards after the "disorder of Cairo and other cities had suddenly become visible."²⁶ He contrasts the model village and a traditional North African

²⁴Mitchell, Colonising, 7.

²⁵Mitchell, Colonising, 21-3.

²⁶Mitchell, Colonising, 63-4, 68.

house analyzed by Bourdieu. In the model village, "The plans and dimensions introduce space as something apparently abstract and neutral, a series of inert frames or containers."²⁷ However, the traditional Mediterranean house "is a process caught up in this life-and-death, not an inert framework that pretends to stand apart."²⁸

He continues with methods of order and discipline in schooling. He describes the detailed schedule of the Egyptian school in Paris, the totally synchronized exercises of the Lancaster Model School, and the elaborate hierarchy, organization, building plans and examinations in the first Western-style schools in Egypt.²⁹ In contrast to these modern educational systems, he explains educational practices at al-Azhar and the village Quran school (kuttab).

The great teaching mosques of Cairo...were centres not of education . . . but of the art and authority of writing . . . The order of teaching, in other words, even the order of the day, was inseparable from the necessary relation between texts and commentaries that constituted legal practice.³⁰

Likewise, education as a process for children separated from daily life is itself a modern innovation. The kuttab was an institution where children were taught Quran so that the power inhering in the Word itself could protect them. Thus, the village "teacher" was also local healer, Quran reciter and maker of protective amulets.³¹

Finally, he contrasts Saussure's modern ideas of meaning and language, with those of al-Marsafī and Ibn Khaldun, traditional Islamic thinkers. Al-Marsafī held that words "were not labels that simply named and represented political ideas or objects, but

²⁷Mitchell, *Colonising*, 45.

²⁸Mitchell, *Colonising*, 52.

²⁹Mitchell, *Colonising*, 73, 75-7.

³⁰Mitchell, *Colonising*, 82-3.

³¹Mitchell, *Colonising*, 87.

interpretations whose force was to be made real."³² In contrast, Saussure, "who formulated our modern theory of language," held that "the word or linguistic sign is a two-sided entity consisting of a sound-image ('signifier') and a meaning ('signified')."³³

By playing on the cultural difference between pre-modern Egypt and nineteenth century Europe, Mitchell attempts to highlight the 'strange' and 'peculiar' conceptions which inform modern Western practices.³⁴ By their very difference, these non-European interpretations render Western accounts interesting. Without these contrasts, we might easily ask "so what?" By using strategic contrasts, Mitchell's interpretations feel as if they have been measured against an external standard. He does not use the logic of controlled comparison, since he specifies only differences. The comparative method as outlined by Mill requires the specification of *both* similarities and differences. Even so, contrasting cases give his interpretations credence beyond their mere coherence as interpretations.³⁵

Suspicious Coincidences and Strategic Locations. Another way Mitchell leverages his interpretations is that he renders up connections which show the relevance of the texts and practices he chooses to interpret. First, he points out odd parallels which seem to beg for explanation. Second, he shows how conceptions were operating in key institutions, key practices and by strategically placed individuals.

In showing the significance of his texts, for example, before he interprets Ibn Khaldun's notions of writing and political authority, he notes that Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddima was one of the first books printed in Cairo in the 1860s and "the work was being read among students and intellectuals, in particular at the new teachers' training

³²Mitchell, Colonising, 136.

³³Mitchell, Colonising, 143.

³⁴These two words appear frequently in his text. Cf. Mitchell, Colonising, 7, 14, 82, 130-1, 134, 137.

³⁵This is his great advantage compared to Foucault, whose interpretations of European ideas and practices are truly case studies.

college, where both Marsafi and Muhammad Abduh are known to have lectured on Ibn Khaldun.³⁶ New methods of schooling are interpreted in light of ideas about character traits like industriousness. Mitchell's text is an Arabic translation of a self-help book by Samuel Smiles. He justifies this text, noting that "several events indicate the impact of Smiles' book in Egypt"—in particular the founding of a Self-Help Society by Mustafa Kamil, the leader of the nationalist movement in Egypt during the 1890s.³⁷

He also makes claims for the importance of the practices which he analyzes. Thus, to return to the example of writing, "the authoritative interpretation of legal and scholarly texts was a significant aspect of the way in which an older political authority used to work"³⁸—because law was "the profession in which important Egyptian families, from every region of the country, acquired and protected positions of rural and urban authority."³⁹ In like manner, he explains the relevance of the great nineteenth century exhibitions in a study of colonial Egypt. The great exhibitions highlighted the emerging textile industries, which spurred cotton as a cash crop, in places like the American South, India, and Egypt. "No other place in the world in the nineteenth century was transformed on a greater scale to serve the production of a single industry."⁴⁰

As for suspicious coincidences, he connects Ibn Khaldun directly to al-Marsafi. Suspiciously, al-Marsafi's essay on writing and political authority reflects upon eight words, and the traditional circle of justice was characterized by eight words, which Ibn Khaldun (among others) interpreted. Another suspicious coincidence is that the first

³⁶Mitchell, *Colonising*, 134-5.

³⁷Mitchell, *Colonising*, 109.

³⁸Mitchell, *Colonising*, 131.

³⁹Mitchell, *Colonising*, 84.

⁴⁰Mitchell, *Colonising*, 16.

Middle Eastern official to construct a modern Europeanized quarter (in Istanbul) had been in charge of the Ottoman exhibit at the Paris World Exhibition.⁴¹ A third coincidence: when interpreting schooling practices and European notions of discipline, he characterizes the Lancaster Model School as the epitome of the Western practice. There was a Lancaster school in Egypt, in Cairo, in the 1850s, under the supervision of the future Egyptian minister for schools.⁴² These "suspicious coincidences" provide the interior connections between Mitchell's highly theoretical interpretations and broader social currents.⁴³

In these ways, Mitchell shows that his interpretations are significant because of their role in something outside his argument itself—his analysis does not merely rely on his ability to create a potent interpretation. These two methods—salient comparison and strategic location/suspicious coincidence—reinforce, at every point, the connections between his rendering of modern practices and conceptions.

Microcosm, not Narrative. As we have seen, Colonising Egypt is intended to highlight certain features of the modern world, not to describe its development. Structured by its themes, it is best described, not as narrative, but as microcosm. By microcosm, I mean the explanation of a whole by describing its component parts. Under Mitchell's strategy, his evidence exists only to illustrate his general point. The parts exist only inside the whole.

He privileges topical value to his argument over chronological sequence. He treats events as reflecting broader relations embodied in his terms of explanation, and only rarely traces out the links between events. For example, the event which caused the colonizing of Egypt, in the strict sense of the term, was the British army's suppression of the Urabi

⁴¹Mitchell, Colonising, 62.

⁴²Mitchell, Colonising, 71.

⁴³This technique resembles Said's. Edward Said, Orientalism (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

revolt. British troops bombarded Alexandria, defeated the Egyptian army, and "restored" the Khedive. Mitchell describes the British victory at Tell al-Kabir, vividly spotlighting the newly invented machine gun. However, he immediately shifts his focus to the military parade two weeks after Tell al-Kabir. The efficiency of machine guns at killing Egyptians is treated thereafter as the mark of Britain's colonial authority.⁴⁴

Mitchell's interpretation of colonial Egypt is primarily an extended synecdoche, in the following sense: He breaks complex phenomena into smaller components, and shows how each component is a representative part of a larger whole. He says:

The new processes that I examine—taking peasants for the first time to be drilled and disciplined into an army, pulling down houses to construct model villages or to open up the streets of a modern city, putting children into rows of desks contained within schools laid out like barracks—all replicated one another as acts of what is now called *nizam*, order and discipline.⁴⁵

Although events together create an "effect" of enframing, they do not have any direct links to each other. To the extent that we see a common sense kind of causation at work here, it is our ability to imagine how these practices create this image of order, this "effect" for us. This is where he sneaks in the causal chaining that he needs.

Conclusion. Mitchell makes a very ambitious claim stick by crafting his account on two levels. On one level, he brings his very abstract general thesis down into concrete particulars by creating a closed analytical world. Particulars are treated as parts of a complete self-contained system. He treats events as microcosms of larger forces. In short, he creates an analytical system under which the key standard of evidentiary relevance is agreement with his thesis.

⁴⁴Mitchell, *Colonising*, 129. He also states: "The mechanical efficiency of the invasion was then turned into a demonstration of Britain's military power." *Ibid.*, 128. There is something disturbing about an account which spotlights the machine gun because it 'epitomises' speed and efficiency, not its efficiency at killing.

⁴⁵Mitchell, *Colonising*, 14. There is obviously a strong similarity between Mitchell's evidentiary strategy and Fanon's, cf. section 2.3, above.

On a second level, he renders this move plausible by moving outside his closed analytic world. Mitchell uses two main techniques to render his account convincing. On the one hand, he makes striking comparisons of European and Arab accounts of the same phenomena, and between modern and traditional Arab practices and texts. In light of these contrasts, his interpretations stand out as more than just one man's clever whimsy. They feel as if they have been tested. On the other, he utilizes "strategic location" and what are best labelled "suspicious coincidences." By noting the strategic position of actors, texts and practices in society, he convinces us that phenomena are worth interpreting. By pointing to coincidences which otherwise seem to strike at random, he creates puzzles which, once solved, make his case seem all the stronger.

Mitchell's substantive findings dictate this dual approach. He strives for the certainty embodied in a seamless theory, yet to convince the reader he must go outside it, utilizing strategic locations and suspicious coincidences. As we will see in the next section, these devices are alternative causal mechanisms which supplement his main causal argument. These little theories are implicit, which means he gets their benefits without needing to acknowledge the limitations in his primary mode of explanation.

3.5. Causation in Microcosm and Narrative

While neither Mitchell nor Tignor directly discuss the nature of causation, it should be clear from the above discussion that their differing evidentiary criteria imply differing conceptions of causation in social life, one which links events in causal chains, and another which places phenomena in atemporal analysis. I call these two conceptions narrative and tautological causation, respectively.⁴⁶ In this section I draw out their conceptions and

⁴⁶My choice of terminology requires some explanation. I choose the term narrative causation, because narratives are associated with stories. I argue below that accounts which use this form of causal explanation derive their plausibility from the normal logic of stories.

reveal the insufficiency of both modes—and the necessity for each. I show the open or hidden borrowing of the other mode by the narrativist Tignor and the deductivist Mitchell.

Tautological Causation. Mitchell's use of analysis implies its own idea of causation. Indeed, his very language invites such an inquiry. Although, he rarely, if ever, speaks of causes, yet his writing is filled with references to effects: "effect of an abstract conceptual realm,"⁴⁷ "an effect I am going to call enframing,"⁴⁸ the modern political order is "the effect of seeming to exclude the other absolutely from the self . . .,"⁴⁹ the effect "of a world that would now be divided in two,"⁵⁰ and "the effect of an external reality"^{51, 52} Thus Mitchell, relates his phenomena as effects without cause. Since it makes virtually no sense to speak of an effect without a cause, at work here must be a very unusual account of causation.

My neologism "tautological causation" is more troublesome. We normally consider tautologies trivial, so one could deem tautological causation a pejorative. However, it must be remembered that tautologies are the only statements which are unqualifiedly true.

Moreover, it is precisely the deductive or tautological implications of a statement which enable it to be tested. For example, a theory about the causes of revolution would be irrefutable without defining what constitutes a revolution. We can debate the importance of cultural factors versus the international system in revolution, only because we have previously agreed on some definition of what counts as a revolution, e. g., a revolution *is* the toppling of old state structures and their replacement by new structures. Elaborating on that definition so it can be tested is the tautological dimension of theory-building. With regard to scientific theories, this point is made more clearly in Karl R. Popper, The Logic of Scientific Discovery (New York: Basic Books, 1959).

⁴⁷Mitchell, Colonising, 127.

⁴⁸Mitchell, Colonising, 44.

⁴⁹Mitchell, Colonising, 167.

⁵⁰Mitchell, Colonising, 14.

⁵¹Mitchell, Colonising, 7.

⁵²He uses the same vocabulary in his 1991 APSR article. Timothy Mitchell, "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics," American Political Science Review 85 (1991): 89, 93.

Mitchell's causal thinking turns out to be of a very sophisticated kind. Forms of thought do not cause social practices; nor do social practices cause forms of thought. For example,

... the new facades of the city, like the display of commodities at the exhibition, could be taken as a series of signs or representations, as we say, of the larger economic changes 'underneath'. . . The economic and political transformations . . . were themselves something dependent on the working of this peculiar distinction.⁵³

Likewise, modernity is typified in the spread of the concept of the world-as-exhibition and the diffusion of practices like urban planning and military drills.⁵⁴ He denies that realms of thought and practice are independent and autonomous from each other. These two cause each other; they constitute each other: where you find one, you necessarily find the other.⁵⁵

The tightness of these connections is described in the strongest possible language—as constitutive, "necessary", and "essential." For example, the age of the exhibition (modernity)

was *necessarily* the colonial age, the age of world economy and global power in which we live. . .⁵⁶

The world's division into two was an *essential* part of the larger process of its incorporation into the European world economy and the European political order.⁵⁷

⁵³Mitchell, *Colonising*, 17-8.

⁵⁴Mitchell, *Colonising*, 18.

⁵⁵"The reality effect" described by Mitchell is the overall whole for which every piece of evidence in his story is merely a component. In speaking of effects while remaining silent about causes, Mitchell obscures the bipartite character of causal relations. By privileging "effects", he makes them real to a degree that the unlabelled complex of causes is not.

⁵⁶Mitchell, *Colonising*, 13.

⁵⁷Mitchell, *Colonising*, 166.

This political method is the *essence* of the modern state, of the world-as-exhibition.⁵⁸

Moreover, Mitchell tends toward an oddly atemporal view of historically bounded phenomena. For example, the division of the world into the material and the conceptual is "always" present in modernity.

A certain street, a particular view, a book, an advertisement or a commodity appeared as a mere object or arrangement that somehow *always* stood as in an exhibition, for some more original idea or experience.⁵⁹

He doesn't aim for an approximate image of social phenomena, recognizing the limitations of a model: he seeks, instead, to articulate what the modern *is*, what the modern state *is* and what modern power really *is*. Thus, Mitchell—who decries statist approaches as "fundamentally idealist,"⁶⁰ and who rejects, as constructions, dichotomies ranging from theory/practice to mind/body—this same scholar indulges in the most spectacularly reifying language.

In Colonising Egypt the causal relations between things are essential, necessary and constitutive. The relationship between forms of life and thought is described as invariable. Invariable, because they are necessary like logic. The upshot of Mitchell's working notion of causation is to create a self-contained theoretical system. His account succeeds, in large part, because he creates a closed theoretical world. Because this theoretical world is sealed off, I call Mitchell's characteristic mode of causal explanation "tautological."

Narrative Causation. As a historian, Tignor's account ultimately stands or falls on our acceptance of causal chaining. Causal chaining derives its persuasiveness from our natural sense of cause and effect. This intuitive notion will be called here "narrative causation."

⁵⁸Mitchell, Colonising, 179. Emphasis added. Cf. *Ibid.*, 44: "The essence of this kind of order. . ."

⁵⁹Mitchell, Colonising, 172. Emphasis added.

⁶⁰Mitchell, "The Limits of the State," 88.

Narrative causation describes causality by describing causal sequences. It is our more or less common-sense understanding of causal relations: Every effect has a cause. In fact, it is the natural form of stories. For example, the groom was late to his wedding because his car broke down five miles from the church; the cause of the groom's lateness was his car's breakdown (i. e., the effect of the car's stopping was the groom being late for his wedding.) Another example: The Soviet Union collapsed because of excessive defense spending. Moreover, we apprehend the connection between cause and effect in chronological terms: first x occurs, then y occurs. We cannot say the car broke down because the groom was late for the wedding, or that the Soviet Union's collapse caused its high level of defense spending. For this reason, narrative causation is diachronic. It is the special forte of historians.

Narrative causation has many strong features. First, we can easily see the connection between causes and effects, even when they seem far removed. This method of causation is excellent for showing the linkages between even disparate events. Second, human agency is readily apparent. Since human beings can only act consciously as individuals, by focusing our attention on events, we are better able to see how the actions of individual persons influence the course of events. In terms of ideas, the distinct causal mechanism by which ideas influence history are always included—people have ideas, and they act on those ideas. We have an intuitive understanding of how the factors of deciding on a course of action "cause" one to take that course.⁶¹ However these strengths are also weaknesses.

⁶¹Max Weber called this "understanding," and from it developed his methodology of ideal-types. By constructing an ideal type model of instrumentally rational decision-making he hoped to combine this quality of empathic plausibility with predictability, so that hypotheses could be tested. Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim Fischhoff, et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 4-22.

Limitations of Narrative Causation. Our sense of life-like plausibility and the ability to link together disparate events are ultimately in tension with the demand for theoretical generality. For one thing, these causal sequences are unbounded across time. If *a* causes *b* which causes *c*, one can easily extend the chain to a forward consequence, *c'*, and backwards to an antecedent cause, *a'*. There is no obvious criterion for excluding additional links in the chain as irrelevant.⁶²

Tignor has sound reasons for beginning his account with 1882 and the British occupation, but these are not logically related to the causal sequence itself: logically, the British occupation was not only a historical cause, but also an effect. If the occupation was determined by a national interest defined in London, that too is an effect, e. g., of British domestic politics or European international relations. Whatever its origins, the occupation is comprised of other effects, which are themselves effects, too.

The difficulty of limiting causal chains is especially true for social facts, complex phenomena whose definition is often in dispute. Social facts are themselves hard to delimit, which means that the connection between any two social phenomena is problematic. In the Soviet example, the explanation, at the very least, presumes the nature of the Soviet system and the nature of defense expenditures in it. The connection between the two is only clear if we assume the answers to questions such as: Why was this level of spending necessary? Why couldn't the economy support this level? Why couldn't they reform their economy without reforming their state? Every example of narrative causation invites this sort of questioning. For there are no instances in social life which meet strict criteria of sufficient causation. Every presumed framing condition is an implicit additional cause.

⁶²Of course, at any given point in time, narrative causation also excludes many events as unrelated.

The compound nature of social facts creates a principle of density: between any two social facts one can potentially find a third. Returning to the Soviet example, if the Soviet Union collapsed because of excessive defense spending, we must answer our earlier queries. In order to support a massive defense industry, the Soviet Union needed to reform the economy. To achieve economic reform, it needed to dislodge conservative functionaries. In order to dislodge them, it needed political reform. Political reform caused the center to lose control over peripheral nationalisms. The reassertion of nationalism ultimately caused the disintegration of the Soviet Union. This is a breakdown of our earlier two part causal narrative. One could break down each additional step into its own narrative, that is, break down each complex event into simpler ones. For example, the economic reform program called for market mechanisms applied to state enterprises, whose managers stalled the reforms, which meant that the reformers had to break the managers' political control. Thus, economic reform causes political reform, is also a problematic chain. And so on. Consequently, the historian can easily get stuck at the level of events.

In a conventional history, it is painfully obvious that something else must provide the structure which delimits the beginning and ending points of the narrative. In Tignor's case, this is done by applying an overarching causal sequence. He needs his deductive account in order to select relevant from irrelevant, and so structure narrative causation: His ambivalent methodology reflects the limitations of his discipline's notion of causation. In seeking theoretical closure, he must use tautological causation.

Limitations of Tautological Causation. We saw earlier how Mitchell uses tautological causation to create a closed theoretical universe. However, he too makes use of chains of events, which is *prima facie* grounds that tautological causation alone is insufficient as well. Mitchell borrows narrative causation for his account, but in a very subtle way.

Narrative causation is hidden inside an account in which the primary actors are "methods," "practices," "conceptions," and "effects." By using passive voice and nominalizations, Mitchell is able to pretend that ideas and practices are, in themselves, causes. By looking closely at his words, we can see that, in fact, his account ultimately relies on implicit psychological thinking for its plausibility.

A key term in Colonising Egypt is certainty. For one thing, the modern European world is distinguished by

its remarkable claim to certainty or truth: the apparent *certainty* with which everything seems ordered and organised, calculated and rendered unambiguous—ultimately what seems its political *decidedness*.⁶³ (emphasis added)

From the rest of the book, we can see that certainty, facticity, and the effect of "reality" are synonymous. Certainty and decidedness mean that the world is perceived to be certain or decided. All three terms refer to how the world is perceived.

Now, the world is not simply perceived: it is only perceived when humans do the perceiving. Only humans can take the world to "seem" to consist of a signs representing signifiers. Only humans can take a social practice as "decided," i. e., necessarily arising from the nature of reality. Thus, there is no logical connection between certainty and a social practice like, say, military drills. These practices will only create certainty in the minds of people. When Mitchell describes these practices and the images that they evoke, he simply places the idea of certainty next to those images. The link that makes "a reality effect" is always left to the reader.

Thus, in Mitchell's account too, factors must ultimately act through people. The representation of the Orient "obeyed . . . [a] problematic and unrecognised logic, a logic determined not by any intellectual failure of the European mind but by its certainty of

⁶³Mitchell, Colonising, 13.

representation—for an effect called reality."⁶⁴ Such a logic was to "be grasped representationally."⁶⁵ Europeans grew to follow such a logic, they grasped it in a certain manner, and so they approached the Middle East in a particular way.

Every one of us can see how an idea would make us do something. Thus Mitchell's account has, buried deeply within itself, a narrative causation. Social practices make ideas seem plausible: under the influence of certain conceptions, certain practices flourish. Thus, for example, plans of houses and maps of cities made people feel that order could exist separate from the content. Printing made people feel that a word was the same every time it appeared in a text. Drilling made people feel that an army existed apart from the soldiers who comprised it. World exhibitions made people feel that one could represent other worlds. And vice versa. The claim of necessary, mutually determining relations between factors is plausible because we read in how each factor could influence the other.

The implicit psychology of Colonising Egypt artfully brings human agents into Mitchell's account, incorporating narrative causation into an otherwise tautological frame. Conventional narratives describe how causal chains happen over time. So too, with "the effect of certainty." The difference is that the causal chains of Mitchell's implicit psychology occur quickly, over and over again, in the minds of nineteenth century Egyptians and Europeans. These warrants are grounded in our own implicit empathy.

There is a second way that Mitchell imports causal chains into his account, a sociological mode that depends on the devices I earlier called suspicious coincidence and strategic location. Mitchell first warrants the relevance of his facts by linking them to other suspiciously important individuals and events. For example, the Lancaster Model School

⁶⁴Mitchell, Colonising, 31.

⁶⁵Mitchell, Colonising, 30.

demands comparison to the kuttab because Mustafa Kamil founded a self-help society on Samuel Smiles' book, and the new schools were also based on that book. Yet we read in the common sense causal influence (à la Tignor) of Smiles' book *through* Kamil—Smiles influenced Kamil, who through his prestige shaped Egyptian education in the early twentieth century. Likewise, since the earliest Lancaster Model School in Cairo was directed by a future Minister of Education, we can infer that he caused to proliferate, in the conventional sense, these practices and associated ideas of order. Smiles' book influenced the Minister who influences Egyptian ideas of social order.

In short, just as narrative causation requires tautological causation, tautological causation requires narrative.

3.6. Substantive Consequences of Method and Causal Notions

We have seen Tignor's and Mitchell's real differences in methodology, and that these differences are bound to their implicit notions of causation. In this section, I contend that methodological differences are intimately associated with their substantive findings, specifically, how they conceive and define modernity. Mitchell focuses on the "essence" of modernity, seen in colonizing methods of domination, while Tignor elaborates the causes of British colonial domination and its variegated modernizing consequences for Egyptian society. This section will show that Tignor's methodological position actually forces him to question and refine his substantive conclusions, while Mitchell's overarching theoretical framework is merely reinforced by his methodological position.

Generalizing despite Chaining: Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt.

Conventional historical methodology invariably makes evidence relevant. This gravely damages the holistic approach to modernity. Thus Tignor was forced to choose, not only between diachronic and synchronic approaches, but also between substantive conclusions

that lump or split the categories of modernization theory. His historical method led him to conclusions which emphasize the extent to which Egyptian modernization was contingent and unique. Tignor is led by his historical method to a diffuse idea of modernization.

Tignor's project builds on a notion of modernity as a complex of traits that can be disaggregated conceptually.⁶⁶ These traits are adapted by non-Europeans in culturally specific ways. In addition, human agency influences the form of their adaptation. To a large extent, his story shows how the ebb and flow of politics influences this process, through an uncountable number of contingent interactions. Above all, the transition to modernity is a process which occurs through human beings.

Tignor describes political processes in detail. As a result, we can see how contingent the outcomes were. For example, the Gorst Administration (1907-1911) pursued a more liberal policy toward nationalist demands, but alienated moderate nationalists by its pro-Khedival stance. Tignor explains this irrational policy in terms of Gorst's long friendship with Khedive Abbas II.⁶⁷ In this way, he must acknowledge contingent factors of a highly particular sort. This result is not accidental. If one looks at how decisions are made, then one will be drawn to examine the biases of the original British bureaucrats in Egypt.⁶⁸ One will look more closely at the selection of and personal particularities of individuals with exceptional power, e. g., Lord Cromer.⁶⁹ If one understands the influence of prior events on later events as a key aspect of causality one will be more likely to devote exceptional attention to the ways in which the earlier policy-

⁶⁶Tignor attributes his understanding of modernization to Cyril E. Black and to Marion Levy, Modernization and the Structure of Society.

⁶⁷Tignor, Modernization, 314.

⁶⁸Tignor, Modernization, 196-201.

⁶⁹Tignor, Modernization, 57-61.

makers were constrained by local and temporary conditions which, because they set precedent, become solidified.

To an extent, Tignor does pursue a generalizing social scientific approach. His general paradigm is the conventional modernization- political development paradigm of the late 1950s and 1960s. He reconciles generalization with his evidentiary strategy in two ways. First, he approaches the overall phenomenon of modernization as an aggregation of numerous distinct processes, some at work in infrastructure, some in village life, some in the development of political institutions, and some in central administration. Specifically, modernity is seen in institutions: in their autonomy, their functional specialization, and their use of meritocratic criteria. Modernization is the process whereby these traits are extended. For non-Western countries, this is largely a process of borrowing. Because he treats modernization as a compound phenomenon, Tignor can trace causal chains in different areas without immediately plugging them into an overarching causal schema.

Another way he resolves the difficulties which he uncovers is by operating additional sets of distinctions. He then takes the general modernization approach and draws it forth into a series of distinctions. First, he inserts the intervening variable—the type of political regime (colonial rather than self-rule). Then he divides that variable further into subspecies (security, prestige, economic, and settlement). These distinctions are the second way he attempts to reconcile general theory with the particularity of the case.

Causal chaining privileges particularity, continuity, human agency and contingency. Narrative causation (through the practice of causal chaining) is the traditional historical method *par excellence*; these chains are most visible inside national traditions, and they primarily utilize human choices. Narrative causation emphasizes the role of human agency, the unique, and the contingent in each case. The product of these interactions is the uneven modernity that Tignor describes.

Colonising Egypt. By contrast, Mitchell wishes primarily to empirically demonstrate certain theses about modernity put forth by philosophers like Heidegger and Derrida; indeed, the whole book can be seen as an extended elaboration of this conception of modernity. Modernity is seen as identical with certain ideas and practices which, borrowing from Heidegger, he has labelled "the world as exhibition." It is the power of these ideas and practices that concerns Mitchell. The universal scope of his substantive claims ultimately feeds his deductive use of evidence. In a corresponding way, the deductive-synchronic approach allows him to push out evidence of particularity and contingency. In doing so, it draws Mitchell toward substantive conclusions which reify modernity and modernization as unitary phenomena.

Since he sees modernity as having an essence, he is interested in those universal aspects of the modern world. Generalizing about the West, he also presumes a Middle Eastern cultural homogeneity. As a result, he freely uses examples from outside Egypt as evidence describing the colonization of Egypt. This is how he uses the French colonial experience, e. g., the design of Rabat, Bourdieu's work on Algeria, and numerous Ottoman examples. With one exception,⁷⁰ he never justifies his frequent use of evidence which, strictly speaking, is completely irrelevant to the colonizing of Egypt.⁷¹ Mitchell contrasts the model village with the Kabyle house to highlight the nature of "enframing" in household design and architecture.⁷² He contrasts the Kabyle house with model village housing from Algeria. What is contrasted is not pre-modern and modern Egypt, but modern Europe and a non-modern other. Likewise, to show the necessary connection

⁷⁰Mitchell comments that Bourdieu's work on the Kabyle house is the only appropriate analysis of pre-modern Arab household architecture.

⁷¹In this way, it is perfectly clear that his book, despite its title, is not really about Egypt at all; it is about the West, and modernity.

⁷²Mitchell, Colonising, 44-52.

between the world exhibition and new cities in the Middle East and North Africa, he contrasts comments on colonial Morocco by Marshal Lyautey and Frantz Fanon.⁷³ In each instance, Mitchell claims evidence for a thesis about how modernity transformed Egypt, but in both cases the evidence proves less than it assumes. The Kabyle house example presumes the unity of Egyptian and Algerian cultural formations, and the Moroccan example extends the presumption all the way to Rabat. The picture he paints is vivid, but this picture seems relevant only in light of his ideas of certainty and how that effect is created. Mitchell's evidence is illustrative, but not demonstrative.

Mitchell believes that theory and practice are inseparable, indeed, that they are merely two sides of the same thing, praxis. Thus, modern ideas constitute practices such as urban planning, military drilling, modern schooling and printing. As he states succinctly about urban planning, "the space, the minds, the bodies all materialised at the same moment, in a common economy of order and discipline."⁷⁴ Thus, modernization, and the spread of the conception of the world-as-exhibition are the same thing. In describing the mutually reinforcing and constituting ideas and practices, he seeks to explain the operation of power through the interplay of new forms of thought and social practices.

In terms of evidence selected, the posited unity of theory and practice means that he can interpret either texts or social practices, depending on which validates his general thesis. We have seen how Mitchell writes about "new methods" and "new effects" of creating truth and authority; events themselves are merely instances of larger entities which do things. This is seen in his description of the British suppression of the Urabi revolt and subsequent occupation of Egypt. Chapter 5 of Colonising Egypt, "The Machinery of Truth," begins with the bombardment of Alexandria, and describes how the British

⁷³Mitchell, Colonising, 161-5.

⁷⁴Mitchell, Colonising, 68.

defeated the Egyptian army in a mere eight weeks using modern technologies such as the gattling gun. However, in summing up this episode, he instead focuses on the subsequent military parade. As he says,

The mechanical efficiency of the invasion was then turned into a demonstration of Britain's military power...It was no mere question of show and no mere holiday spectacle...The speed and efficiency epitomised in the new machine guns on show was made the mark of Britain's colonial authority.⁷⁵

With that Mitchell goes on to describe the tremendous coordinating capacity of the British army primarily in terms of its effect of self-certainty; this introduces his analysis of modern and traditional ideas of authority. The effectiveness of this power to coerce the bodies of Egyptians⁷⁶ is thus treated as resting in representing power.

Tautological causation tends toward determinism and over-generalization. Because it creates closed systems, it weeds out contingencies, and depending on the theory, can be used to weed out historical particularity. Mitchell elaborates an essentially philosophical understanding of modernity. His ideas of new metaphysical (i.e conceptual) effects (e. g., certainty, reality, facticity, framework) and new methods of power (authority, education, discipline, colonization) are usually quite abstract, and always general. Since the ideas are general, he feels free to prove his case by drawing evidence outside his case study. Mitchell views modernity in philosophic terms, as an essence with a necessity. It makes sense that he would emphasize the colonizing and coercive aspects of modernity, and would approach a model which can only bring in human agency furtively, through the

⁷⁵Mitchell, *Colonising*, 128-9.

⁷⁶Speaking in common sense terms, Britain was capable of doing this because 40 years earlier the European powers forced the dismantling of Muhammad Ali's program of protective tariffs, widespread conscription, and monopolies, which were designed to promote Egyptian military self-sufficiency and industrialization.

backdoor. Even then, the human agency is quite limited, since it merely enacts a pre-existing program.⁷⁷

Methodological stances highlight different kinds of evidence; the differential balance of relevant evidence forces researchers to reevaluate their theories. Thus, if Mitchell had pursued a diachronic evidentiary strategy, he would have developed more differentiated conclusions about modernity, while if Tignor had pursued a more synchronic approach, he could have constructed a more unitary and deterministic idea of modernity. In this way, methodological choices shape substantive conclusions. By the same token, alternative ideas of causation reinforce corresponding standards of relevance and substantive ideas, in this case, about the nature of modernity and modernization.

3.7. Positivist Social Science and Hybrid Causal Explanation

Although structural realists, most Marxists,⁷⁸ rational choice theorists and structural-functionalists—to name just a few—disagree on many important matters, they fundamentally agree on certain methodological questions. They share a set of shared implicit presumptions about what counts for knowledge in social science. These presumptions allegedly derive from natural science. According to this view, social science is fundamentally a quest for causal generalizations which are valid across space and time.

Positivist social scientists look

for answers based on valid causal connections—connections that either hold good across similar historical instances or else account in potentially

⁷⁷This agency would be more robust if one could point to a contradiction in the "metaphysics" that binds practice and discourse. In fact, this is precisely where one can find the possibility of resistance in Foucault's work.

⁷⁸Critical theorists constitute a notable exception.

generalizable terms for different outcomes across space and time in otherwise similar cases.⁷⁹

These generalizations take the form of laws of social change. This positivist view of social knowledge includes an account of causation.

Typically a positivist will generalize an invariable relation between two or more social phenomena. Thus, according to Arend Lijphart, scientific explanation consists of two basic elements: "(1) the establishment of general empirical relationships among two or more variables, while (2) all other variables are controlled...[to] be sure that a relationship is a true one."⁸⁰ For example, Marxists claim that certain types of political formations emerge with the evolution of new social classes. Parliamentary democracy emerges when the bourgeoisie becomes strong. Structural realism in international relations theory provides another example; under a bipolar system, conflict will occur less often and small states will be more likely to select their allies ideologically. In the political development literature, Samuel Huntington argues that with modernization, governments interact more with members of society and the sphere of participation in politics expands. As a result, he argues, modernization entails new social forces impinging on political institutions, increasing the likelihood of political instability. In each case, explanation results from discovering the invariable relation between two (or more) factors: rise of the bourgeoisie and parliamentary government, bipolarity and conflict, modernization and instability.

There is more to this relationship, however, than just the invariable association of factors.⁸¹ In each case, there are causal arrows. Theda Skocpol, echoing a phrase of

⁷⁹Theda Skocpol, "Emerging Agendas and Recurrent Strategies in Historical Sociology," in Vision and Method in Historical Sociology, 376.

⁸⁰Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," 683.

⁸¹Andrew Abbott calls the positivist view "general linear reality." When the invariable association of factors is expressed mathematically in the form $y = Xb + u$, then "the model is a linear transformation . . . [which] itself makes no assumptions about causality or direction; any column of X can be interchanged with y if the appropriate substitution of b is made. Using the transformation to represent social causality,

Barrington Moore's, asserts that social scientists "try to specify in somewhat generalizable terms the 'configurations favorable and unfavorable' to the kinds of outcomes they are trying to explain."⁸² Unlike physics or chemistry—which are satisfied to show an invariable relation, e. g., $PV=\alpha T$ or $E=mc^2$ —positivism demands that its theories distinguish cause and effect. Variables are either independent (causes) or dependent (effects). Because causes and effects are separate and distinct, each explanation can be broken down into independent variables which produce the dependent variables.

Thus, positivists expect laws of social change to be of the form: $A \rightarrow B$. They combine invariable relation and directionality: directionality from narrative causation and invariability from tautological causation. The endurance of positivism stems in no small measure from its hybrid notion of causation.⁸³

Positivism shares features of both kinds of causation. On the one hand, it posits a necessary relation between two (or more) factors: "social science establishes causal generalizations that are valid across space and time." In establishing causal generalizations, of whatever generality, positivist social scientists establish invariable relations between classes. On the other hand, they also purport to establish a directionality between those factors: one is a cause and the other an effect. They derive this directionality by using narrative forms of causation, which chain events together in a causal sequence. Positivism needs chaining to move from correlation to causation, and thus show causal dependence in one direction.

however, assumes that y occurs 'after' everything in X." Andrew Abbott, "Transcending General Linear Reality," 170.

⁸²Skocpol, "Emerging Agendas," 378.

⁸³Ironically, in its notion of causation, Mitchell's interpretive account is closer to physical science than to positivist social science. Because he holds that forms of thought and methods of social organization constitute each other, they are in invariable relationship, but lack directionality. One cannot identify factors in his account as either dependent or independent variables.

This hybrid notion of causation enables a historian like Tignor to utilize a broadly positivist framework to structure his overall account. As a historian, he can use sociological categories while accepting them as merely approximate aggregations of real particulars, i. e., events. Moreover, he can do this because tautological causation and narrative causation operate on different levels. Tautological causation operates with categories: its explanations use conceptual constructs. In contrast, narrative causation operates nearly at a more empirical or everyday level: it deals with particular events. Thus, tautological and narrative causation can be complementary, at least for a historian aiming to speak beyond his narrow circle.

More generally, the limits of the positivist notion of causal generalization are defined by the tension between narrative and tautological modes of causal explanation. Our thrust for explanations that are relevant to other phenomena—whether other countries, eras, or types of interactions—leads us to tautological causation. Meanwhile, our thrust for a causal link that we can apprehend in common sense human terms leads us to temper the tautological with the narrative. Social scientists should readily see the dangers to parsimony and generalization that an over-use of narrative causation poses. Likewise, social scientists should also see the dangers to "falsifiability" that inhere in an overreliance on the rigors of tautological causation.

Avoiding these dangers is partly a problem of practice, of reaching a happy balance. That is to say, since we must utilize both forms of causation in social analysis, the tension can only be coped with, never definitively resolved. Most of us cope with it by working in what Gabriel Almond has called the "vast cafeteria of the center," where we mix methodological rationales as circumstances demand.⁸⁴ Indeed, this is the very nature of what I have identified as positivist causality.

⁸⁴Gabriel A. Almond, "Separate Tables: Schools and Sects in Political Science," chap. in *A Discipline Divided* (Newbury Park (CA): SAGE Publications, 1990).

But a methodologist owes it to his peers to offer something more. The question of method here is: How should we weigh the balance between narrative and tautological causation when human agency and theoretical closure conflict? I believe the scales tip towards the side of narrative causation for most social scientists. Since most of us are not historians, theory is our deep and abiding concern. We thus have a decided predisposition toward theoretical closure, and hence, tautological causation. More importantly, in social science, the considerations in favor of narrative causation include extra-scientific as well as purely scientific aims. Both closure and human agency are essential to social explanation, but human agency is also of value in politics as an end. Thus narrative causation has value both in terms of the discipline's cognitive aims, and in terms of its social or moral aims. As a result, political scientists ought to err on the side of narrative causation when they face the inevitable need to exercise their judgment. In the concluding chapter I will return to this theme, offering criteria for where we should draw the line and measure the balance.

CHAPTER 4
NORMS, RATIONAL ACTION, AND COLLECTIVE AGENCY
IN THE SCOTT-POPKIN DEBATE

Systematic and continuous inquiry into all the conditions
which affect association and their dissemination in print is a
precondition of the creation of a true public.

John Dewey

4.1. Introduction

In the last chapter, we saw how evidentiary strategies are informed by implicit notions of causality. We saw a tension between causal explanations specific to a time and place, and those that are law-like, parsimonious, and necessitarian in their logical structure. At the end of that discussion, I claimed that we can navigate the tension between these two notions of causality by taking human agency as a principle that should take precedence in social explanation, since social science is ultimately practical. The meaning of "human agency," however, was left open, having been only applied to rather abstract notions of causation. I am now in a position to elaborate what such a principle of human agency means, in substantive terms, for social explanation. Human agency, for social science, means collective agency, the capacity of a community to control their destiny.

My path into this idea is analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of rational choice methods. As in the previous chapters, I approach this through a comparison, in this case, by comparing the accounts of Vietnamese peasant life in the classic debate between James

Scott and Samuel Popkin. Their methods rely on both formal and substantive types of warranting strategies. Until now attention in both political science has usually focused on their differences: Scott's emphasis on discourse and shared interest versus Popkin's focus on the conflict between individual and collective interest.

Yet Scott and Popkin actually have much in common. First, at the most basic level, their debate takes place within the same empirical arena—Vietnamese agrarian relations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹ Second, in the more prosaic methodological realm of using facts to prove theory, they share a deep commitment to the comparative method. Third, the comparison is strong because Scott and Popkin are explicitly engaging each other. Scott refers to Popkin in his preface,² while Popkin graciously thanks Scott in his own.³ It is ironic that, to the best of my knowledge, apart from The Rational Peasant itself, neither Scott nor Popkin has responded directly to the other's criticisms. But there is a large literature that derives from this single engagement: According to the Social Science Citation Index, between January 1980 and June 1996, there were 154 articles which cited both works. There are, of course, numerous books that compare the two, e. g., Robert Bates' work on African agricultural politics.⁴ It is because they share so much that the

¹Even in this case, their fact-universe is not entirely congruent: Scott examines Burma as well as Vietnam, and they focus on different aspects of the Vietnamese timeline and geography, e. g., Scott focuses heavily on Northern Annam while Popkin is most interested in Cochinchina. Thus, one could argue that their differing conclusions are caused by differences in the preponderance of fine-grained data that ground their claims. Nonetheless, each deals with both regions, and each is very self-conscious in comparing across regions and time periods.

²James C. Scott, The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), viii.

³"A fundamental influence on my work has come from . . . James C. Scott . . . [who] provided unpublished manuscripts and searching criticisms. If my work ever provokes the reexamination I gave his work, I hope to be as good-natured and helpful as he has been." Samuel L. Popkin, The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), xiii.

⁴Robert Bates, Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

debate between Scott and Popkin has been so fertile. Thus, their shared comparative approach and shared fact universe makes the comparison a true one: the substantive consequences of method are plain to see without the static generated by differing subjects of inquiry.

Because Scott and Popkin share so much in substantive and methodological approach, my argument here has a secondary purpose: I aim to spotlight the degree to which their differences are quite subtle, which the moral versus political economy debate has overshadowed. That debate has been heated because Scott and Popkin both posit general theories of the peasant, when in actual fact, their methods point to necessarily incomplete but complementary visions of social life: the importance of discourse versus the reduction of culture to interest (the moral economy critique of Popkin) or the centrality of the collective action problem versus the assumption that collective interests entail collective action (the rational choice critique of Scott). Only by acknowledging their similarities can we appreciate the truly unbridgeable divide between them, which I will show is the role of values and deduction in social science theorizing.

My concern here is two-fold. First, I am interested in the use of comparison across social strata, cross-temporally, and especially, cross-spatially. Scott and Popkin share a positivist preoccupation with disciplining theory through the systematic use of facts. This is not to say that either elaborates an explicit methodology for doing so. But both increase the number of observations through comparison over time and space. As country studies, the number of cases (one or two) is given by the location of their empirical data set in the modern nation-states of Vietnam and Burma.⁵ But, in practice, the number of comparisons is not, because they can disaggregate the data in each "case" in multiple ways. Both thus bring to fruition the work of Eric Wolf, who argued that peasant studies should apply the

⁵Scott discusses both colonial Burma and Vietnam, while Popkin's work is a pure case study in the sense that it examines only Vietnam.

anthropologist's sensitivity to divergent local conditions.⁶ Each uses comparison between classes, localities, and regions to refute opposing claims and bolster their own points. Scott and Popkin thus share an evidentiary strategy; this shared strategy opens up the key arena in which their disagreements take place. Focused comparison is an evidentiary strategy that can be used by otherwise incompatible methods.

Second, I am interested in the political ramifications of rational choice methods and more structuralist alternatives. This methodological divide means that it is possible to account for political events either by resolving action down to individual choices, or by reference to macro-entities, such as classes, states, markets, colonialism, and discourse. An account that works from macro-entities has to overcome the tendency to treat individuals as mere microcosms of culture and classes. An account built on methodological individualism has to overcome the tendency to flatten all human experience into self-interested calculation; this tendency renders institutions and norms epiphenomenal and, at times even ad hoc. Briefly, I argue that rational choice models are excellent in problematizing collectivities—whether norms, institutions, or classes—but they are, by the same token, incapable of taking collectivities as such seriously, and are, if taken too far, politically disempowering.

This claim will be borne out by examining specific disagreements between Scott and Popkin about the nature and causes of peasant inequality and rebellion in colonial Vietnam. First, Scott claims that peasants are fundamentally risk-averse, and that Vietnamese peasants evaluated tax and land tenure arrangements on that basis, while Popkin claims that peasants pay as much attention to long-term income as to subsistence

⁶The anthropologist, he argued, "brings to the problem [of peasant rebellion] a concern with microsociology, born of an understanding gained in the field that the transcendental ideological issues appear only in very prosaic guise in the villages . . . he will be aware of the importance of regional differences between peasants. He will stress the concentration of particular circumstances in particular regions . . ." Eric Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), xi.

security. Second, Scott claims that subsistence became less reliable for Vietnamese peasants due to French colonialism and the spread of markets. By contrast, Popkin argues that strong states (even colonial ones) do not necessarily harm peasant welfare, and that when they attained access to markets, Vietnamese peasants benefited, since it raised their overall incomes by reducing their dependence on local notables. Third, Scott argues that peasants have a notion of secure subsistence that is both fixed and partly grounded in objective interests, and that they rebelled when this need was not respected by Vietnamese landlords and the French colonial state. Popkin, by contrast, implies that subsistence level is not a meaningful notion, that definitions of need are continually negotiated and that peasants offer organized resistance whenever they feel they can improve their position.

Because Scott and Popkin are explicitly engaged in debate, my analysis in this chapter is structured somewhat differently than in previous chapters: I can dispense with arguing that they are commensurable, since their very engagement proves that.⁷ Secondly, the emphasis in my discussion of their rhetorics focuses more heavily on the substantive content of their arguments than in previous chapters. Thus, sections 4.2 and 4.3 describe key features of their argumentative strategies and lay out their general arguments in some detail. Both begin with a deductive and universalizing theory of the peasant. Moreover, they share a close attention to local conditions and micro-motives, and an evidentiary strategy that relies heavily on regional geographic comparisons; relativizing the notion of a "case," they use the comparative method at a variety of levels of analysis.

⁷Marcus Kurtz has argued convincingly that in significant ways Scott and Popkin are not, in fact compatible, because they define the peasant differently, which makes critical tests between their theories difficult. In particular, he correctly notes that their "test cases" for peasant rebellion are not the same: Scott cites the Depression Rebellions, while Popkin's evidence is from the early post-World War II period. His argument is extremely insightful, and accounts for the unresolved quality of their debate. Marcus Kurtz, "Conceptual Roots of Theoretical Disputes: Contrasting Conceptions of the 'Peasant' in Explanations of Revolution," unpublished paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D. C., August 28-31, 1997.

Nonetheless, I do not follow him in this chapter, because my concerns are focused on the areas where Scott and Popkin do genuinely share a universe of facts, e. g., in their analyses of the traditional village, the impact of colonialism, and in Popkin's critique of Scott's arguments about the Depression Rebellions.

Substantive theory has powerful but subtle influence over methodology. In section 4.4, I detail the ways that Scott and Popkin are led by the content of their theories to utilize the comparative method more or less rigorously. Popkin's greater rigor is shown to be more a sign of his theory's weakness (in terms of falsifiability) than a strength itself, since his comparativist rigor stems from his inability to document intentions directly: as a rational choice theorist, individual self-interested instrumental rationality is his causal mechanism, and this cannot be proven directly. Unable to collect first hand admissions of self-interestedness, his method inevitably must rely on other indirect measures. As a consistent and rigorous thinker, Popkin appropriately justifies this choice on an instrumentalist philosophy of science which takes predicted behavior as the only criterion of scientific validity.

Having seen the impact of substantive theory on their use of the comparative method, I then go on (in sections 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7) to examine the advantages of each kind of theoretical vocabulary in highlighting and obscuring aspects of peasant life. Their arguments focus on the significance for peasant welfare and the likelihood of rebellion of village governance, colonialism and Vietnam's integration into the world market. To do this, one must first see how their claims are ultimately grounded on differing conceptions of (a) how peasant interests translate into public action and (b) the place of culture and discourse in peasant intentions. Section 4.5 discusses the methodological issue of how we can ground claims about collective action on the evidence of common interests. Popkin takes Scott to task for presuming that common interests are sufficient to explain collective action, and, in good rational choice fashion, goes to great lengths to demonstrate that even where peasants shared interests, these were not sufficient to generate collective action. Yet a close reading of Scott shows that one can address the collective action problem without doing so in explicit terms. Nonetheless, Popkin's approach highlights both the exploitative nature of the traditional village and the prospects for *successful* peasant resistance.

Sections 4.6 and 4.7 analyze the specific arguments they use to explain the contingent, partial and sometimes successful efforts of peasants to realize their collective interests. Section 4.6 focuses on the traditional village and section 4.7 examines peasant rebellion.

The empirical data is generally consistent with both Scott's and Popkin's claims about peasant resistance. Popkin's critique delimits but does not falsify Scott's argument, even on the home-turf of rational choice theory, the collective action problem. It appears that there is indeed more than one way to skin a cat. Thus, to evaluate their approaches we must ultimately look to normative considerations which lie outside the technical aspects of comparative politics theory and methodology. The necessity for and the limits to universalizing, univocal conceptual frameworks in social science are, in the end, determined by the extra-scientific goal of enhancing democratic governance. This is the subject of my concluding remarks.

4.2. James Scott: Theory, Comparison, and the Rhetoric of Need

James Scott's argument in The Moral Economy of the Peasant succeeds for three mutually reinforcing reasons. First, Scott offers a model of peasant decision-making that is, in its broad outlines, intuitively plausible. He details the particularity of the peasant's economic predicament and elaborates the values and behaviors we can reasonably expect from persons under such circumstances. This model can be expressed as deductively as a rational choice model, and Scott does this at the outset. Second, he is an effective positivist because he provides the reader with copious amounts of relevant and specific data to support his broader claims. Much of this data is framed in geographic comparisons that are quite pointed. Finally, Scott's argument persuades by the mutually reinforcing quality of his theoretical language, which is simultaneously theoretical, descriptive, and normative. Central to the logical structure of his argument are the powerful intuitive meanings of

"need," "subsistence" and "safety." The theoretical usage of "need," delineated abstractly by Scott, is bolstered by his descriptive use of the term when he documents peasant perceptions directly through their utterances and inferentially through comparisons of their behavior. And both the descriptive and theoretical uses are reinforced by—and support in turn—his normative use of the term. Having accepted Scott's presentation of the peasant's perceptions as objectively accurate, the reader is inclined to share the moral outrage of the hypothesized peasant when his fundamental needs are not met. Thus, the normative quality of Scott's categories enables the reader to understand the subjective dimension of peasant rebellion; this closes the circle and reinforces the general theory with which Scott's argument began.

A General Theory of Peasant Choice-Making. James Scott's argument begins with a simple intuition: peasants are motivated primarily by the desire to avoid subsistence crisis. This "safety-first" motivation is embedded in village level social relations, and traditionally put limits on local inequality. From this motivation Scott deductively derives the political and economic relations peasants prefer.⁸

The fact that subsistence-oriented peasants typically prefer to avoid economic disaster rather than take risks to maximize their average income has enormous implications for the problem of exploitation. On the basis of this principle, it is possible to deduce those systems of tenancy and taxation that are likely to have the most crushing impact on peasant life.⁹

Reliable subsistence becomes the primary value in peasant definitions of social justice. Over the past two centuries, colonialism and the spread of the world market have threatened subsistence security. The result is an increasing discrepancy between the peasant's economic situation and the norms derived from the peasant's existential needs.

⁸"I have argued that starting with the peasant's existential dilemma . . . we can *deduce* his conception of the decent landlord and the decent state, on the one hand, and his vision of the exploitative landlord or state on the other." Scott, Moral Economy, 157. Emphasis added.

⁹Scott, Moral Economy, vii.

Both the commercialization of agriculture and the growth of bureaucratic states produced systems of tenancy and taxation that increasingly undermined the stability of peasant income and provoked fierce resistance.¹⁰

This discrepancy violates the peasant's belief that he is entitled to subsistence. For this reason, the discrepancy is "social dynamite," the social conditions that produce peasant rebellion.

Scott presents this argument at the outset by constructing a formal economic model of peasant risk-avoiding behavior, complete with a hypothetical example presented in graph form.¹¹ According to Scott, the peasant is a risk-minimizer, not a profit-maximizer:

[T]he peasant household has little scope for the profit maximization calculus of traditional neoclassical economics. Typically, the peasant cultivator seeks to avoid the failure that will ruin him rather than attempting a big, but risky killing . . . his behavior is risk-averse; he minimizes the subjective probability of the maximum loss.¹²

Living close to the subsistence level, the peasant cannot afford to increase his long-term income, if doing so increases fluctuations from year to year that might push him below the subsistence level. The objective conditions under which peasants live make it reasonable for them to eschew risks, even at the cost of lower long-term income. One might even say that risk-aversion is rational, in the technical sense.

Empirical Consequences of the General Theory of the Peasant. As a result, the peasant chooses those crops and cultivation techniques that minimize the risk of crop failure; he will not shift crops or techniques if a higher long-term yield means greater risk of crop failure.¹³ Furthermore, peasants prefer economic arrangements that act as insurance against subsistence crisis, even if those arrangements extract more from him in

¹⁰Scott, *Moral Economy*, vii.

¹¹Scott, *Moral Economy*, 15-6.

¹²Scott, *Moral Economy*, 4.

¹³Scott, *Moral Economy*, 19.

the long-term: "... peasants in many parts of lowland Southeast Asia judged the fairness of tenure systems according to how reliable they were in subsistence terms."¹⁴ Thus, peasants prefer multi-stranded relationships to simple contractual relations; patron-client ties mean a long-term relationship, and hence an obligation by the patron to reduce claims in lean years. Likewise, peasants prefer tenancy arrangements that make a minimum harvest most dependable. "As one tenant explained, 'I will have to pay higher rent all my life [under sharecropping] but I can at least get food to live on now.'¹⁵ Thus, they prefer outright land ownership to sharecropping, sharecropping to seasonal employment, and seasonal employment to day labor.

Because they fear subsistence crisis, peasants prefer taxation systems that vary their demands depending on ability to pay: thus head taxes that set a fixed rate per household are abhorred, fixed rates per acreage are only slightly better, and a fixed percentage of actual yields is considered reasonable.¹⁶ "The more invariable the tax is—both across seasons and peasant classes—the more likely it will constitute, sooner or later, a direct threat to subsistence routines."¹⁷ During drought and other periods of crop failure, peasants need landlords and the state to forego revenue so that they will not be pushed either to starvation, or into a new level of dependency (as, for example, when a peasant is forced by debt or taxes to sell off his land and become a tenant).

Together, this "safety first" mind-set generates a set of expectations by peasants which constitute a shared norm of fairness. This notion of justice provides a standard by which peasants judge the claims made on them by outsiders, whether landlords, creditors

¹⁴Scott, *Moral Economy*, 47.

¹⁵Scott, *Moral Economy*, 50. Bracketed text original.

¹⁶Scott, *Moral Economy*, 93.

¹⁷Scott, *Moral Economy*, 156.

or the state: ". . .the analogous problems of subsistence, rents, and taxes for cultivators who occupy similar positions in the social structure are likely to foster a body of shared sentiments about justice and exploitation."¹⁸ Because their objective situation creates needs, the peasant's preferences about taxation and rents become values. Those values derive from his individual economic predicament, but are causally effective as collective moral norms.

Traditionally, peasants came to expect that the right to subsistence would be respected—if only because premodern institutions lacked the capacity to violate subsistence norms. Poor communication and transportation networks prevented the state and local notables from extracting more than the peasantry could bear. For example, precolonial villages were adept at tax evasion.

The flexibility in the traditional system lay primarily in the village's capacity to understate its population and thereby reduce its tax liability . . . the modern colonial state . . . [often] meant that a substantial proportion of the village poor were for the first time effectively taxed by the state.¹⁹

Likewise, weak rural law enforcement and the plentiful empty land left peasants with an ever-present exit option:²⁰

. . . the traditional state did not have the means to impose its will and there was a corresponding slippage between what the king decreed and what his ministers could deliver.²¹

¹⁸Scott, *Moral Economy*, 157.

¹⁹Scott, *Moral Economy*, 108. Both Scott and Popkin often use the term, 'traditional,' as a synonym for 'closed', 'corporate,' when referring to villages, and as shorthand for 'precolonial' institutions in general. It is now a commonplace to question the traditional-modern dichotomy, e. g., Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne H. Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967). It is not my intent to reify the dichotomy: I merely retain Scott's and Popkin's usage for the sake of convenience.

²⁰Although he does not cite him, Scott implicitly relies here on the political economy of Albert Hirschman, elegantly presented in idem, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, (Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1970).

²¹Scott, *Moral Economy*, 93.

Moreover, as communications were weak, most landowners lived in the same communities as their tenants and laborers; consequently social approbation (operating through the force of gossip) put a check on their ability to exploit:

Well-to-do villagers avoid malicious gossip only at the price of an exaggerated generosity. They are expected to sponsor more conspicuously lavish celebrations at weddings, to show greater charity to kin and neighbors, to sponsor local religious activity, and to take on more dependents and employees than the average household . . . There is a particular rule of reciprocity—a set of moral expectations . . .²²

Socially embedded economic relations meant that rents or debt collection were subject to communal judgment. In practical terms, neither the state nor local notables *could* violate peasants' rights to subsistence. This premodern moral economy guaranteed that, short of natural disaster, peasant households might be poor, but they would not starve.

Objective Consequences of Structural Change on Peasant Welfare. To his conceptualization of the peasant, Scott adds a model of how structural change in the colonial period impacted the peasant economic dilemma. From the nineteenth century onward, this moral economy was increasingly undermined by colonialism and the spread of the world market. Commercial agriculture monetarized the peasant economy and made agrarian livelihoods dependent on market prices. The colonial period in Southeast Asia, and elsewhere for that matter, was marked by an almost total absence of any provision for the maintenance of a minimal income while, at the same time, the commercialization of the agrarian economy was steadily stripping away most of the traditional forms of social insurance.²³ As peasants had no control over the world market price of rice, they now had to contend with both ecological and price fluctuations that rendered their income variable, thus more frequently forcing them below the subsistence level.

²²Scott, *Moral Economy*, 41-2.

²³Scott, *Moral Economy*, 10.

At the same time colonialism strengthened the ability of the state to extract resources from peasants. The strengthened state now had the means to stabilize its income at the expense of the peasant. No longer could peasants evade taxes or flee the tax collector. "There is little doubt that the average burden of the colonial government on a peasant's income was greater" than under precolonial regimes, but "the distinctiveness of colonial taxes lay . . . in the nature of those taxes and the blind rigor with which they were imposed."²⁴ Moreover, the colonial state rigidly enforced the claims of large landowners and creditors who were its clients. No longer was it necessary for well-off landowners to forego profits for the sake of traditional patrimonial obligations.

The capacity of landowners to realize the full exploitative potential of their bargaining power, however, depended as much on political power as on owning the scarce factor of production. Their ability to break traditional terms of tenancy, to seize the land of defaulting debtors, to stop peasant mobilization, depended ultimately on the ability of the colonial state's militia and courts to enforce contracts that violated the moral economy of the peasantry.²⁵

Landlord-tenant relations increasingly shifted to a strictly contractual basis, knocking out the last leg of the peasant's social insurance system. In short, "from the micro-perspective of a peasant family's budget," income became ever more insecure, charges on that income became ever more invariable, and alternative coping strategies became ever scarcer.²⁶

Structural Change and Peasant Rebellion. In the face of increasing income fluctuations and fixed demands by the state, peasants found it more and more difficult to maintain a secure subsistence. Since this expectation of subsistence formed the core peasant view of social justice, the stage was set for peasant rebellions:

. . .the clash came in 1930 in the wake of the world economic crisis and the worst famine in local memory. When the state nonetheless pressed ahead

²⁴Scott, *Moral Economy*, 92.

²⁵Scott, *Moral Economy*, 65.

²⁶Scott, *Moral Economy*, 57.

with its claim, there was little choice but to revolt . . . [It was] a revolt of desperation.²⁷

When conditions became dire, peasants revolted in Vietnam, Burma and other parts of Southeast Asia. They revolted not only out of economic necessity, but also out of moral outrage over an agrarian order they considered unjust. Shared traditional expectations for subsistence gave these rebellions a common language and a shared dynamic. Thus, traditional norms gave peasants the ability to organize around shared grievances, and rebellions were explicitly aimed at restoring a just social order that was seen as being lost.

Conclusion. Scott has constructed his theory by positing a general model of peasant preferences at the micro-level, and then describing how constraints on those preferences change with the advent of colonialism and the commercialization of agriculture. In the abstract, it seems rational that a small-scale cultivator would place great value on securing subsistence. Moreover, it is generally plausible to conceptualize colonialism and marketized agriculture as changes in the structural constraints in which the peasant operates. Common sense would dictate that colonial regimes exploit colonized peasants more ruthlessly than their own. And it is at least plausible that capitalism increase income variation in a commodity sector like agriculture. Thus, Scott's theoretical argument is, in the abstract and deductively, powerful on its face.

Scott and the Proliferating Case Study. As an empirical social scientist, Scott has to persuade the reader by more than the intuitive appeal of his model: he must link specific facts to his broader theoretical claims about the nature of peasant decision-making vis-a-vis landlords and the colonial state. One striking aspect of Scott's mode of argumentation is his endlessly proliferating references to different geographic regions. These references cross centuries and thousands of miles. Partially, his persuasive power simply stems from the impression he leaves with the reader that the author is knowledgeable and his theory is

²⁷Scott, Moral Economy, 136.

applicable beyond his more limited geographic focus: Southeast Asia. More than this, however, Scott's "travels" enable him to access data from divergent sources, and to make a powerful prima facie case. Most significantly of all, it allows him to cut into his data in multiple ways, comparing not only Vietnam to Burma, but regions within each country, and even among different areas within those regions.

"*Globe-trotting*". Scott's numerous examples across historical and geographic space enable him to argue by analogy. For instance, he argues for a subsistence motivation by describing risk-spreading techniques used by fisherman in Haiti, petty traders in Barbados, and by capitalist firms in advanced industrial countries.²⁸ He also cites eighteenth and nineteenth century protests by the rural poor in England and France. These protests focused on the right to subsistence. A further analogy extends the argument to the urban poor. He then refers to worker protests in Cuba, the United States, England and Germany: Unemployment for the urban worker is analogous to crop failure for the peasant.²⁹ These examples create a powerful prima facie case for what follows.

This evidence, though hardly conclusive, is suggestive . . . [Stabilization] of real income for those close to subsistence may be a more powerful goal than achieving a higher *average* income; it indicates that we may learn more about the politics of peasants by asking not merely how poor they are but also how precarious their livelihood is.³⁰

Numerous secondary sources then ground the claim as applicable to Southeast Asia. These authorities describe risk aversion in French Indochina, in Indonesia, among Thai farmers, and in Malaysia.³¹ The result is a strong initial claim, one which makes the reader both interested and trusting of his claims for Southeast Asia. He first supports the linkage of

²⁸Scott, *Moral Economy*, 24-5.

²⁹Scott, *Moral Economy*, 33-4.

³⁰Scott, *Moral Economy*, 34. Emphasis original.

³¹Scott, *Moral Economy*, 22-3.

low risk and technical innovation by describing new techniques adopted in Central Luzon (the Philippines). He then offers two sets of contrasting cases from other parts of the Third World: Buganda and Kenya are compared, where Bugandans readily shifted to cotton but the Luo of Kenya did not. Likewise, cocoa growing spread rapidly in Ghana and Nigeria, but not in Sierra Leone. In cases where cash-cropping was adopted, the risks were slight because cash crops did not compete with food crops. In giving his general argument for a peasant subsistence ethic, Scott thus cites six widely separated Third World countries.³² By contrasting cases of adoption and resistance, he makes a compelling claim that risk aversion induces peasants to avoid adopting new agricultural techniques when these techniques might threaten their food security.

Countries, Cases and Comparisons. Scott describes peasants by region—not by nationality. Thus, he rarely refers to "Vietnamese," "Burmese," "Filipino" or "Indonesian" peasants. Instead, Vietnamese peasants are almost invariably referred to as Tonkinese peasants, Annamite peasants or peasants in Cochinchina (the three regions of Vietnam). A typical passage reads "Though the tax was . . . slightly higher for the Cochinchinese peasant, it was far more of a subsistence threat to the poor Tonkinese or Annamite peasant."³³ Likewise, Burmese peasants are always placed in Upper or Lower Burma, Filipino peasants described as living in Central Luzon, and the Indonesian peasant is "of Central Java" or "Javanese." Another typical passage reads:

. . . where a frantic and growing export market conspired to transform rural class relations (as in *Central Luzon, Lower Burma, and Cochinchina*), agrarian movements often fastened on . . . [landlord-tenant issues] . . . where customary reciprocity weathered the assault of market forces more successfully (as in *Tonkin, Annam, and Java*), taxes often remained the major cause of peasant unrest.³⁴

³²Scott, *Moral Economy*, 20-1

³³Scott, *Moral Economy*, 109.

³⁴Scott, *Moral Economy*, 92. Emphasis added.

In labeling peasants by region, Scott is able to make useful distinctions that increase the number of comparisons he can make. Because the ecological and sociopolitical conditions vary as much within colonial boundaries as across them, Scott is able to contrast Upper with Lower Burma, and Cochinchina with Tonkin and Annam.³⁵

By treating Burma and Vietnam as collections of regions, Scott is then able to look at both similarities and differences in a nuanced way. For example, because Cochinchina was more penetrated by market forces, it is more like Lower Burma than Annam or Tonkin, while Upper Burma, due to its isolation from international capital flows, more resembles north and central Vietnam than southern Burma. Thus, it is possible

to speak of peasants in Cochinchina and Lower Burma in virtually the same breath . . . because the integration of these two areas into the world market had, even before the 1930s, . . . [made them] fully vulnerable to a failure of the financial center that nourished them.

. . . In contrast, the traditional heartlands of Upper Burma, Annam, and Tonkin, though hardly untouched, retained a certain autonomy and inner dynamic of their own due to their relative isolation from the world economy.³⁶

Thus, he can argue for the influence of peasant norms in rebellion either by showing similarity in conditions (ecological, political, economic) between Upper Burma and Annam. Likewise, when it suits his purposes, he can demonstrate increasing peasant exploitation by contrasting conditions within Burma, and between Annam and Cochinchina.

Scott also uses fine data *within* regions to make compelling comparisons. For example, he documents the erosion of peasant social insurance institutions in Cochinchina and Lower Burma by noting that "these features of frontier capitalism were *especially*

³⁵This also renders the nation-state historically contingent and defines peasants in something like the way they themselves would understand their identities in the period under discussion. Peasants in colonial Burma, Vietnam, the Philippines or Indonesia would hardly have identified with a "new nation" that did not yet exist politically.

³⁶Scott, *Moral Economy*, 90.

pronounced in the southern Delta of Lower Burma and in the trans-Bassac in Cochinchina."³⁷ In this way, he disaggregates regions into multiple cases in the same way that he has dissected whole countries into cases comprised of regions.

Geographic Focusing. Scott's most persuasive evidentiary technique is to present implicit geographic comparisons of increasing narrowness to argue the same claim at different levels of generality. Thus, his analysis of peasant rebellion in Annam provides a masterful example of how he convinces by making geographic comparisons on national, regional, provincial and local district levels. By shifting back and forth between differences at both the regional and sub-regional levels, Scott accounts for the precise geographical locus of the 1930-1 Annamite rebellion—in Soviets that formed in particular areas of Ha Tinh and Nghe An.³⁸

First, he makes a comparison between *regions* of Vietnam. He thus notes that the Annamite rebellion was more intense than protests in Cochinchina.³⁹ He then describes how Annam was particularly vulnerable to inflexible rents and regressive taxes.⁴⁰ The colonial state, relative to the past, had decreased peasants' income security, because its very strength enabled it to enforce landlord claims and extract resources from peasants, even when they were especially motivated to evade these claims. Moreover, the market was

³⁷Scott, *Moral Economy*, 68. Emphasis added.

³⁸For the sake of presentation, I will reserve the word "area" for districts within a province. Annam is thus a region of Vietnam, Nghe An a province of Annam, and, e.g., Nam Dan an "area" of Nghe An. Scott's terminology is not so precise, but his meaning is always clear from context.

³⁹"Events in the northern Annam provinces began at almost precisely the same time and escalated in roughly the same manner as they had in Cochinchina. The main difference was that the rebels in Nghe-An and Ha Tinh actually succeeded in taking power . . . [they] held out against tremendous military and economic pressure for as long as nine months until finally crushed." Scott, *Moral Economy*, 127.

⁴⁰"Annam's agrarian economy was simply too poor and too tenuous to be expected to yield up, year after year, the rents and taxes imposed upon it," Scott, *Moral Economy*, 136.

especially unkind to Annam: Unemployment due to the Depression was more severe than elsewhere in Indochina.⁴¹

Along the way, he often shifts to *the sub-regional level*, where he shows that the strong colonial state and the spread of market forces were especially powerful in particular areas within Annam, e.g., Nghe An and Ha Tinh. First, the market was not only unkind to Annam generally, but especially unkind to Nghe An. The area had been "a net exporter of labor throughout Annam, to Cochinchina, and to Laos."⁴² Second, he notes the particularities that lent special force to rebellions in Nghe An: physical isolation, distinct culture and leadership. "[M]ost important, its poverty and capricious climate made for a turbulent population that had every reason to defy claims on its tenuous subsistence."⁴³ He explains that agrarian landlessness was

*most strikingly the case in the areas of Nghe-An (Nam Dan, Anh Son, and Thanh Chuong) bordering on the Song Ca river which constituted the heartland of the rebellion. In Nam Dan, for example, 90 percent of the families had no land whatever. In Thanh Chuong the proportion of landless had reached 60 percent.*⁴⁴

As a result, "the structural probability of conflict was magnified" in the areas of greatest revolt because landlessness had reduced the capacity of peasants to protect themselves against fluctuations in yields.⁴⁵

Finally, he focuses on *areas within the sub-region*. Within Nghe An, the most militant districts experienced extreme versions of all these factors: the Song Ca valley was the heartland of the rebellion and its population was most impacted by poor climate and

⁴¹Scott, *Moral Economy*, 136.

⁴²Scott, *Moral Economy*, 136.

⁴³Scott, *Moral Economy*, 129.

⁴⁴Scott, *Moral Economy*, 131. Emphasis added.

⁴⁵Scott, *Moral Economy*, 130.

modern economic crisis. Much of this rural population had become dependent, directly or indirectly, on the employment and remittances generated by industries in Vinh and its neighboring port of Benthuy.

The crisis led to a series of wholesale dismissals and salary cuts in these industries . . . The valley of the Song Ca (Nam Dan, Thanh Chuong, and Anh Son) was *once again most directly affected* as it represented the natural labor hinterland for the Vinh Area.⁴⁶

The economic vulnerability was compounded by ecological vulnerability:

[The] tenuousness of the Song Ca valley's rural economy was an extreme version of Annam's and Nghe An's problem. Within Indochina, Annam had the . . . economy most prone to subsistence crisis. Within Annam, Nghe-An in turn had the most variable rainfall and hence the most tenuous food supply. Within Nghe-An itself, the clayey soils of Nam Dan, Thanh Chuong, and Anh Son compounded the already huge risks of a disastrous harvest.⁴⁷

Thus, the areas of Nghe An that revolted had soils that were especially sensitive to changes in rainfall, and so had greatest risk of total crop failure.

State-extractive inflexibility combined with ecological and market fluctuations, forcing peasants to face the prospect of famine. In Indochina, these factors were strongest in Annam. In Annam these factors were strongest in Nghe An and Ha Tinh. And in Nghe An and Ha Tinh, these factors were strongest in the Song Ca river valley, i.e. in "the veritable heartland of the revolt."⁴⁸ By narrowing the geographic scope of his focus in clear steps, Scott leads the reader to make ever finer comparisons that make his analysis of peasant rebellion extremely persuasive.

One great strength of Scott's book is his repeated use of geographic comparisons to document the significance of the changes he finds critical. His core documentation is a series of comparisons that proceed on multiple levels, e.g. Annam and Cochinchina, Lower

⁴⁶Scott, *Moral Economy*, 137. Emphasis added.

⁴⁷Scott, *Moral Economy*, 140.

⁴⁸Scott, *Moral Economy*, 139.

and Upper Burma, different areas within Lower Burma and Cochinchina, and between Annam and Upper Burma, on the one hand, and Cochinchina and Lower Burma on the other. He goes further, breaking down his comparisons areas within Annam (such as Ha Tinh and Nghe An) into district within *these* areas. In short, Scott takes what starts out as a pair of case studies, and transforms them into a host of relevant comparisons, across a plethora of cases: There is an almost fractal quality to Scott's use of the case study. These geographic comparisons are the central means by which Scott grounds his general theoretical model in empirical particulars.

"Need": Theory, Description and Judgment. The linchpin of Scott's analysis is the concept of need. "Need" makes his framework both descriptive and theoretical, because it parsimoniously describes essential features of peasant decision-making, while doing so in terms allegedly similar to the peasant's own discourse. His framework is normative as well, because the centrality of "need" implicitly passes judgment on injustice in peasant society. Scott's moral economy weaves discourse and interest into a structural micro-analysis that constitutes a morally-charged discourse in its own right.

Scott's argument hinges on two meanings of "need". The first notion describes the material interests of (most) peasants (as individuals) that explain why we should expect peasants to prefer traditional forms of exploitation to those under colonialism and markets; these interests also explain why, as a result, they rebel. The second notion describes peasant norms, and explains how such individual preferences aggregate into a collective force that enables peasants to take collective action, constraining local elites in the corporate villages and justifying rebellion when colonialism and marketization erodes the subsistence that peasants expect: "Although the desire for subsistence security grew out of the needs of cultivators—out of peasant economics—it was socially experienced as a pattern of moral

rights or expectations."⁴⁹ Need simultaneously refers to an objective interest and to a subjective value.

The seamless way that interest flows into norm is the key to Scott's success in presenting a single, coherent, theoretical framework for peasant studies. The most pointed expression of this framework is contained in the quotation that opens chapter one of

Weapons of the Weak:

This is, exactly, *not* to argue that "morality" is some "autonomous region" of human choice and will, arising independently of the historical process. Such a view of morality has never been materialist enough, and hence it has often reduced that formidable inertia—and sometimes formidable revolutionary force—into a wishful idealist fiction. It is to say, on the contrary, that every contradiction is a conflict of value as well as a conflict of interest; that inside every "need" there is an affect, or "want," on its way to becoming an "ought" (and *vice versa*); that every class struggle is at the same time a struggle over values.⁵⁰

In a theoretical sense, the abstracted notion of need refers to the peasant's objective situation, and enables Scott to treat incentive structures as if they demonstrate motives. Thus, because a peasant in Northern Annam in 1930-1 *needed* tax relief, according to his theory, the same peasant is posited as having the subjective state of need. Using the term in this way enables Scott to delineate, for example, when peasants will rebel, and thus to make structured comparisons. The Annamite peasant for example could very well have remained quiescent. This theoretical notion of need, with its implicit plausibility also thereby warrants as evidence his frequent citation of statements *about* peasant intentions found in colonial archives, since these are the primary data for the objective incentive structure that Scott elaborates.

Scott's two-sided notion of need is thus both intuitively plausible as theory and generates predictions about how peasants will behave. However, the notion of need

⁴⁹Scott, Moral Economy, 6.

⁵⁰E. P. Thompson, The Poverty of Theory; quoted in James C. Scott, Weapons of the Weak (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 1.

grounds theory with data in a further way: as a description. The notion of need serves as a handy shorthand to characterize the peasant's subjective perceptions, through a variety of statements by peasants themselves. For example, he argues that a tax is seen as tolerable or intolerable as a function of the sacrifices it imposes in a given year. To prove this, Scott quotes a popular Vietnamese song about the sugar cane withering, a "mau" of land only giving two baskets of rice, "but the state didn't consider this."⁵¹ "Need" seems like a natural way to characterize the pivotal idea in songs and myths that simultaneously express the peasant perception's of an economic situation and express a grievance about that situation. This dual subjective quality is expressed succinctly in another song quoted by Scott. It concludes: "Some have abundance while others are in want."⁵² Thus, Scott's bivalent concept of need reflects what appear to be the peasant's subjective perceptions.

Finally, as a normative judgment on rural inequality, Scott's notion of need explains why the objective, scientific theory fits the subjective, agent-centered description so well. Scott's frequent metaphors for the subsistence predicament create a sense of empathy for the peasant. We believe that this predicament exists because the concept of need grounds a theory of peasant rebellion which is rooted in objective deprivation. Scott engages his Western, liberal audience in normative terms—he plays on our sympathy—by translating Vietnamese motives into our own terms. His objective analysis leaves *the reader* feeling that peasants were exploited and *should* have felt wronged. For this purpose, "objective" deprivation is key. Readers are apt to feel that any rational person would feel wronged by a social system that left them to starve. The normative thrust thus limits the role of discursive explanation in Scott's causal argument, even as it makes *his* own discourse all the more effective. Because subsistence is a need, it has a normative

⁵¹Scott, *Moral Economy*, 107.

⁵²Scott, *Moral Economy*, 236.

power not accorded to mere preferences. The *need* for subsistence entails a *right* to subsistence.

Conclusion. As we have seen, Scott's rhetoric has three salient aspects. First, he offers an account of the peasant's objective interests that relies on characterizing the incentives and constraints that the small scale cultivator faces when close to the margin; this account relies on the plausibility of Scott's formal model to the reader. The incentives and constraints on peasant action are deeply bound up with economic necessities and constitute the structure in which peasants act; colonialism and the commercialization of agriculture thus change these structural parameters. Second, Scott relies extensively on multiple comparisons and analogies—to other countries, regions, historical situations, and very local areas—to support his description of peasant motivations. Whether these comparisons are structured or not, they increase the power of Scott's argument by giving him many more points of entry into his data: the case study becomes a vehicle for innumerable observations. Finally, he utilizes a vocabulary that is, simultaneously, a theoretical apparatus, descriptive of peasant intentions, and a normative critique of agrarian society. The notion of need both describes the peasant's subjective perceptions, explains his objective incentive structure, and judges the rural order unjust when basic peasant needs are unmet. Because the normative judgment arises from our acceptance of the abstract theory, and is bolstered by its descriptive accuracy, Scott's multivalent vocabulary is all the more powerful. Each claim subtly reinforces the other.

4.3. Samuel Popkin: Deduction, Comparison, and Rational Action

Popkin's explicit aim is to re-found peasant studies on a micro-political basis. To this end, he casts his causal arguments in a deductive framework and persuades the reader

of its usefulness by contrasting his construction of the data with that of the moral economy approach. Two features of his argumentative strategy are especially prominent. First, he proceeds in a self-consciously deductive fashion, laying out his general claims, specifying its empirical consequences, and then analyzing the model's performance when confronted with the facts on the ground. Second, in handling ground level facts, Popkin relies heavily on the comparative method. Like Scott, he gains greater purchase on the data by treating Vietnam at different points as a collection of three regions, as a set of areas within regions, as an aggregation of class strata, and as a time-series with three points. Unlike Scott, Popkin convinces by generally comparing the data in a structured way. In short, Popkin persuades through a series of focused comparisons that document the explanatory power of his deductive framework.

A Deductive View of Social Theory. Popkin's model of social science is deductive and behaviorist. This view is apparent from the language in chapters 1 and 2 where he lays out his general argument: repeatedly he refers to "deductive frameworks," the "assumptions" of a model, and the "hypotheses" derived from it. Moreover, his deductive presentation of moral economy claims follows the same form, with him specifying the "assumptions" which the model follows, and then the empirical predictions that follow as behavioral consequences. Thus he declares that

In order to compare the two approaches, I have recast the historical and inductive richness of moral economy thought into a deductive framework of my own construction . . .⁵³

For Popkin, empirical testing requires a deductive formulation of theoretical claims.

Deduction enables Popkin to be scientific and rigorous. Like Karl Popper, he views theory as a set of axioms or assumptions; theories are then evaluated by specifying

⁵³Popkin, Rational Peasant, 5.

the empirical consequences that follow from the internal logic of the general theoretical model.

The core assumption of both the moral economy and political economy approaches to peasant society have been identified . . . Contrasting political economy *predictions* with those of the moral economists, and drawing on suggestive evidence from various peasant societies, this examination of the inner workings of village and patron-client relationships will demonstrate the need for important revisions in previous interpretations of the effects on peasant society of commercial agriculture, the growth of central states, and colonialism.⁵⁴

Deductive theorizing produces "predictions" that enable the social scientist to "test" the "assumptions" of a theory. A model entails certain empirical consequences. "Building on the political economy assumptions in this chapter, hypotheses will be developed about villages and patron-client relationships that will be applied in succeeding chapters to the case of Vietnam."⁵⁵

I have made assumptions about individual behavior that are different from those of the moral economists. These assumptions have drawn attention to different features of villages and patron-client ties and have led to questions about the quality of welfare and insurance [in traditional villages]⁵⁶

For example, assuming that peasants serve their individual interests leads one to expect free-riding in the absence of select incentives. Thus Popkin expects peasants will have difficulty providing for collective goods, such as social insurance or infrastructure, in the absence of institutions that can coerce or otherwise obviate mistrust. Since the precolonial village lacked these institutions, Popkin predicts a lower level of social investment and insurance. The result is a strong prima facie case for his model, one which we expect will be borne out by the empirical data to follow.

⁵⁴Popkin, Rational Peasant, 32. Emphasis added.

⁵⁵Popkin, Rational Peasant, 32.

⁵⁶Popkin, Rational Peasant, 79.

Popkin's view of science is behaviorist because he is less concerned with the literal truth of the assumption of rational self-interest than he is with how this simplifying heuristic enables him to account for peasant behavior. The methodological warrant for his claims is not the literal truth of rational self-interestedness, but the usefulness of this principle in explaining what peasants *do*:

I am above all seeking a different strategy of inquiry, one which emphasizes individual decision-making and strategic interaction . . . In adopting an economic approach I am adopting a method. It should be clear that I am *not* committing myself to the view that individuals are solely concerned with material commodities or money incomes.⁵⁷

He is pointedly *not* making a philosophical or substantive empirical claim about universal human motives, only arguing that modeling behavior in an economic fashion is useful for the practicing social scientist. This view of social science has been cogently argued by Milton Friedman, who claimed that the value of a theory is not in the veracity or truth of its axioms, but in its usefulness as a tool for explaining social behavior.⁵⁸

Popkin's deductive rhetoric is powerful, establishing a credible initial case for his model over the moral economy analysis. By the end of chapter 2, many will agree that he has "demonstrated that there is more potential value to markets *relative to the actual performance level* of [non-market] institutions."⁵⁹ The test of his method must then be, in the end, in the same place as with Scott: in the explanation of the empirical data. Before

⁵⁷Popkin, Rational Peasant, 30-1. Emphasis original.

⁵⁸"The relevant question to ask about the 'assumptions' of a theory is *not whether they are descriptively 'realistic,' for they never are*, but whether they are sufficiently good approximations for the purpose in hand. And this can be answered only by seeing whether the theory works, which means whether it yields sufficiently accurate predictions. The two supposedly independent tests"—whether the assumptions are accurate and whether they predict behavior adequately—"thus reduce to one test." Friedman, "The Methodology of Positive Economics," in Essays in Positive Economics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 15.

⁵⁹Popkin, Rational Peasant, 79. Emphasis original.

we can examine his evidentiary strategies for handling specific data, we must first lay out the substantive empirical claims which constitute his overall argument.

Empirical Claims Derived from Popkin's Deductive Framework. Popkin argues that peasant welfare is hamstrung at the village level: a lack of organizational resources prevents peasants from utilizing markets to their benefit. Once outside resources enable them to solve their collective action problems, peasants act like other rational maximizers, and are not especially risk-averse. They pursue long term income growth and accept increased income variation from year to year. The true source of inequality for peasants is rapacious notables, and inequality is built into the traditional village; inequality thus predates colonialism and the expansion of markets. Thus, neither the colonial state nor the market is necessarily an obstacle to peasant welfare. Depending on whether peasants have overcome the resistance of local elites, the colonial state can be either helpful or detrimental: the colonial state is not necessarily deleterious, since it facilitates access to a broader market. Thus, peasant distress is a product of collective action problems bound up with clientelism, not the market or the colonial state.

Strategic Interactions, Inequality and the Traditional Village. Popkin sees village politics as the key process for determining peasant welfare. The traditional closed village was highly inegalitarian, organized around insider-outsider distinctions.⁶⁰ Village citizenship was the key mark of this distinction, and it excluded "transients, refugees, the poor, and even men who had moved to the village following marriage to an insider."⁶¹ This distinction was highly salient in Vietnam, which was unusual in having a large population of peasants without a village: "To admit floaters, even as outsiders, to a village,

⁶⁰Popkin, Rational Peasant, 43.

⁶¹Popkin, Rational Peasant, 89.

was to stretch resources and decrease one's share of land and water."⁶² Landless peasants lacked the institutional resources to leave or contest these arrangements. Thus a key feature of the precolonial Vietnamese village was stratification between insiders and outsiders, which kept resources in the hands of village citizens.

According to Popkin, peasants were stratified even among the class of village citizens. Villages were controlled by notables on the village council, who

handled relations with the state, collected taxes, allocated communal land, and conducted rites of worship . . . The village council was also the village court, the final adjudicator of local conflicts between and within families.⁶³

Village notables used these institutional resources to preserve their own wealth and power at the expense of both poor village citizens and outsiders.

[Many have] tended to overemphasize the noblesse oblige of the notables and the welfare provided by the village qua village. The procedures used to pay state extractions and distribute resources were regressive . . .
 . . . [C]orporate villages need not be leveling or egalitarian.⁶⁴

Even the communal feasts which embodied the notables' social obligations were a means of barring less wealthy peasants from positions of power, in so far as only the rich could afford them, and only the sponsors of feasts could sit on the village council. In general, "the benefits of becoming a notable far outweighed the costs for the successful."⁶⁵

The notables maintained an inegalitarian distribution of resources through patron-client relations. Not surprisingly—and contrary to the moral economy approach—peasants dislike patrimonialism, whereby the patron combines the roles of landlord, creditor, arbiter of disputes, and village headman.

⁶²Popkin, Rational Peasant, 92.

⁶³Popkin, Rational Peasant, 92.

⁶⁴Popkin, Rational Peasant, 99.

⁶⁵Popkin, Rational Peasant, 99.

It is true that, *landlords* preferred multi-stranded relationships because they allowed them to maintain their monopoly position and the tenant's dependence . . . *Tenants*, on the other hand, generally preferred single-stranded relationships rather than an all-encompassing feudal relationship with one lord.⁶⁶

Patrimonialism guarantees an income floor for only a favored few who act as strike-breakers and informants.⁶⁷ Thus, patron-client linkages entail efforts by patrons to preserve the peasant's dependency by preventing him from using collective bargaining to improve his position.⁶⁸

Given the inegalitarian structure of closed, corporate villages, Popkin argues, villages remained closed because local elites found it in their interest to limit contact with outsiders, especially the state.⁶⁹ The rule of consensus on village councils, rather than reflecting a culture of harmony and unanimity, reflected the "overriding personal considerations on the part of each council member."⁷⁰ Rule by consensus ensured that no group of notables could exploit another, and it enabled the elite to keep outsiders, especially the mandarins, from interfering in local affairs. Popkin astutely points out that this in no way entails that the village notables would redistribute the benefits of local autonomy to the less wealthy. Later, when the French colonial authorities reorganized village governance, notables had greater incentives to call on state power, and they did so, typically, in order to increase their control of village lands.

Objective Consequences of Structural Change for Peasant Welfare. Colonialism and the spread of markets are not the proximate causes of peasant distress. Although

⁶⁶Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 76. Emphasis added.

⁶⁷Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 77-8.

⁶⁸Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 27

⁶⁹During the precolonial period, Vietnamese emperors used village notables as a counter-weight to the power of the mandarins. Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 112.

⁷⁰Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 106. Cf. *ibid.*, 58-9.

markets may in the short term exacerbate the peasant's position, in the longer term, access to international markets reduces his dependence on local notables, and thus improves his terms of exchange.⁷¹ "There are often better opportunities for peasants in markets than under lords, and markets can reduce the bargaining power of the lords."⁷² Likewise, although strong states may enforce landlords' claims against peasants, this is not necessarily the case: the state may intervene on behalf of peasants if improvements in efficiency (and thus tax revenues) are obstructed by landlords. Moreover, strong states improve law and order which indirectly benefits peasants, in the longer term. Although colonial taxes undoubtedly hit the poorest peasants hardest, they were still better off, overall, under French colonial rule than before: "Colonialism was ugly, but the quality of the minimum subsistence floor improved in most countries."⁷³

Structural Change, Norms and Peasant Collective Action. Popkin rejects the moral economy position that peasant grievances are effective precisely because they become norms. Norms fail to account for peasant resistance for two distinct reasons. First, he claims that peasants, like most people, are not exclusively or even primarily motivated by norms, i. e., they are most often motivated by individual interest. Second, even when motivated by norms, peasants (again like other people) have difficulty in applying norms to practice choices.⁷⁴

⁷¹Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 79. He also notes: "Commercialization of agriculture and the development of strong central authorities are not wholly deleterious to peasants . . . because traditional institutions are harsher and work less well than [moral economists] believe . . . Depending on the specific institutional context, commercialization can be good or bad for peasants. In many cases, the shift to narrow contractual ties with landlords increases both peasant security and this opportunity to benefit from markets." *Ibid.*, 81.

⁷²Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 80.

⁷³Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 81.

⁷⁴Popkin gives numerous examples of problems in ranking needs, e. g., a peasant family with few children but a poor harvest versus a family with many children and a better yield, or a young couple who cannot afford to have children versus an older couple with irresponsible children. Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 16.

... [V]illage processes are shaped and restricted by individual self-interest, the difficulty of ranking needs, the desire of individual peasants to raise their own subsistence level at the expense of others, aversion to risk, leadership interest in profits, and the free-rider problem.⁷⁵

The only way to argue around the difficulties of needs-ranking and free-riding is to assume shared individual goals. Since Popkin sees all sorts of obstacles to acting on such common standards, he doubts that social norms impose standards, and hence peasants do not rebel out of moral outrage over violations of the subsistence ethic.⁷⁶

Rather, peasant rebellions are largely a function of the demand-making ability of peasants: whenever they can, peasants organize to improve their situation, even when the overall "balance of exchange is *improving* in favor of the tenant."⁷⁷ For example, "every class [of peasant] in Cochinchina was a notch ahead of the corresponding class in the other areas" of Vietnam,⁷⁸ yet protest was also more widespread there throughout the entire colonial period.⁷⁹ Cochinchinese peasant resistance was accomplished by the Communist Party (which was also active in Nghe An and Ha Tinh) and especially by religious organizations such as the Cao Dai, the Hoa Hao, and the Catholic Church.⁸⁰ These organizations enabled peasants to solve the collective action problem. The leaders of these organizations are described by Popkin as "political entrepreneurs."

Peasants resist exploitation only when they can solve the collective action problem. Problems of collective action are "crucial to the analysis of villages and patron-client

⁷⁵Popkin, Rational Peasant, 38.

⁷⁶Popkin, Rational Peasant, 11.

⁷⁷Popkin, Rational Peasant, 73. Emphasis original.

⁷⁸Popkin, Rational Peasant, 172; see also, *ibid.*, 249.

⁷⁹Popkin, Rational Peasant, 248.

⁸⁰Popkin, Rational Peasant, 184-242.

relations; it is difficult under the best of circumstances to organize peasants to provide collective goods, and the coalitions formed may be precarious."⁸¹ Due to the individual's incentive to defect, collective action is difficult. "As long as the results of contributing to the common goals are common advantages, the peasant may leave the contributions to others and expend his scarce resources in other ways."⁸² Peasants work together against landlords and the state only when the individual gains more than he loses; this often requires special incentives that discourage free-riding.

Special incentives are excludable benefits that could be denied to free riders. For example, peasants who became Catholic were assisted in court by a priest who would plead his case. Conversely, a priest would be unlikely at best to assist a peasant who refused to join the Church.⁸³ Likewise, members of the syncretistic Cao Dai religion could protect their land titles by overriding village officials' opposition to surveying small plots (and thus registering property with colonial authorities.) The Cao Dai could override these objections because sixty percent of their original elite were in the colonial administration. Moreover, peasants could use Cao Dai courts to avoid altogether colonial courts, which were expensive and unreliable.⁸⁴ In both cases, membership in the religion entitled poor peasants to significant institutional benefits which could be excluded to those who failed to tithe or otherwise follow the church's discipline. Popkin brings similar examples to bear from the organizational success of the Communist Party, and a third religious group, the millenarian Buddhist Hoa Hao sect.⁸⁵ In short, all four groups

⁸¹Popkin, Rational Peasant, 25.

⁸²Popkin, Rational Peasant, 253.

⁸³Popkin, Rational Peasant, 192.

⁸⁴Popkin, Rational Peasant, 197-8, 201.

⁸⁵The Communists and the Hoa Hao relied more extensively on the use of violence to extract benefits and enforce discipline.

attracted peasants by helping them to break their dependence on, and control by, large landowners and/or village officials. This was done by providing the peasants with mutually profitable sources of insurance and welfare, and helping them overcome the institutional manipulations of market and bureaucracy that reinforced their dependence.⁸⁶

Thus, religious and political organizations provide the institutional vehicles that enable collective action by reducing the risks for trust. Throughout, peasant rebellion is portrayed as merely one end of a spectrum of collective action.

Cultural values shape the forms of peasant organization, but not the content; culture does not determine what level of income a peasant feels entitled to receive. Thus, contra Scott, he argues

What constitutes a subsistence crisis changes as organizations expand, communications improve, and new skills are developed. . . .
 . . . New conditions, new options, new skills and opportunities can create situations in which long-standing practices come to be viewed as arbitrary, capricious, or intolerable. . . .
 There is no direct relation between short-term subsistence crises and collective action.⁸⁷

Peasants' conceptions of the subsistence level are "endogenous and variable," because peasants constantly seek to raise it. It is a "target income" rather than a norm defined by binding cultural expectations.⁸⁸ As a target, it is defined by the peasants' assessment of his bargaining power vis-a-vis the landlords and state authorities who make claims on his resources. "For the purposes of this study, religious and ideological beliefs are givens that will be evaluated in relation to developing bureaucracies, villages, and organizations."⁸⁹ His definition of culture is unrelated to how peasants define their "needs," i. e., what constitutes a subsistence crisis. Instead, Popkin assumes peasants will

⁸⁶Popkin, Rational Peasant, 185-6.

⁸⁷Popkin, Rational Peasant, 247.

⁸⁸Popkin, Rational Peasant, 72.

⁸⁹Popkin, Rational Peasant, 82.

define as a need whatever they can get. Definitions of subsistence thus lack socially objective content.

Three Modes of Focused Comparison. Popkin uses geographic comparisons to test the elements of his theory, but his comparisons typically fall into three basic kinds. First, he structures his account around a three-fold temporal comparison of Vietnam in the precolonial, colonial, and nationalist eras. Second, he compares the three primary regions of Vietnam, i.e., the relatively modernized and more deeply colonized Cochinchina contrasted with Annam and Tonkin.⁹⁰ Finally, Popkin tests his claims and falsifies those of moral economy by making comparisons between groups with different positions in the social structure, e.g. village citizens versus outsiders, and smallholders versus tenants versus landless laborers. The types of proofs offered by Popkin for free-riding illustrate these different types of comparison.

Cross-temporal comparison is fundamental to the very organization of Popkin's book: chapters 3, 4 and 5 address, respectively, the precolonial, colonial and post-World War II periods. He rebuts Scott's central evidence for the desperation thesis of rebellion—which, as we saw, was grounded in spatial comparisons—with a temporal objection. Specifically, he points out that a more severe famine in Nghe An and Ha Tinh provoked no rebellion at the turn of the century.⁹¹ "The difference between the two reactions was not level of misery: it was organization, particularly communication and coordination."⁹² More generally, Popkin begins his empirical analysis with the precolonial period, because

⁹⁰When Popkin wishes to emphasize the importance of economic environments, he contrasts Cochinchina to the other two regions. When he seeks to show that political structures at the colonial level were not relevant, he contrasts Annam and Tonkin.

⁹¹Scott, however, explicitly asserts the opposite: He says there was, in fact, a rebellion in Nghe An in 1906-7, which was "a lineal ancestor of the 1930-1 revolt." Scott, *Moral Economy*, 128. He further states that 1930-1 was "a famine which even in a land of scarcity was almost without precedent." *Ibid.*, 137.

⁹²Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 248.

by disproving the social welfare and insurance capacity of the traditional village, he can then debunk the causal connections between peasant rebellions and *both* peasant incomes *and* traditional village structures.⁹³ If precolonial villages did not guarantee subsistence, then (a) markets and colonialism did not erode subsistence security, since this was absent to begin with, and (b) peasants later were not rebelling to protect an eroding social contract, since none existed. His ultimate datum for this point is comparative famine rates, which were more higher in the nineteenth century than during the Depression.⁹⁴ In the 1930s and 1940s, peasants rebelled because they were *organizationally capable* of improving their *average incomes*. In short, cross-temporal comparison is used to parse the causal chain and so refute moral economy arguments about the significance of village welfare mechanisms for peasant resistance.

Cross-regional comparison is Popkin's strongest argumentative device. Again and again, he applies the comparative method to the three main regions of Vietnam: Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina. His arguments about the causes of agricultural commercialization and peasant rebellion illustrate his structured use of spatial comparison. The highly structured quality of Popkin's regional comparisons can be formulated in a two-by-two table.

⁹³Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 249.

⁹⁴Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 136.

Figure 4.1—Popkin's Structured Comparisons

		Commercialization	
		Open Villages	Closed Villages
Colonialism	Village Administration Changed	Cochinchina	Tonkin
	Village Administration Stable	X	Annam

Horizontal comparisons between regions with open and closed villages show the positive effects of markets on peasant welfare, while vertical comparisons show that peasant rebellion was not caused by either colonialism or market penetration, since Cochinchina and Annam both experienced rebellion, but differed on both Scott's dependent variables.

Popkin argues that market forces were not imposed on peasant villages from outside, but were the result of peasants responding to different local incentives. To prove this, he contrasts Annam and Tonkin. Yes, he says, village politics in Cochinchina differed from Annam and Tonkin, but not because France had more completely imposed market forces or colonial reforms on Cochinchina, thus destroying a leveling and legitimate village social system. If the immediate cause was colonial reforms of village administration, then Annam and Tonkin—which experienced the same breakdown of village social insurance system—should also have experienced similar colonial reforms. But, Popkin notes,

... the decrees quoted in support of this view is a decree enacted in either Tonkin or Cochinchina. In Annam, however, village administration was left to the notables with virtually no change whatsoever until 1942. Yet the

processes of rural political and economic change in Annam closely parallel those of Tonkin.⁹⁵

And so, the relevant difference between Cochinchina and Annam must lie elsewhere. Neither colonialism nor the commercialization of agriculture " is sufficient . . . to explain why the political structure of Cochinchinese villages developed differently from that in the other regions."⁹⁶ Rather, the difference came from favorable ecology and available land. More even rainfall and a less violent river reduced the need for water storage and flood control structures. "The irrigation system necessary for the stable production of rice differed in Cochinchina from that required in the other areas of the country."⁹⁷ Ample land meant that dissatisfied peasants could simply exit the village. "While 20 to 25 percent of all land in Annam and Tonkin had been communal, distributed by village officials, there had never been more than minimal amounts of such land in Cochinchina."⁹⁸ Together, these factors meant that closed villages were not needed to ensure peasant welfare, nor could village notables use their control of these resources to control peasants. As a result, Cochinchinese peasants more readily embraced production for market than those in Annam and Tonkin.

Regional comparison also bolsters his claim that collective action, not subsistence ethics explains peasant rebellion. He claims, for instance, that the erosion of social justice along with traditional institutions does not account for peasant revolt, because traditional village structures were exploitative. Thus, if peasants were defending traditional

⁹⁵Popkin, Rational Peasant, 138-9. Popkin makes a similar comparison of Annam to Tonkin. "Both the administrative argument and the demographic arguments can be tested by looking at central Annam "which indicates that village notables, not French meddling were responsible for increasing rural land stratification." Ibid., 168.

⁹⁶Popkin, Rational Peasant, 170.

⁹⁷Popkin, Rational Peasant, 172.

⁹⁸Popkin, Rational Peasant, 173.

institutions, then rebellions should not occur in areas where traditional village institutions were intact. But rebellions did occur in Tonkin and Annam, and the Annamite rebellions had wide support, despite traditional structures.⁹⁹ Popkin also claims that low peasant incomes cannot account for rebellion, because peasant incomes in Cochinchina were higher than in Annam and Tonkin.

Although Annam and Tonkin (aside from Nghe An and Ha Tinh) were generally peaceful during the Depression period, there was widespread protest throughout Cochinchina, just as there was far more tumult there during the entire colonial era.¹⁰⁰

When building his own positive argument that highlights the importance of free-riders, he applies the notion of free-riding to successful drives against landowners by tenants. These require that no large class of landless laborers be available to defect. So Popkin compares Cochinchina where this class was absent to Tonkin and Annam, where there was a large landless class.¹⁰¹

Sub-regional Comparisons. As Scott compared the level of unrest within Annam, so Popkin uses subregional comparisons to support his argument that rebellions were not caused by the erosion of pre-capitalist institutions. His comparison is (typically) from Cochinchina:

If peasant protests were defensive reactions to threats posed to "feudal" precapitalist institutions there would be no widespread peasant movement in *areas* where traditional agrarian relations and/or traditional village forms survive intact. In Cochinchina, peasant protests would be a responses to a change from "feudal" landlord-tenant relations . . . to a "more straightforward and more painful cash-nexus contract with little or no social insurance . . ." ¹⁰²

⁹⁹Popkin, Rational Peasant, 245.

¹⁰⁰Popkin, Rational Peasant, 248-9.

¹⁰¹Popkin, Rational Peasant, 256-7.

¹⁰²Popkin, Rational Peasant, 246. *Emphasis added.* The internal quotes are from Scott.

However, this shift was most prominent in eastern Cochinchina, while peasant organization and resistance was greatest in the west of Cochinchina.

In the denser eastern half of Cochinchina, there was just such a change from sharecropping to fixed-rent contracts, with the greater risk and uncertainty absorbed by the tenants. However, the Hoa Hao developed in the newer, less densely populated, western areas of Cochinchina. The Hoa Hao, that is, attracted its following in an area where supposedly legitimate, traditional practices still prevailed.¹⁰³

Thus the Hoa Hao were able to organize tenants in an area of less hardship, precisely because landless laborers whose distress is greater are more likely to free-ride than tenants. Thus, sub-regional comparison disproves the moral economy claim.

Class Comparisons. Finally, Popkin makes comparisons based on different class interests. To prove that free-riding, rather than need, is the controlling factor in peasant protests, he notes that the most oppressed peasants are not the one's most likely to rebel:

The class most threatened by subsistence crises (both short and long run) are the landless agricultural laborers. Were there a direct relation between crisis and activity, this class would be the most active politically . . . Yet the Vietnamese experience confirms the almost universal finding that agricultural laborers are harder to organize or less likely to protest than are tenants, and the tenants, in turn, are often far less active than are landowning middle peasants.¹⁰⁴

In short, a comparison of class fractions is used to bolster the argument about free-riding previously proven through cross-temporal, cross-regional, and sub-regional comparisons.

Conclusion. Popkin's rhetoric is persuasive because it combines the formal articulation of theory with a rigorous use of the comparative method that links general theoretical claims with specific data from regions, classes and time periods. Popkin is very clear on the assumptions of his theory—indeed he takes the theory to consist in its assumptions—and then elaborates what the consequences for empirical work should be. The formal model lays out a credible initial case for the advantages of rational choice

¹⁰³Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 246.

¹⁰⁴Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 250.

analysis over moral economy approaches. The prima facie case is strong because it rests on common sense intuitions about the importance of self-interest in human decision-making. Moreover, by explicitly appealing to a deductive model of social science Popkin appeals to the reader's desire for an account of peasants in Vietnam which can be applied to cases in other places and times. In other words, the deductive approach serves both as a prima facie case and as an appeal to the social scientist's interest in theory per se. Popkin then grounds his deductive theory in empirical data, using a series of structured comparisons—geographically, temporally, and socio-structurally—to organize specific data in ways that seem both rigorous and neutral vis-a-vis his own theoretical position. The overall result is an argument that is consistent with the specific Vietnamese empirical data, yet that is easily applied to other cases.

4.4. Prediction, Intentions, and Comparative Method

My discussion of Scott's and Popkin's argumentative strategies has shown the deep positivist affinities in their work: their commitments to generalizing theory and to grounding such theory by empirical testing. As social scientists, both treat the country study not as a single case, but as a universe of observations that, through comparison at different levels, can document the elements of their overall arguments. Thus, comparative method is used to link general theory to data tied to specific events, procedures and localities. This was a major methodological innovation.

Once we acknowledge their fundamental similarities, we can more clearly see what divides them. As generalizing theorists, their methods are highly dependent on the inherent plausibility of their accounts of human choice. Differing theoretical commitments lead Scott and Popkin to emphasize different aspects of positivist methods. Scott's refusal to adopt an exclusively self-interested paradigm contrasts with Popkin's nearly complete

reduction of all action to self-interest. As a result, they do not rely on focused comparison and "fact-testing" to the same degree. Scott uses a broader variety of facts,¹⁰⁵ but Popkin links empirical data to theory with a more focused and rigorous use of the comparative method. Popkin ultimately relies more on fixed, broad scale comparisons because he is unable to empirically document directly his causal mechanism, which is that peasants are self-interested rational maximizers. Scott, on the other hand, can and does document his causal mechanism, moral outrage.

Positivism, Case Studies and the Comparative Method. Scott and Popkin are both committed to proving general claims by reference to empirical facts, understood as observations about specific persons, events, actions and utterances. They increase the number of these observations by utilizing comparisons that differ in degrees of generality, whether in temporal, spatial, or class-terms. They are not bound to treat "colonial Vietnam" as a single case merely because Vietnam constituted a single nation. Rather than compare Vietnam as whole to other nations, they compare regions within Vietnam to each other, and to foreign regions, as well as pre- and post-colonial situations within and across Vietnam and its different regional and sub-regional components. Their disagreements take place on an argumentative field defined by dueling comparisons.

Scott and Popkin have rendered the case study rigorous because they have integrated the theoretical and comparative dimensions, presenting geographic and temporal variations side by side, within the body of the argument, thus making each comparison a test of the variation's significance. Sub- and cross-national comparisons are a means of increasing observations. In Popkin's case study, extensive comparisons are also made between time periods and class fractions. In general, their multiple levels use of comparison shows that the dichotomy between areas studies particularity and comparative

¹⁰⁵Scott's approach is in this way analogous to Ian Lustick's, discussed in Chapter 2, above.

politics is false. The number of countries in a study has very little to do with a study's theoretical significance.

The works of James Scott and Samuel Popkin are thus a methodological quantum leap beyond the previous standard of excellence in peasant studies, Eric Wolf's Peasant Revolutions of the Twentieth Century. Specifically, they follow Wolf's advice to take the variety of local conditions seriously. Wolf described variations, sometimes at very local levels, but he presented complete national case histories, leaving his comparisons at a separate, macro level. By contrast, Scott and Popkin, link sometimes very local comparisons to the broader claims of their theories.

In so far as their approach relativizes the meaning of a case study, it overcomes objections to small-N studies that were common twenty-five years ago. The advantages of conceptually dissolving the case study into its component observations is the central point made by a number of different commentators that have, in recent years, moved beyond an earlier positivist fixation on large-N studies. The contributors to a volume edited by Ragin and Becker are generally in agreement that what counts as a case depends on one's purpose.¹⁰⁶ "Case" is a role played in an argument, not a quality of the phenomenon studied. In other words, in a case study of Vietnamese peasants, we can look at that as a single instance of a "peasantry", but it is more fruitful for evaluating theory to treat it as a collection of different cases. Depending on what aspects of our argument we are seeking to document, different arrangements of our observations are called for, and each is appropriate.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶Charles Ragin and Howard Becker, eds., What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁰⁷There are (at least) two interesting variations on this line of argument.

For a defense of disaggregating the case study because this more easily enables one to falsify the historiographical grounds for social theoretical claims, see Ian Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias," American Political Science Review 90 (September 1996): 605-618.

In similar fashion, King, Keohane and Verba have defended this perspective. They present a sophisticated formal model that defends the utility of case studies.¹⁰⁸ They argue that while examining a single case increases the chance of random variation, thus making it a less "efficient" estimator of expected variables, large-N studies entail less familiarity by researchers, who thus will probably need to rely on measures that could be systematically biased. Thus they note that, if the phenomenon studied is subject to factors

that make the measure likely to be far from the true value (i. e., the estimator has high variance) . . . and we have some understanding . . . of what these factors might be [and]. . . our ability to observe and correct for these factors decreases substantially with the increase in the number of communities studied . . . We are then faced with a trade-off between a case study that has additional observations internal to the case and [say] twenty-five cases in which each contains only one observation . . . [We] could collect far more than twenty-five observations within the one community and generate a study that is also not biased and *more* efficient than the twenty-five community study.¹⁰⁹

In their analysis "efficiency" has the technical meaning of random variation and "bias" refers to systematic bias. Although inference based on a single case necessarily has more random variation than inference based on twenty-five cases, intensive study enables one to correct for both random and systematic variation. As they astutely remark, the argument for case studies by area specialists is

often just the one implicit in the previous example. Large-scale studies may depend upon numbers that are not well understood by the naive researcher working on a data base . . . The researcher working closely with the

Collier and Collier make an interesting and self-conscious use of comparison in their eight-case analysis of regime change in Latin America. They balance a four-fold comparative model with a recognition of the ways their cases differ from their model's primary thrust, thus combining the features of a "most-similar" and a "most-different" research design. David Collier and Ruth Berins Collier, Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement and Regime Dynamics in Latin America, 17, Table 0.1.

¹⁰⁸Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994), 67-74.

¹⁰⁹King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, 67-8.

necessary materials and understanding their origin may be able to make the necessary corrections.¹¹⁰

If the theoretical value of case studies is now widely accepted, this is due in no small measure to the example of the Scott-Popkin debate.

Substantive Theory Shapes Usage of Comparison. While Scott and Popkin were both innovators in the application of the comparative method to case studies, comparison itself nonetheless plays a less crucial role in Scott's work than in Popkin's, because Scott can call on evidence that Popkin cannot: first person testimony of peasant intention. Popkin's highly deductive theoretical style—and the Friedmanesque philosophy of social science that supports it—are ultimately an attempt to cope with this singular fact.

Three Characteristic Grounds in Scott's Argument. Scott uses utterances, behavior, and the generic plausibility of his model to ground his understanding of peasant action, both in peasant preferences for tax and tenure systems, and in collective resistance.

First, Scott implicitly relies on the inherent plausibility of his model: In order to believe Scott, one needs to find his model of the traditional village credible. This requires that one believe that public-collective interests have an autonomous causal power but are grounded in self-interest, and that all value conflicts are interested and all conflicts of interest are about values. His explanations have a prima facie credibility that stems from his audience's common sense understanding of human motivations. This credibility has two related aspects. First, his core concept just seems like a strong foundation for an explanation. Central to this is the bivalence of the concept of need. Scott explains action in terms that blur interest and value. For him, anyone's reason for doing something is simultaneously value and interest, both calculation and affect. This conforms to an insight that every reader brings from life: that people usually feel entitled to what they need. Moreover, when the interest involved is survival, people are especially self-righteous about

¹¹⁰King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, 69.

defending their interest, and especially angry if vital self-interests are threatened.

Secondly, this enables him to handle the distance between researcher and research subject well. He makes us see Southeast Asian peasants as both different from and similar to us. Although we are not in danger of starving, we can imagine how we would feel under that condition, as our reactions combine both moral anger and determined commitment to self-preservation.

Second, Scott's theory tells him when he should expect peasants to rebel, what tax systems they should shirk, and which choices to make among types of crops and land-tenure systems. As we saw in section I, finding examples of these behaviors under the expected conditions is central to Scott's effectiveness as a researcher. These examples are set within a variety of comparative frames.

Finally, Scott finds direct evidence of a peasant "subsistence ethic" in a number of ways. Most ingeniously, he documents this ethic through their folk culture, e. g., in songs, in stories, in rituals, as well as in explicit statements by the leaders of peasant revolts. For example, he quotes a Vietnamese peasant folk song of the 1920s and 1930s which reveals bitterness at "rapacious notables" who, the song says, "Make the poor bear all the charges of the state."¹¹¹ While recognizing that it is impossible to definitively ascertain the intentions of any actor, Scott believes that ethnographic and historical evidentiary techniques can document peasant intentions with significant reliability. When he argues that "the colonial leviathan seemed often to inspire a certain hysteria by the very scope of its taxes,"¹¹² he then quotes "the 'Asia Ballad,' popular in Vietnamese nationalist circles at the Tonkin Free School in 1907," and hysterical rumors during the Saminist revolt in Java that there would be new taxes on "the burial of the dead, on bathing

¹¹¹Scott, *Moral Economy*, 236.

¹¹²Scott, *Moral Economy*, 94.

buffaloes in the stream, on traveling on the road, and so on."¹¹³ Not only does Scott use the voice of the peasant both by direct quotation, but he also utilizes it subtly, by mimicking it:

In the case of forests and streams, the state seemed to be taxing the free gifts of nature. Where would it stop? If the state could tax firewood and fish, why not the banana tree by the house, or the peasant's clothes, or the very air he breathed? . . .

Nothing seemed immune from taxation . . .¹¹⁴

Finally, he even uses an opinion survey of Philippine cultivators from the 1970s.¹¹⁵ Strictly speaking, the survey is irrelevant to the case, but it bears on his Vietnamese claims analogically. This analogy works since his notion of peasant attitudes is so economically grounded. In short, Scott's model rests on three kinds of evidence: behavior, direct evidence of peasant intentions, and the inherent attractiveness of the way he describes peasant intentionality.

Only Two Characteristic Grounds in Popkin's Work. By contrast, Popkin uses only the first two types of grounds: predicted behavior and the generic plausibility of interested choice. In order to believe Popkin, one needs to entertain the notion that self-interest is more important than public or collective interests in dictating political outcomes. The credibility of this warrant is over-determined. First, no one who studies politics or social conflict has ever, to my knowledge, claimed that all choices are altruistic. Second, most of us would readily agree that selfishness seems more prevalent than altruism. Third, economics, having attained great predictive power also grounds the claim that peasants are rational maximizers. Finally, living in the free market 1990s, the centrality of instrumental self-interested choice appears almost self-evident. Moreover, Popkin acknowledges, in

¹¹³Scott, *Moral Economy*, 95.

¹¹⁴Scott, *Moral Economy*, 95.

¹¹⁵Scott, *Moral Economy*, 50.

principle, the limits of rational choice. He denies that his model entails a belief that all choice is self-interested,¹¹⁶ and he acknowledges cultural factors that are "exogenous" to his model. Thus, his model rests on the common sense notion that "most" people act "mostly" from self-interest when deciding how to act.¹¹⁷

While this is appealing to the cynic in all of us, thick rationality premises require that we see norms as so ineffective as to be irrelevant. For Popkin, the irrelevance of norms is demonstrated by documenting the behavior expected by his model. He does this in two ways: through comparison and by indirect measures. Key indirect measures include: (a) income levels, which were lower before colonialism, and (b) famines, which were more frequent before the breakdown of the traditional village moral economy. Yet these indirect measures are inconclusive when taken alone. Scott repeatedly notes that average income levels do not reflect the increasing variability of peasant incomes. Moreover, he directly disputes Popkin's point about famines, at the fact level, arguing that "the overwhelming weight of evidence suggests . . . that the average per capita consumption of rice had been tending to decline since 1913."¹¹⁸ Finally, Scott argues against the measure itself, acknowledging that a traditional moral economy could not protect whole communities from starving during regional famines which were more

¹¹⁶"In adopting an economic approach I am adopting a method. It should be clear that I am *not* committing myself to the view that individuals are solely concerned with material commodities or money outcomes . . . Many person equate rationality and self-interest—with self-interest defined as 'interest only in one's own welfare.' I most emphatically deny that persons are self-interested in this narrow sense." Popkin, Rational Peasant, 31. Emphasis original.

¹¹⁷"I do assume that a peasant is *primarily* concerned with the welfare and security of self and family. Whatever his broad values and objectives . . . he will *usually* act in a self-interested manner." Popkin, Rational Peasant, 31. Emphasis added.

¹¹⁸Scott, Moral Economy, 106-7. He further argues that "the evidence suggests that the real per capita income of Southeast Asian peasants did not increase between 1910 and 1929 and may very well have decreased between 1900 and 1940." *Ibid.*, 56, n. 1. As I am neither an expert in Vietnam nor in peasants studies, I am not qualified to adjudicate their dispute over the facts themselves.

common before colonialism created "the transportation networks and political capacity that could move grain from surplus to deficit areas, thereby easing the threat of local famine."¹¹⁹

Comparisons test Popkin's predictions that peasants will prefer arrangements that maximize their income, taking into account the discount entailed by risk. As we saw in section II, Popkin argues that peasants will prefer markets when they can benefit from them, as in Cochinchina. And they will organize under certain conditions, which translates into specific times and places. Thus, in Cochinchina where they were less at the mercy of landlords, due to greater marketization, they will organize more. Because the indirect measures are in dispute, the brunt of Popkin's empirical proof relies on structured comparisons.

Why Popkin Cannot Rely on Direct Evidence of Intentions. In short, Scott grounds all elements of his theory, including peasant motivations, while Popkin seeks only to ground his predictions about behavior of actors. This difference is rooted in the practical research problem that people are reluctant to admit selfish motivations. Popkin is highly unlikely to find such evidence on the part of peasants (or landlords for that matter), since public discourses must always refer to common goods and values rather than the interests of particular groups.¹²⁰ People are reluctant to ascribe to themselves selfish motives, even when they are acting on the basis of self-interest, since it serves their self-interest to treat public discourse strategically. Their best strategy for fighting landlords is to invoke the dominant ideology, which in almost all cases justifies social arrangements on the basis of values rather than interests. In Gramscian terms, subalterns (and everyone else) fight wars

¹¹⁹Scott, *Moral Economy*, 56.

¹²⁰Marxism is an interesting exception. Although it is class interests that are validated not individual interests, it justifies the interests of rising classes when they act for themselves, e. g., it validates action by the proletariat for itself. But even here, Marxist theory justifies class struggle on the grounds that particular classes move the historical process forward, ultimately to a class-less society, i. e., the proletariat is a "universal" class.

of position by invoking dominant ideologies rather than self-interests.¹²¹ Popkin thus is unlikely to find direct evidence for his causal mechanism.

Unable to find such direct evidence at the individual level, Popkin relies on predictions about behavior to ground his theory. Since this inability is endemic to models based solely on self-interested choice, I believe this accounts for a general disinterest in proving intentions on the part of rational choice theorists. A typical example is Ferejohn's and Fiorina's work on voting. Their real disinterest

in the descriptive accuracy of their rationality model at the individual level (compared to their real interest in the explanation of patterns of aggregate data) is apparent from the fact that no evidence to test their argument is sought or given from cognitive psychology, survey research about subjectively experienced rationales for voting, or reporting of the authors' own experience of voting.¹²²

Their disinterest stems from the fact that the individual level tests of subjective intentions do not—arguably can never—ground a theory of rational voting. Norms of citizenship dictate that voting is a duty. Either voters do not acknowledge their self-interested, instrumental intentions when they go to the voting booth, or they are simply reluctant to admit them. In either case, a rational choice model of voting is left to find its grounds in aggregate behavior rather than in individual level data.

This evidentiary predicament applies to topics as diverse as peasant resistance, international relations, voting, and interethnic conflict. While Friedmanesque behaviorism does cope with this difficulty, practitioners of rational choice will always be vulnerable when their opponents demand direct evidence of the self-interest causal mechanism. In the view of King, Keohane, and Verba,

identifying the mechanisms by which a cause has its effect often builds support for a theory and is a very useful operational procedure. Identifying

¹²¹Ironically, Scott himself has offered this line of argument in Domination and the Arts of Resistance: The Hidden Transcripts.

¹²²Ian Lustick, "Culture and the Wager of Rational Choice." APSA-CP 8:2 (Summer 1997).

causal mechanisms can sometimes give us more leverage over a theory by making observations at a different level of analysis into the implications of a theory.¹²³

Rational choice theories by their very nature identify causal mechanisms that are highly unlikely to yield testable implications at the level of discourse. (The paradox is that unfalsifiability through citation of utterances is a tacit acknowledgment that the autonomous power of discourse is not reducible to individual motives per se.)

Thus, while rational choice *theory* is individualist, rational choice *methodology* (in the strict sense) is collectivist.¹²⁴ Rational choice is both a substantive theory and a methodology because it asserts the existence of a universal (or nearly so) causal mechanism. The mechanism of self-interested instrumental rationality generates both substantive claims about social phenomena, and entails a warranting strategy that treats shared interests and norms as problematic. "Methodological individualism," however, is a misnomer, because the term conflates the theoretical and evidentiary aspects of rational choice approaches. As Popkin's inability (and indifference) to documenting peasant intentions shows, the grounds for accepting this causal mechanism are overwhelmingly at the macro-level, not at the level of individuals. Ian Lustick describes the situation succinctly:

The analytic wager represented by . . . most formal theories of rationality is that despite their inability to illuminate behavior at the individual level, analysts using such theories can account for aggregate behavior by *pretending* their models have verisimilitude at the individual level and by relying on market mechanisms and the laws of large numbers to produce distributions of outcomes *conforming to* predictions.¹²⁵

¹²³King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, 86-7.

¹²⁴This indifference is common among rational choice theorists, especially the more sophisticated, who defend rational choice theory on instrumentalist or predictivist philosophy of science grounds. Jeffrey Friedman, "Introduction," in *The Rational Choice Controversy: Economic Models of Politics Reconsidered*, ed. Jeffrey Friedman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 1-24.

¹²⁵Ian Lustick, "Culture and the Wager of Rational Choice," *APSA-CP* 8:2 (Summer 1997). Emphasis added.

This is precisely Popkin's wager in *The Rational Peasant*, except he uses the comparative method rather than statistical measures to prove his behavioral predictions accurate at the aggregate level.

The Needs of a Theory Structure Comparison More or Less. Unable to document his causal mechanism, Popkin is forced to rely on the comparative method in a more structured way than Scott, both temporally and geographically.¹²⁶ Popkin relies heavily on the structured comparison of the three regions of Vietnam. Scott uses geographic comparison, but most commonly by citing examples from other countries, regions and historical eras. Explicit comparisons between regions are relatively infrequent compared to his many more short-term, local, and unstructured comparisons.

Likewise, Scott's temporal comparisons revolve around changes in peasant welfare over short periods of time, from the mid-nineteenth century through the Great Depression. For example, he argues that taxes were central to peasant grievances, and hence to the Depression Rebellions, because they began in 1930, and the only significant change to the peasant income was an increase in colonial head taxes. Popkin, by contrast, makes his comparisons in three distinct stated periods, e.g. the pre-colonial (chapter 3), colonial (chapter 4), and post-colonial (chapter 5).

Even so, structured temporal comparisons are essential to both their arguments, because each is making a causal claim, which usually entails a claim about the order of events. (See chapter 3, above). It is for this reason that Popkin, whose argument appeared after Scott's, devotes such energy to presenting the traditional village as inequalitarian and failing to provide welfare guarantees. Peasants cannot plausibly be seen as preferring traditional tenure arrangements because those arrangements did not provide meaningful

¹²⁶Popkin does this for a second reason: his data is limited to Vietnam, so he cannot use cross-national data to bolster his claims the way Scott does by showing similar differences between Burma and Vietnam, i. e., Lower Burma resembled Cochinchina the way Upper Burma resembled Annam and Tonkin.

guarantees of welfare for the most needy. And, as a logical consequence, if they do not prefer the traditional moral economy of the village, they cannot be outraged into rebellion over the destruction of that social order.¹²⁷ There can be no cause and effect relationship if no systematic before and after difference is observable.

Conclusion. Their different usages of comparison thus ultimately come back to the kinds of data they can use to defend their claims. Having different substantive theories closes off certain kinds of data for defending social theoretic claims, and this affects, in a profound manner, standards of theory testing. Lacking any ability to test human motivations, Popkin implicitly understands theory as inherently oversimplifying, indeed, as (strictly speaking) false. Consequently, validity can only be grounded by accurately predicting behavior. I believe this is what Popkin means when he states that his economic approach is "a method." The validity of his model is to be found in the empirical consequences for behavior, but not in the psychology that undergirds it theoretically: Popkin calls these "assumptions," because they cannot be tested in themselves. At least in Scott's case, Popkin's deductive repackaging does an injustice to moral economy, not merely in oversimplifying it, since Scott's claims about peasants' intentions are not simply axioms in a model, but empirical claims that can be directly tested. Scott has this evidence, and Popkin never addresses it. Scott seeks evidence for all parts of his theoretical claim, including the actors' motivations that form the causal mechanism of his model. Scott can afford to be less rigorous in his proofs by comparison, since he has three legs of evidence, while Popkin, only two: Popkin lacks an evidentiary strategy of directly testing peasant intentionality, being only able to test it inferentially. In short, Scott's kind of social science

¹²⁷Interestingly, this is one of Popkin's few uses of peasant utterances to disprove Scott. Specifically he argues that the North Annamite and Cochinchinese rebellions of 1930-1, could not have been aimed at defending the traditional moral economy, since they were explicitly anti-feudal: they were self-styled "soviets." Popkin, Rational Peasant, 247-8, 251.

allows for more direct ways of testing intentionality. Scott's argument is thus not only explanatory but descriptive as well.

This methodological difference is rooted in substantive conceptual choice. But these conceptual choices only produce a behaviorist-discursive divide because Popkin's conceptual framework lacks the kind of bivalence that typifies Scott's. There is nothing comparable to the concept of need. Although we all recognize self-interested instrumental rationality in ourselves, Popkin cannot test intentions because his univocal framework reduces all action to this single motivation, leaving no room for him to acknowledge other equally self-evident human motivations, such as the desire to hold social actors to moral standards.

4.5. The Problematic of Collective Action

What follows will show that while both the moral economy and rational choice approaches have heuristic value, neither can do full justice to the complexity of social life. In particular, the rational choice approach cannot account for the very social-ness of the precolonial village and peasant rebellion. At different points, Popkin's univocal framework forces him to ignore important aspects of behavior by local elites in the traditional village, by the leaders who organize peasants against local elites (and the colonial state) in the colonial period, and by peasants themselves in choosing to rebel. By the same token, Scott's approach fails to acknowledge the fragility of peasant efforts to secure their rights and the very limited scope of the social insurance provided by traditional villages.

Both sets of lacunae have an essential role in the explanation of any action that we can generally call political, in the practical sense that politics is about communities acting corporately to influence their shared life. Shared comparative method enables us to

examine the specific logic of Scott's and Popkin's arguments, and see how they rely on implicit warrants that are contained in their theoretical starting points. Ultimately, their arguments about the structural impact of colonialism and the commercialization of agriculture rest on deeper causal assumptions about the role of culture and interests in peasant decision-making. The theory implied in their empirical claims about peasant welfare and resistance is the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

After laying out the rational choice critique of moral economy in this section, the next two sections go on to examine these issues in detail. Section V calibrates the heuristic value of Popkin's "methodological" individualism in critiquing and bracketing the generality of Scott's claims about the power of shared interests in the traditional village. Section 4.7 then shows how Popkin's and Scott's theories account for highly distinct types of peasant collective action and that these theories are actually complementary. Building on these substantive differences, the conclusion addresses the political ramifications of their differences for the science of politics.

The Rationalist Critique of Collective Action. Rational choice holds that the interests of members of a group, class, or community do not necessarily account for the collective action that serves those groups, classes, or communities. "Collective action requires more than consensus or even intensity of need. It requires conditions under which peasants will find it in their individual interests to allocate resources to their common interests—and not be free riders."¹²⁸ Because rational choice problematizes the agency of collective interest, it problematizes the whole notion of a class. Instead, a class then takes on the much more limited notion of "all individuals similarly situated," as in American law. Even when this similar situation entails common interests, the concept lacks the Marxist promise that a "class-in-itself" will become a "class-for-itself." The evidentiary standards

¹²⁸Popkin, Rational Peasant, 253.

that define a class-for-itself depend on examining the constraints that operate at the micro-level, not just the costs and benefits to members of the group.¹²⁹

For not discussing this problem, Popkin accuses Scott of equating individual with class morality:

When a direct link is made between individual morality and the morality of a class, the implicit assumption is that peasants are easily motivated to uphold norms and support one another by individual action; they are assumed to be willing to devote time and resources to common efforts for the good of their class.¹³⁰

According to Popkin, Scott assumes that peasant self-interest automatically translates into effective collective interest (and hence action).

At key points in their analysis, moral economists make direct predictions about village outcomes from their assumptions about shared individual goals. . . [S]ince every peasant is assumed by moral economists to be interested in minimizing risk or maximizing security, it is further assumed from this common individual goal that *villages* also will operate to minimize risk or maximize security. These direct leaps from common interest assume, in effect, a collective rationality among the peasantry.¹³¹

Popkin correctly points out the close linkages that moral economists like Scott make between individual and collective interest. However, such linkages need not be ungrounded assumptions; the data, as we shall see, are mixed. Moreover, solutions to the collective action problem can take a variety of distinct forms: while some explanations rely on a notion of norms that comes close to being "collective rationality," Scott's analysis includes causal accounts that rely on both social disciplines and effective institutions, neither of which entails strong claims about cognitive states.

¹²⁹Methodologically, rational choice approaches hold that determining people's interests does not require proving collective action on their behalf. Thus, absence of rebellion does not mean peasant interests are satisfied. Scott would agree with this "anti-warrant," since it denies the notion of false consciousness.

¹³⁰Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 252.

¹³¹Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 38. Emphasis original.

To illustrate the degree to which moral economy's emphasis on collective agency obscures the potentials and obstacles to peasant welfare, I shall compare how well different aspects of Scott's argument withstand Popkin's rational choice critique, e. g., his accounts of the traditional village, peasant rebellion, and the colonial state. In all three areas, Scott's approach can, on its own terms, withstand the rational choice critique, either because a strong micro-level mechanism is described, because strong institutions act as unitary actors, or because expressive action does not entail the kinds of collective action problems that instrumental action does. However, Popkin's rational choice critique highlights the problems of a group, class or community realizing itself as a coherent actor.

4.6. Norms, Collective Agency and Precolonial Villages

Scott and Popkin disagree on the degree and nature of exploitation in the precolonial village. While they discuss the same data, they interpret it differently. While Popkin aims to refute Scott's interpretation, in fact, what he does is to highlight aspects of the traditional village which Scott downplays: its inequality and inefficiency. Although Scott acknowledges the traditional village's inequality, he makes little or no mention of its inefficiency, which in the long-term lowered peasant welfare.

Subsistence Floors and Inequality. Scott claims that a moral economy existed in the precolonial, corporate, closed villages of Vietnam and Burma. By this he means that the economic self-interest of wealthy villagers was constrained by communal norms of reciprocity and the subsistence ethic. He grounds that claim in the social discipline imposed on landlords living in closed communities. For example, "the abrasive force of gossip and envy" led the wealthy to hold lavish public feasts, to forgo rents when harvests

were poor, and to give alms to poor families. Likewise, villages periodically distributed communal lands to the poor.¹³²

Popkin's criticism is that the micro-processes which Scott alleges ensured subsistence were not, in fact, leveling. In contrast to Scott who sees feasts by the wealthy as redistributive, Popkin argues that the cost of giving feasts barred poor villagers from positions of authority, since sponsorship of feasts was a requirement for membership on the village council. And membership on the council conferred economic benefits.¹³³ In particular, village notables enjoyed privileges during the distribution of communal lands. He argues that, apart from widows, orphans and the aged without children,

communal lands were distributed not according to need, but ascriptively, on the basis of rank within the village. Villagers, that is, chose on the basis of rank. The council of notables supervised the distribution and also had first choice of select plots of communal land.¹³⁴

Moreover, this ranking system formed an important device in the village financing of such projects as waterworks. Some methods were redistributive—such as the very wealthy "buying posterity" by donating land for temple offerings—but the ranking system itself was not, since money for collective goods was often raised by the selling of higher rank on the village ladder. According to Popkin this is regressive since a key incentive to purchase rank was the better land it enabled a peasant to receive when communal lands were allocated.¹³⁵ He concludes: "This suggests that neither the force of gossip and envy nor the desire for prestige or posterity was sufficient to guarantee adequate donations from

¹³²Scott, Moral Economy, 5.

¹³³Popkin's characterization is imprecise. His analysis does not show that that the communal feasts were in themselves redistributive, because the feasts could be locally redistributive, even though they were part of a social system which was, in global terms, stratifying.

¹³⁴Popkin, Rational Peasant, 101.

¹³⁵Popkin's distinction between the sale of rank and "buying posterity" depends on a distinction between economic and non-economic goods that he elsewhere rejects: Buying posterity can only be redistributive (compared to buying rank) if keeping temples and offering ancestor worship to dead notables is not of value.

wealthy villagers . . ."¹³⁶ However, poor villagers still received an allocation of land, and the obligations associated with the position of notables were, in Popkin's own words, "heavy and forced them to share some of their wealth with the community."¹³⁷

Popkin's criticism—that "corporate villages need not be leveling or egalitarian"¹³⁸—is technically beside the point, because Scott's point is more complicated: *despite* inequality, a floor was maintained.¹³⁹ The traditional village was hardly egalitarian, yet it still provided a basic assurance that no peasant would starve. Thus, there is a significant difference between social welfare and insurance functions: it is quite possible for a system to guarantee a minimum income (social insurance) while reducing the peasant's overall welfare (the social welfare function). These arrangements are "imply only that all are entitled to a *living* out of the resources of the village, and that living is attained often at the cost of a loss of status and autonomy."¹⁴⁰ Popkin conflates these two facts, arguing that because the traditional village was inegalitarian, it didn't provide social insurance. Redistribution of resources did go on, and the only dispute is over how much.

Scott's causal chain does not presume anything about the individual motives of those constrained by these norms, only that they heeded them: He does not assume a "collective rationality among the peasantry." In this way, Scott's argument is defensible against a realist-objectivist critique of the notion of norms. Stephen Turner, for one, has

¹³⁶Popkin, Rational Peasant, 102.

¹³⁷Popkin, Rational Peasant, 93.

¹³⁸Popkin, Rational Peasant, 99. Elsewhere Popkin repeats the same point, noting that "stratification does exist in precapitalist society," and colonialism and capitalism "exacerbate, but they do not create economic competition and stratification." *Ibid.*, 61, 62. Scott would not disagree.

¹³⁹Scott, Moral Economy, 36-7.

¹⁴⁰Popkin, Rational Peasant, 5. *Emphasis original.*

made this critique.¹⁴¹ Turner argues against the notion of practice as a set of shared presuppositions that constrain and enable social action, because we have no independent evidence for people's internal thought processes or motivations except their behavior. Turner argues, instead, for the notion of habit, understood as external behavior that conforms to social conditioning, but need not entail any claim about individual motivations. Scott's analysis of the power of gossip is an example of such conditioning that does not rely on a claim that landlords bought into the subsistence ethic.¹⁴² The power of gossip could plausibly be strong indeed, since (as Popkin candidly informs us) precolonial villages were quite small, consisting of only three hundred to a thousand persons.¹⁴³ In such a small community the power of informal sanctions could indeed be very controlling. This attention to micro-level mechanisms distinguishes Scott's work from the more culturalist versions of moral economy which Popkin finds easier to critique, such as that of Karl Polanyi.

Because Scott's mechanism for effective premodern social norms is clear and intuitively plausible, Popkin's micro-political analysis is not enough: he would need to destroy the very empirical grounds for Scott's claim of effective subsistence norms. Since Scott acknowledges severe inequality and the occurrence of regional famines that overwhelmed the social insurance offered by the traditional moral economy, Popkin cannot show that traditional social obligations were totally ineffective. The upshot of his critique is thus only to show how high a price peasants paid for those guarantees in the coin of

¹⁴¹Stephen Turner, The Social Theory of Practices: Norms, Tacit Knowledge and Presuppositions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

¹⁴²Actually, Turner's claim is too strong, as the Scott example shows: the disciplining power of gossip is grounded in the claim that people wish to avoid having their neighbors say bad things about them. This too is a claim about cognitive states.

¹⁴³Popkin, Rational Peasant, 88.

inequality, a point that does not so much refute Scott as complement and define the parameters of his analysis.

Inefficiency in the Moral Economy. In his effort to show that precolonial villages failed to provide subsistence guarantees, Popkin does make a strong case that collective action problems reduced peasant welfare significantly. That is to say: the moral economy was riddled with such mistrust that free rider problems prevented necessary communal investments. As a result, even conceding that peasants only starved during regional famines, they starved more often, despite subsistence "guarantees." Scott fails to consider this.

Popkin argues that peasant welfare in precolonial villages was low, because it improved during the colonial period—despite the loss of moral economy. He proves this through his comparison of precolonial and colonial famine rates.

[D]emographic data clearly support the argument that the colonial era (until World War II) was one of fewer extreme crisis years for the peasantry than before the advent of the French—that is, there were fewer years in which hunger was not only constant and painful, but actually killing.¹⁴⁴

Although under colonial rule many peasants were forced to desperate measures, the population grew rapidly, infant mortality declined still more quickly, and deaths from cholera became less frequent. In short, the number of crisis years decreased.¹⁴⁵

Popkin explains this macro-level phenomenon by citing the benefits of political stability due to a strong state, even when that state was colonial and rapacious. More importantly, welfare improved because "village institutions work less well than [moral economists] maintain, in large part because of conflicts between individual and group interests. . ."¹⁴⁶ These conflicts lead peasant villages to choose sub-optimal cultivating

¹⁴⁴Popkin, Rational Peasant, 136.

¹⁴⁵Popkin, Rational Peasant, 137.

¹⁴⁶Popkin, Rational Peasant, 17.

techniques and under-invest in public works that would raise overall income. For example, Popkin reinterprets one of Scott's first examples of peasant risk-aversiveness: scattered plots.¹⁴⁷ By widely scattering their croplands, peasants reduce the risk that a single flood or blight would destroy their whole crop. "The scattering of plots substantially reduces the maximum damage that small local disasters or climactic variations can cause in a given season."¹⁴⁸ Popkin and Scott agree that this protection reduces the yield per farmer and for the village as a whole, because more cropland is devoted to paths and boundaries and more time is spent in traveling to distant plots. Popkin insightfully notes that insurance against these risks could be achieved through village institutions—if they were workable.

If there had been widespread trust among all peasants and within the village leadership, and if a reliable, low-cost insurance system had existed at the village level, then an integrated system of holding could have resulted in a higher yield for everyone, every year. It was clearly more important, however, to assure a guaranteed minimum at the family level than to maximize production for the village. The risks and costs of such a villagewide system apparently outweighed the gains.¹⁴⁹

In short, the peasant's risk-aversiveness only produces a pattern of suboptimal agricultural choices when it combines with his inability to work collectively.

A more purely political example is under-investment in collective goods (such as irrigation works) by traditional villages. "[The] systems for raising money to finance village projects in Vietnam were consistently manipulated by village leaders to make a personal profit for themselves at the expense of the village treasury."¹⁵⁰ As a result, villagers were reluctant to pay for "communal" projects. Over the long term, villages thus tended to invest in projects only when the benefit was direct, tangible and visible.

¹⁴⁷Scott, Moral Economy, 5.

¹⁴⁸Popkin, Rational Peasant, 49.

¹⁴⁹Popkin, Rational Peasant, 105.

¹⁵⁰Popkin, Rational Peasant, 56.

Consequently, many public works went unbuilt, even though they would have improved agricultural production for every one in the village. Popkin proves this point by showing how rapidly religious groups like the Catholic Church, the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao were able to increase peasant welfare by providing institutions that could pool collective resources and raise income levels. If norms of the traditional village had been effective, there would have been no need for political entrepreneurs to overcome mistrust by "marketing" these new value-systems.

Popkin also points out how the traditional village reduced even those *individual* investments that would improve production. Apparently, landlords refused to allow tenants to make improvements in their rental property, if such payments could in any way be construed as implying a long-term or permanent right to tenancy.¹⁵¹ Thus, the patrimonial relationships that Scott sees as guaranteeing subsistence are seen by Popkin as reducing long-term income for the sake of preserving the poor peasant's dependency on his richer neighbor.

All in all, the micro-mechanisms Scott describes at work in the precolonial village answer Popkin's demand for a solution to the collective action problem. But Popkin rightly emphasizes the built-in exploitation and inefficiency of the traditional village. The subsistence guarantees that Scott describes are actually quite minimal. Popkin's achievement is to show how minimal Scott's claims ultimately are.

¹⁵¹Popkin, Rational Peasant, 208-9.

4.7. Norms, Collective Agency, and Rebellion: Expressive versus Instrumental

Action

Popkin's most effective criticisms concern Scott's account of peasant rebellion, revealing important and overlooked dimensions of resistance. Scott claims that the breakdown of traditional moral economy leads to peasant revolt. Popkin shows that need alone does not explain peasant resistance, at least in the time period he focuses on, and that successful resistance by peasants required organizations that paid attention to select incentives and individual interests. Scott persuades as much as he does because the forms of peasant rebellion he describes are not instrumental, but expressive. Popkin's account of peasant rebellion, by contrast, highlights only those peasant movements that succeeded in improving peasant welfare. In short, Scott and Popkin disagree about the causes of peasant resistance because their arguments describe different forms of resistance, even to the point where they use different cases to prove their models—the Depression Rebellions versus peasant organizing between 1945 and 1955. In terms of causes, Scott and Popkin divide along the polarity of discourse-interest; in terms of effects, they divide along the polarity of spontaneous versus organized resistance; and, in data, they divide along pre- and post-Depression resistance. Their theories are, in fact, complementary.

Spontaneous Revolt, Norms, and Expressive Action. Scott implies that social norms are capable of organizing poor peasants if the norm is clearly violated in the same way for a large number of individuals.

The fact that agrarian revolt involves substantial numbers of peasants acting simultaneously out of anger suggests what forms of exploitation are most explosive. At a minimum, we would expect that an increase in exploitation that touches many peasants similarly, that is sudden, and that threatens existing subsistence arrangements would be especially volatile.¹⁵²

¹⁵²Scott, Moral Economy, 193.

As this quotation indicates, Scott does rely on a simple aggregation of individual peasants' outrage into collective (but not very organized) peasant mob action. Clear and obvious violation of the subsistence ethic leads to rebellion. Why, in this case, does Scott feel it unnecessary to address the contradiction between individual and collective interests?

The answer seems to be that here Scott's claim focuses on expressive rather than instrumental action.

In anything less than a concentration camp context, the coincidence of severe hunger with available stocks of food in the possession of landowners or the state is a call to action. . . the onset of hunger in most societies, whether Annam or seventeenth-century England, leads not to listlessness but rather to rage.¹⁵³

Because rebellions are expressions of peasant anger and outrage, normal calculations of benefit do not apply. The immediate cause (although not the ultimate cause) is violation of the subsistence ethic, not subsistence itself. The violation of the norm is what calls forth action, rather than the interest. For this reason, it is the *moral grievance rather than the interested goal* that structures action. And since the moral grievance is shared, action simply aggregates. "Regardless of the particular form it takes, collective peasant violence is structured in part by a moral vision, derived from experience and tradition, of the mutual obligations of classes in society."¹⁵⁴ As he describes the Depression Rebellions, the revolts consisted of action by crowds. These revolts were typified by the characteristic behaviors exhibited of those mobs: destroying local property records in colonial courthouses, and then later, seizing land expropriated by landlords. In short, Scott's account of peasant rebellion describes a shared collective response, not an instrumental activity that requires coordination and organization.

¹⁵³Scott, *Moral Economy*, 191.

¹⁵⁴Scott, *Moral Economy*, 192.

Scott's argument for the normative impulse to peasant rebellion leans heavily on the timing and form of the rebellions themselves. In the first part of the rebellions, collective action consisted in spontaneous peasant crowds that presented petitions for tax relief, and then, when their demands were not met, the seizure of government offices. The first act of open revolt was usually the refusal to pay head tax. Because increased taxes were the immediate cause of change in the subsistence equation, the first object of spontaneous peasant wrath was tax records and courthouses.¹⁵⁵ The timing of rebellions shows that the straw that broke the camel's back for most peasants was invariant taxation policies. Moreover, Scott shows that in the short interval that preceded the Depression Rebellions, income was declining but taxes were not. Scott infers from peasant petitions that the opposition was due to the burden of the regressive head tax.¹⁵⁶

Built into Scott's account is an implicit psychology of expressive resistance: the object of morally structured revolt is that which personifies or embodies the source of grievance.

The collapse of the commodity and labor markets, affecting the income side of the household ledger, was an impersonal event for which it was difficult to find a guilty party. The outside claimants for this reduced income, by contrast, were hardly impersonal; they were extra-village moneylenders, landowners, and the state.¹⁵⁷

Thus, the object of attack later shifted to landlords who were equally personal claimants on the peasant's income. "The most common collective act during the second half of the rebellions" was the seizure of grain and lands that peasants felt had been unjustly appropriated.¹⁵⁸ Typically this involved the mob hauling spoils for public division among

¹⁵⁵Scott, *Moral Economy*, 143.

¹⁵⁶Scott, *Moral Economy*, 119, fig. 3.

¹⁵⁷Scott, *Moral Economy*, 116.

¹⁵⁸Scott, *Moral Economy*, 146.

those in need. The refusal to pay head taxes, the seizure of grain and lands, and the burning of tax records all expressed specific grievances over institutions that had a clear negative impact on peasant subsistence. In short, the commonality of all these actions despite a lack of central organization indicates that peasant rebellion is structured by norms.

Successful Revolt, Incentives & Instrumental Action. While Scott's account focuses on the Depression Rebellions of 1930-1, Popkin's account treats them only tangentially. Instead, he focuses on the period between 1945 and 1955, when a variety of organizations actively mobilized peasants against landlords and the colonial state. Among these were the Cao Dai, the Hoa Hao, and, most successfully, the Communists. Popkin shows how each of these organizations overcame micro-level disincentives so that peasants gained the institutional competence to challenge those who exploited them. To understand this, one must realize that the post-war rebellions were not revolts of desperation that failed, but long-term organizing efforts that succeeded in improving peasant welfare.

Cao Dai, for example, was a continuation of the Vietnamese Three-Religion system (Tam Giao). It was from Tam Giao that all Cochinchinese rebellions sprang between 1860 and 1916; Cao Dai, however, succeeded in mobilizing peasants where earlier small Tam Giao sects failed. Since the initial Cao Dai elite worked in the colonial administration, the new religion could offer "significant economies of scale and benefits for the small sects simply by being able to legalize the sects and thus offer them protection and security."¹⁵⁹ This provided the new religion with a ready means to reach thousands of peasants. Because the Cao Dai elite were in the administration, they were able to protect poor members against manipulations by large landholders, e. g., by representing peasants in courts when titles were contested. The Cao Dai also established religious courts that enabled peasants to by-pass the French courts altogether. Finally, the Cao Dai, as a

¹⁵⁹Popkin, Rational Peasant, 196.

religious hierarchy with extensive popular participation in its decision-making, could persuade peasants to accept tax burdens that went into social insurance funds. All these practical benefits were available to Cao Dai members, and were excludable to those who failed to meet their obligations to the community. As a result, the Cao Dai in many areas threatened a breakdown of the French administrative system; its courts were used instead of French courts, its taxes were paid instead of French taxes, and its armed forces held sway.

In western Cochinchina, the Hoa Hao also succeeded by providing peasants with "the sociopolitical competence to deal with capitalism, violence, and stability . . ." ¹⁶⁰ Its founder, Huynh Phu So, established strong village-level organizations that decreased peasants' dependence on landlords for dispute adjudication, and collecting the taxes needed for public works and social insurance. While these organizations levied high taxes, peasants were willing to join the Hoa Hao since taxes were used to finance improvements in agricultural infrastructure that put unused land into production. By World War II, Hoa Hao "security teams" prevented village authorities from acting on behalf of landlords or the French.

Obviously, the most successful organization in twentieth century Vietnam was the Communist Party. It succeeded in both attaining national sovereignty and restructuring domestic class relations. In Annam, the Communists used its front organization, the Viet Minh, to establish intervillage administrations that instituted changes in the communal land system that had been resisted by village notables. ¹⁶¹ Communal land was distributed by lottery and bidding for small parcels, rather than by rank within the village. Likewise, taxes were reformed, replacing regressive head and land taxes with progressive income taxes based on family productivity. The Viet Minh also subsidized village-level

¹⁶⁰Popkin, Rational Peasant, 208.

¹⁶¹Popkin, Rational Peasant, 225.

improvements in water storage and irrigation. As a result, the Communists were able to attract a loyal following among peasants in Annam. In sum,

. . . [W]inning enormous popularity for declaring a free and independent Vietnam did not immediately or easily translate into the rural support necessary for . . . long and arduous resistance . . . That support was gained by slowly restructuring village government to increase productivity and taxes and to create a positive system of exchanges between village leaders and peasants that could be tapped for the resources and manpower necessary to build an army.¹⁶²

Similar benefits gained support for the Communists in Tonkin and Cochinchina.

In general, Popkin's analysis of peasant rebellion is "supply-side." It describes the kinds of organizations peasants need not just to rebel, but to rebel successfully. As such, it highlights an important dimension missed by Scott's "demand-side" approach, which highlights the conditions under which peasants will be most compelled to resist. Scott and Popkin ultimately describe different social phenomena, which is reflected in the different data they cite. While both theories successfully account for their data, a strong case could be made that the *success* of peasant rebellion is a more important topic—in social terms—than merely the *occurrence* of rebellion.

Conclusion. Popkin highlights important neglected factors in the analysis of peasant life, even though his abstract critique of Scott's moral economy is ultimately a red herring. Although Scott does make functionalist assumptions about collective action, his implicit and explicit backing for these assumptions are not problematic when collective action is expressive in nature, or when informal mechanisms of social control are made explicit. His account of the traditional moral economy works because he provides an explicit micro-level mechanism by which norms are enforced: this accounts for meaningful subsistence guarantees, concedes inequality, but takes no account of the obstacles to increasing long-term income. Popkin's criticisms are most telling in the case of peasant

¹⁶²Popkin, Rational Peasant, 229.

rebellion, exposing the reasons for sustained and effective peasant resistance, whereas Scott merely analyzes the structural conditions that produce revolt.

4.8. Communities, Discourse and Social Science

The Scott-Popkin debate is an academic debate *par excellence*, because it embodies a community of discourse. Their community of discourse is based on: (a) a shared set of empirical data, i. e., rural Vietnam from the precolonial period through the Great Depression, (b) a shared object, "the peasant," who they generally agree is more or less directly driven by material interests, and (c) an evidentiary strategy that links theory to discrete facts through multiple levels of comparison. It was only by recognizing these similarities that we were able to see the real but subtle differences between them. We are now, at last, in a position to evaluate their methods properly.

Most specific disputes between Scott and Popkin come down to matters of tone and emphasis in reading the data, which means that the justification for each reading is filtered by implicit, substantive precommitments. As a result, we cannot evaluate their methods by the criteria of "scientific inference" alone: we need to judge the political and philosophical grounds for those matters of tone and emphasis, specifically, Scott's quasi-structuralism and Popkin's emphasis on macro-micro linkages. We can evaluate the proper balance between those two approaches, and, as we shall see, we can also critique their shared limitations in handling culture.

I propose that democracy—understood as collective agency—is the ultimate philosophical and political ground for evaluating social science. Collective agency is a value, and although it is outside the bounds of my discussion to justify it in this chapter, I believe values can be defended through discourse and will take this subject up in the

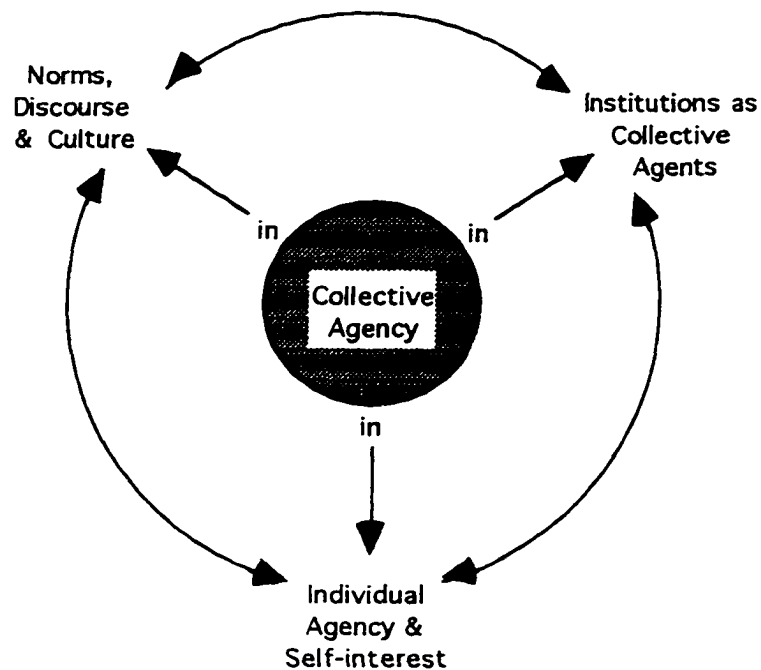
concluding chapter. At this point it is enough for the reader to acknowledge that communities, classes, nations, etc., can act as units to improve the quality of life for individuals living in those groups. Without such a notion, social science is quite literally useless. Collective agency aims to improve individuals' well-being, but it does so by recognizing their inter-connectedness.¹⁶³ In short, my criterion for evaluating social science methods is usefulness in understanding how, in a variety of contexts, communities can act to enhance their well-being by linking these three components. This is the highest purpose of social science.

This conclusion will (a) explain my notion of collective agency and how it operates in social explanation, (b) show how collective agency in its various facets is explained and embodied in the work of Scott and Popkin, and (c) evaluate the strengths and limitations of their analyses by specifying the aspects of collective agency they highlight and skirt.

Collective Agency in Social Explanation. To do understand collective agency, social science must address three aspects of social life: individual welfare, common interests and discourse. These three foci are at the heart of social explanation. The interactive relationship among these three foci is depicted in Figure 4.2, below. (An expanded version of this figure will later show how Scott's and Popkin's approaches complement and overlap each other.)

¹⁶³To my mind, this value includes the quality of shared capacities, such as the development of arts and sciences for their own sake. But this is a debate that need not be opened here.

Figure 4.2— Collective Agency in Social Explanation



Collective agency means that the community serves the aggregated interests and values of individuals. This is the traditional liberal grounds for evaluating social phenomena, found in such diverse sources as notion of Pareto-optimality in social welfare economics, and the ideals articulated explicitly in the Declaration of Independence. But collective agency also means that a community is an agent greater than the sum of its parts (individuals). Thus, collective agency, strictly understood, has two aspects: the supra-individual action of institutions and the supra-individual decision-making embodied in culture, norms, and discourse. Institutions are collective agents in the strict sense, because they make decisions and execute them. In law, for example, corporations are treated as persons. Likewise, international relations theorists model inter-state behavior by treating states as actors.

Culture is a less tangible collective agent, but it too exhibits causal agency because it (a) shapes individual perceptions, values, preferences, and even self-definition, (b) it constrains individual actions, and (c) it thus patterns collective action.

Social phenomena are *simultaneously* irreducibly social and ultimately resolvable down to individual action: a paradox, yes, but the dialectic that drives social science. On the individualist side, rational choice theory follows a tradition back to Hobbes which seeks to explain social life by reducing it to individual actions. There are both explanatory and normative reasons for this. The common sense grounding for this position is the obvious fact that social life consists, in tangible terms, of the myriad actions of discrete individuals; inevitably, social phenomena are constituted as the emergent properties of aggregated individual acts. By understanding why individuals behave as they do, we can understand the collective behaviors to which they add up.¹⁶⁴ On the normative side, since the welfare of the community would be meaningless if every individual were worse off, a concern for the common good must address the individual.¹⁶⁵ Individual interests and instrumental decision-making shape collective agency because if social entities are perceived as detrimental to the individual's interests and values, she will try where possible to change them. For both these reasons, collective agency must attend to individual choice-making and self-interests.

Conversely, collective agency must attend to the links between culture and collective interests, since this is the irreducibly social component of social life. Methodological individualism can only go so far, because, while social institutions are generated by the aggregation of individual actions, at any particular moment, at least some

¹⁶⁴Donald Levine, *Visions of Sociological Method*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 129. He states that this position originates with Hobbes, and rightly calls this position "the Postulate of Methodological Individualism."

¹⁶⁵Levine, *Visions of Sociological Method*, 129. He calls this "the Postulate of Normative Individualism." Again, he finds the origin of this position in Hobbes.

social institutions are taken as given. This is especially true of the informal organization of persons through the medium of culture. Communication is an instrument, but it is instrumental by virtue of its social givenness. The individual can only relate to other individuals through a medium that is supra-individual.

In part, collective interest is the simple aggregation of individual interests, but it is also something more, as when those aggregations are institutionalized in organizations that then control the individual's ability to pursue interests and values; this is most clearly the case in times of social conflict, when one group opposes another that controls a crucial institution. Moreover, the incumbents in institutions take on roles as they find their self-interests defined by organizational interests, such as a Supreme Court justice's investment in the autonomy of the high court. But collective interests are also embodied in culture, as when children are socialized into the values of a group, thus shaping their self-definition (and hence both what they will choose, as value and interest, and how they will pursue those goals). Finally, culture shapes collective interests in the form of institutions. Directly, culture shapes formal organizations through debate over what institutions are for, and indirectly, through the definition of self that shapes individuals self-interested action toward collectivities. In short, interactions occur in both directions all along the circle depicted in Figure 4.2 between individual agency, culture, and institutions.

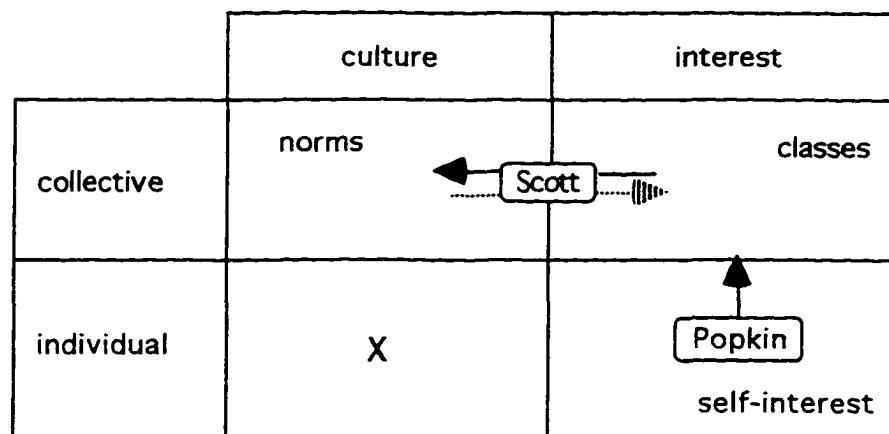
Collective Agency and the Scott-Popkin Division of Labor. On a deep philosophical level, Scott and Popkin have complementary projects, since they explain different aspects of how the collective agency of peasants is achieved and frustrated in colonial Vietnam. The fundamental tension between these approaches is rooted in the unresolvable meta-theoretical dilemma over the essential contingency of collective action. Popkin brings out the fragility of collective action, by explicating the ways the collective agency depends on individual agency, and often conflicts with it. Conversely, Scott highlights the naturalness of collective agency, its growing out of individual interest, and

the sharedness that a common socio-economic position generates in both interests and discourse.

Popkin's rational choice approach disputes much of Scott's analysis as it relates to decision-making by rural elites in village social insurance and by poorer peasants during rebellion. Politically, the issue is who better explains the collective agency of rural communities to insure the welfare of the majority of peasant families. While Popkin's critique points to a conceptually significant issue—the gap between structural factors and micro-level or individual causal mechanisms—a close reading of The Moral Economy of the Peasant shows that Scott's argument does account (often only implicitly) for the collective action problem. Mostly, then, they disagree primarily about which conceptual linkages are most critical in explaining the collective agency of Vietnamese peasants. Ultimately, Popkin focuses on harnessing individual interests to collective action—through institutions—while Scott examines how folk culture—understood as a common social morality—embodies peasants' shared individual interests.

Figure 4.3, below, represents the Scott-Popkin debate in terms of the problems they fundamentally aim to resolve. For Scott, this is the culture-interest dichotomy, while for Popkin, this is the tension between individual and collective interests. (Note that the lower left hand box is vacant, since culture is irreducibly collective.) Since Popkin is univocal, he must choose a box, and thus flattens out human motivation, even as his analysis does explain the collective side of interest in terms of individual interest. Since Scott's theoretical language of need is polyvalent, he is not trapped in one box, although he does place greater emphasis on the interested aspect of collective action than on the cultural aspect.

Figure 4.3 — Scott and Popkin Compared
along Collective-Individual and Culture-Interest Axes



In large measure, Scott and Popkin talk past each other when their explanations focus on the heart of their own problems, and are most in engaged when Scott's analysis focuses on the interest side of the problem. Since Scott is focused on the culture-interest problem, he still misses the aspects of the problem of collective action that Popkin's analysis captures. Popkin's reduction of the subsistence ethic to individual interests is unsatisfactory, but his critique does highlight how inegalitarian the traditional village was (despite subsistence floors) and why peasant rebellions succeeded (not just why they occurred). Where Scott sees income security, Popkin reminds us of inequality; where Scott sees social dynamite, Popkin reminds us to consider the causes of long-term success or failure by peasant rebellions. Popkin's criticisms do not flatly rebut Scott's arguments, because he and Scott emphasize different ways which economic interests determine peasant

life.¹⁶⁶ Rather, Popkin's rigor in applying the rational self-interest heuristic highlights the limitations of collective forces in realizing the common good in peasant life.

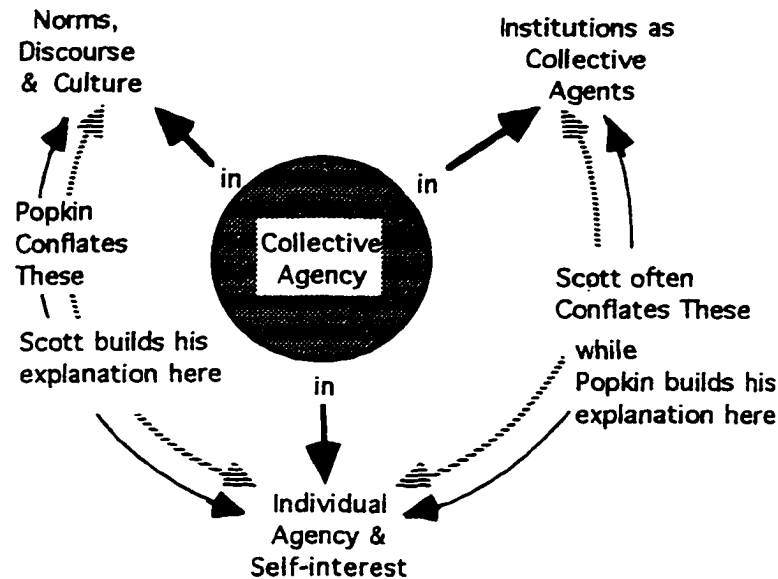
Popkin's rhetorical problem, in a nutshell, is that, by conflating self-interest and culture, he is forced into the empty box in Figure 4.3. Reducing culture to the sum of self-interests enables his analysis to move briskly, but is theoretically untenable, and forces him to move outside his analysis, which is most apparent in his account of peasant rebellion in chapter 5, "Up from Feudalism," where he abandons his comparative geographical method altogether. To his credit, he acknowledges this, stating that "culture is exogenous to my model," and admits that he cannot account for the success of Communist organizing without acknowledging the role of non-self-interested values, e. g., anti-colonial nationalism.

By contrast, Scott's central rhetorical problem is that the sleight-of-hand that allows him to conflate individual and collective interests is attacked dead-on by Popkin's central argument; Popkin's explanation occurs right where Scott's makes the most assumptions. Where he theoretically withstands it, he does so either because he has implicit mechanisms for *constraining* individual action (as with gossip enforcing norms of generosity in a small village), or by describing action as a kind of discourse itself (as in the expressive rebellions of northern Annam in 1930-1.) In both cases, the extent to which he withstands Popkin depends on his linkage of culture to individual agency.

Figure 4.4, below, represents the way that Scott and Popkin engage each other. My clumsy terminology is that each succeeds where he "builds" his argument, while each is problematic when he "conflates" two aspects.

¹⁶⁶Booth, William James, "A Note on the Moral Economy," American Political Science Review 87 (1993): 949-54.

Figure 4.4—Role of Collective Agency in Scott's and Popkin's Arguments



In short, Popkin's rational choice is well-placed to improve the institutional possibilities for collective action, but this is obviated by the reduction of culture to self-interests.

Conversely, Scott's moral economy is well-positioned to explain how discourses express—and not just reflect—interests, but does not explain the organizational aspects of collective agency. As one can see from the conspicuous absence at the top of the circle in Figure 4.4, neither has much explanation for how institutions as collective agents are shaped by culture as collective agency. They share this defect because they both approach peasant motivations in highly economic terms.

Same Program, Same Limitations: Institutions as Collective Agents. While Scott and Popkin illuminate contrary aspects of collective action in peasant communities, they are of one mind on the analysis of colonial state action. Scott assumes that in making and implementing taxation policy, the colonial state acts as a unitary actor. Popkin makes no criticism of Scott's analysis, and rational choice theorists often model the state as a unitary

actor. So here Scott and Popkin are both strictly economicist—and both take collective agency as given.¹⁶⁷ Since strong institutions act like unitary agents, this analysis works quite well. But as I have explained, the agency of institutions is always, on a theoretical level, problematic. Since the colonial state is the polar case of a state acting with autonomy on a population with which it shares almost no interests or discourse, my critique of this model of the colonial state highlights how important it is to take culture seriously when analyzing institutions. My analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of their statist assumption rounds out my critique of the Scott-Popkin debate, bringing us to an awareness of the autonomous role of culture in shaping collective agency through institutions.

The Instrumental Rationality of Colonial Exploitation. Popkin makes no criticism of Scott's claims about the increasing tax burdens imposed by the colonial state and the disproportionate burden of those taxes on the poorest peasants. They are in agreement that the colonial state had an interest in raising the rural tax burden without regard to peasant welfare and the means to do so. Because their analysis is so similar, both fail to address the important cultural roots of peasant exploitation by the colonial state. Since both focus on the instrumental rationality behind colonial taxation of peasants, neither addresses the racist and imperialist discourses that legitimated French exploitation of Vietnamese peasants. Here, where Scott is at his most economicist, he and Popkin suffer the same inability to see the impact of cultural forces.

Not only does Popkin acknowledge that, "French taxes were extraordinarily heavy,"¹⁶⁸ his analysis of state action is almost identical:

French insensitivity to pleas for tax cuts in bad years was another source of stratification . . . In the past, an authoritarian but weak state had

¹⁶⁷To be sure, it is a collective agency that works in opposition to the collective agency of peasants, but is collective agency nonetheless.

¹⁶⁸Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 142. He also notes the "vastly increased—and regressive—land and head taxes," *ibid.*, 136.

had to temper (at least some of the time) its tax demands in bad years and curtail its expenses according to whatever it could collect. But now an authoritarian and powerful central government did not need to be sensitive to local conditions.¹⁶⁹

There is little doubt that the *average* burden of the colonial government on a peasant's income was greater than that of the indigenous governments that preceded it. . . . The distinctiveness of colonial taxes lay not so much in the fact that they were higher but in the nature of those taxes and the blind rigor with which they were imposed.

. . . the chief difference was that the traditional state did not have the means to impose its will and there was a corresponding slippage.¹⁷⁰

I have quoted at length so one can see how difficult it is to distinguish between Scott and Popkin on this point. Both agree that the key difference between colonial and precolonial taxation was the "blind rigor" with which the colonial state enforced its claims.

Popkin follows Scott's account because it combines strong empirical documentation of increased taxes with an analytic frame that relies heavily on the state rationally selecting the best means to its ends. According to Scott, the colonial state required ever larger and more stable revenue to support its payrolls. Its hypertrophied capacity was ironically what enabled it to enforce claims.¹⁷¹ Its increasing size both enabled and forced it to tax peasants with more unrelenting zeal. And since its employees were paid in cash, it moved as quickly as possible from taxes in kind and *corvée* labor to cash.¹⁷² Moreover, the colonial state had strong reasons to rely most heavily on the head tax, which fell equally on all peasants regardless of the size of their plot, and was thus especially hard on small holders. The head tax had "a captivating simplicity. Assessment was automatic and

¹⁶⁹Popkin, *Rational Peasant*, 149.

¹⁷⁰Scott, *Moral Economy*, 92-93. Emphasis original.

¹⁷¹Scott, *Moral Economy*, 96.

¹⁷²Scott, *Moral Economy*, 97.

required no administration," which reduced corruption, and the receipts it demanded were stable and grew with the population.¹⁷³

In short, the colonial state had the means and every rational, self-interested incentive to impose taxes in forms that were most onerous to the poorest peasants. From a rational choice perspective, Scott's analysis of the state works better than his class analyses of the precolonial and colonial village, because collective action and free-rider problems have greater urgency when dealing with an unorganized, non-institutionalized class, such as peasants. By definition, strong states do not have these problems.

The Missing Cultural Component of Exploitation. Popkin offers no critique of Scott's explanation of colonial state behavior because that account is almost completely in the rational choice vein. As a result, however, they share a blind spot: the importance of culture for explaining the behavior of the French colonial state. Scott and Popkin both write as if it were inevitable that the colonial state would expand and raise taxes on peasants. Colonial exploitation of peasants is presented as practically self-fulfilling: the state expanded because it could, it taxed so it could expand, and it expanded more so it could pay for its expansion, etc. Yet there is no rational reason the state would necessarily expand, nor for French metropolitan governments to require that colonialism pay for itself.

The nature of French colonialism in Indochina could arguably be interpreted as a product of imperialist ideologies then current in France. For example, the French presence in Vietnam was as large as it was not due to an inherent dynamic in colonial administration, but due to the French "civilizing mission" that required an ever deeper hold on the country in order to spread French culture. One might argue that this explains otherwise irrational features of French rule. For example, Popkin notes the massive expense of building railways in a country that was more efficiently served by maritime transport. This is

¹⁷³Scott, *Moral Economy*, 101.

explainable as part of a colonial mentality that saw railroads as an essential feature of modern societies—even when traditional forms of transit were more economically rational. The taxes that paid for this would thus be due to ideology.

Likewise, the expectation that colonies would pay for themselves could be rooted in bourgeois sense of proper bookkeeping, rather than the "need" for colonial administration to pay for itself. (As Tignor's analysis shows, colonialism was driven by a variety of interests, some of which did not rely on economic cost-benefit calculations to justify a foreign presence, e. g., the geo-political strategic reasons for the British Occupation of Egypt.)¹⁷⁴ If there were doubts in the metropole about the wisdom of colonizing Vietnam, the impetus for colonial officials to raise taxes would come from the contestation of ideologies in France over colonialism itself.

Finally, colonial indifference to the social costs of high taxes on poorer peasants could very likely have been legitimated by racist attitudes that held "Orientals" as less fully worthy of care than Europeans. In any case, neither Popkin nor Scott even address the European cultural dimensions of colonial tax exploitation of Vietnamese peasants.

My point in raising these criticisms is not to argue for a cultural explanation of colonial exploitation, but rather simply to problematize the assumptions that undergird one aspect of both Scott's and Popkin's work. There is a real sense in which a shared discourse of racism—or subsistence guarantees, democratic participation, freedom, etc.—constitutes a collective agent. Neither Scott nor Popkin acknowledge this in the case of French colonialism, but even here it matters.

Having shown the need to consider culture when explaining institutional action in the extreme case of colonial taxation of peasants, I ask you to please look back at Figure 4.4. The failure of either Scott or Popkin to consider the ways that culture shapes

¹⁷⁴Robert L. Tignor, *Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914*, Princeton Studies on the Near East (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966). See Chapter 3, above.

institutions is graphically represented by the gap at the top of the circle. Scott fails to do this, because his analysis of peasant life is largely non-institutional: while he does address culture as an autonomous force, that force is felt almost exclusively through the expressive actions of individual peasants. Moreover, since the social morality of the subsistence ethic is in suspicious harmony with the peasant's own interests, one often cannot tell whether an action is caused by culture or interest (which is admittedly Scott's intention). Popkin fails to account for the cultural influence on institutions for the opposite reason: his explanations link individual peasant actions to the development of organizations, but culture serves no role in those choices, which are calculated on the basis of economic constraints and incentives.

The Political Uses of Social Theory. Since culture or discourse is integral to collective agency, I can now look at Scott and Popkin as themselves practitioners of discourse. Jumping up a level of analysis, I conclude by looking at their discourses as distinct forms of the collective agency of social science. On one level, social science is an instrumental activity which facilitates collective agency by showing how that agency works. By this criterion, Popkin's analysis is probably stronger than Scott's, since Popkin is preoccupied with when and why peasants are able to realize their own collective power. Scott, while he does address this issue, he generally takes the collective agency of peasants as natural.

On a deeper level, though, Scott's analysis is superior to Popkin's because Scott's rhetoric preserves essential features of social life that are integral to collective agency. Popkin utilizes terms that are univocal and ostensibly value-neutral, while Scott's theoretical vocabulary is normatively-charged and polyvalent. Scott's multivalent language of need leaves intact the autonomous character of culture: the norm of subsistence, while consistently grounded in the peasant's interests, is never *reduced* to that interest. Scott distinguishes "sharply between what peasants consider 'normal' and what they consider

'right,' as the two are by no means the same."¹⁷⁵ Popkin, by contrast, holds that norms are merely equilibria among aggregated individual decisions based on self-interest.

The contingency of collective agency is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, the micro-level obstacles to collective action are themselves a "problem" that social science can explain, and hence provide the public with matters for deliberation and hence respond to as a collective agent. On the other, Popkin's rational choice categories by their definition systematically exclude moral or normatively driven action. At best, such frameworks bracket off non-instrumental motivations. Norms, by definition, are standards that direct action. As such, they determine preferences. So when rational choice theorists like Popkin assert that norms are manipulated for instrumentally self-interested reasons, they are thus not treating norms *as* norms.

The deeper normative claim implicit in Scott's *moral economy* approach concerns the nature of social processes themselves; these claims entail acknowledging that discursive-normative factors are causally determinative across time and space. That acknowledgment is excluded by rational choice theory, because it posits individual rational self-interest as the only central causal factor. At most, discourse is seen in rational choice models as a constraint, but never as a cause. For a socially responsible political science, discourse must have causal force on its own terms. Without it, we are trapped into treating all action as instrumental, and when instrumental, no norm can be imposed that makes demands on behalf of the common good. Discourse is, in this sense, an essential element of collective agency. The practical thrust of social science finds methodological individualism highly useful at one stage of its argument, but requires us to transcend the micro-level to finish the job.

¹⁷⁵Scott, *Moral Economy*, 194, n. 1.

CHAPTER 5
**THE VALUES OF A POLITICAL SCIENCE:
COMMUNITY, EXPLANATION AND METHODOLOGICAL CHOICE**

[W]e must try to comprehend in outline at least what this [ultimate] good is and to which branch of knowledge or to what capacity it belongs.

This good, one should think, belongs to the most sovereign and most comprehensive master science, and politics most clearly fits this description . . .

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics

5.1. A Brief Review

This dissertation has interpreted social science texts in order to investigate the relationship between substance and method. I have thus explicated how methodologies influence empirical conclusions, and how those empirical conclusions are, to a degree, prefigured in implicit substantive theories. Underneath notions of what count for evidence in social explanation stand implicit theories of causation, intentionality, and criteria for relevance among agents, categories and events. As the argument progressed, the dialectic of substance and method directed us to the relationship between individual and collective agency. Understanding that relationship offers the standpoint from which one can evaluate different methods, in order to find unseen commonalities, possible paths of reconciliation and combination, and finally, criteria for deciding between approaches when a conflict is unavoidable.

I first compared two treatments of French decolonization from Algeria, a mainstream political science account by Ian Lustick and the psychoanalytic work of Franz Fanon. We saw how evidentiary strategies were—and were not—determined by the political framing of the object of analysis. The degree of determination depended on the ways that discrete facts grounded limited descriptive claims, and, in turn, how descriptions grounded general theoretical claims. Next, I compared two highly divergent texts on British colonialism in Egypt. I showed the hidden theoretical structures shared by them, and explained their divergence on the basis of the methodological split between historical and synchronic causal models. This was used to critique each work and account for the prevalence of positivist approaches in political science. Finally, I used my evidentiary analysis to illuminate the dispute between moral economy and rational choice approaches to peasant studies in the Vietnamese case. The upshot was to expose the dialectical relation between individual and collective agency. This concluding chapter explains how collective agency as the cognitive and practical aim of social science facilitates the development of methodological criteria.

5.2. The Aims of Political Science and the Forms of Agency

No methodological question can be completely divorced from substantive values. Our substantive values are reflected in our choices about method. Likewise, the commitment to rigorous method is itself a substantive value. Matters of substance include both questions of accurate empirical theory in social science and normative values. While this greatly complicates our task, it also provides an Archimedean point from which to evaluate competing methodologies, because "[i]n order for the categories to be contested at all, there must be a common system of intelligibility, extending to the grounds, means,

modes, and issues of disagreement."¹ I suggest that this "common system of intelligibility" can be found through a description of the purposes of social analysis as a whole.

It is a common-place that the subject matter of the social sciences has special characteristics, among them, intentionality and contingency. As I mentioned in chapter 1, as political scientists we are repeatedly faced with a series of tensions in the practice of making social science analysis. The practical aim of political science offers a tentative criterion that can help us choose responsibly when faced with these dilemmas. This practical aim has two dimensions, the autonomy of science and an attempt to address pressing social issues.²

The aim of political science can be seen as a special species of agency. Human agency is the *object* of social inquiry. On the one hand, agency forms the content of research findings, because attributions of human agency are at the heart of explaining social change. Social explanation tells us how people made and make history (within the constraints of given identities, power distributions, hegemonic discourses, etc.) Thus, social science describes, interprets, explains, and predicts the agency of social actors—or their failure to realize that agency.³ These explanations are constrained by the universe of facts available to researchers. Conversely, notions of agency are the *subject* of social inquiry, because—whether of elites or subalterns, of individuals or collectivities—they shape the relevance of facts, defining the social object to be explained. Our conception of agency prefigures our research questions, thus highlighting different galaxies within the universe of facts as relevant, as crucial, and as exceptions to be explained away.

¹ Marshall Sahlins, Waiting for Foucault, 2d. ed., Prickly Pear Pamphlet No. 2 (Cambridge: Prickly Pear Press, 1996, 14.

² King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, 3, 6, 15-16.

³ Dewey, The Public and Its Problems.

Finally, social science realizes its own agency by self-conscious attention to its relationship to its subject-matter. The bivalence of the term "realizing" indicates the two-headed quality of agency in social life. On the one hand, realizing agency means implementing the value of agency. On the other, "to realize" something means to understand it, i. e., I "realize" why I am writing a dissertation about methodology, or I realize what it means to be a good social scientist. In this sense, "realizing" collective agency means that people understand which factors facilitate and hamper collective agency.

Being practical about political science need not entail a merely instrumental or "technological" view of political knowledge, because the agency of social science, or scientific discourse, is reflected in two features of scholarly work. First, social science seeks to ground its claims empirically. This means that the aim of analysis, no matter how oriented toward practice, will neither preclude nor predecide a particular result.⁴ Second, it seeks consistency, which includes avoiding performative contradictions. My use of this term comes from Habermas, who

argues that Foucault cannot escape the "performative contradiction" involved in using the tools of reason to criticize reason; this has the serious consequence of landing his genealogical investigations in a situation embarrassingly similar to that of the "sciences of man" he so tellingly criticized. The ideas of meaning, validity, and value that were to be eliminated by genealogical critique come back . . . [in] spectral forms . . . [such as] "cryptonormativism."⁵

Social inquiry is not merely an instrument, but gives an account of itself, if only implicitly.

Habermas's critique (which also applies to Mitchell) is that Foucault's analysis of social life

⁴"[T]he scientific habit of mind is one dominated by the reality principle, by the determination to live in the world as it is and not as we might fantasy it." Kaplan, *Conduct of Inquiry*, 380.

⁵Thomas McCarthy, Introduction to *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* by Jürgen Habermas. *Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought*, ed. Thomas McCarthy. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 1995, xv.

cannot account for his own analysis.⁶ The cognitive aims of performative consistency and empirical grounding are what distinguish the social sciences as disciplines from other fields with similar practical aims, e. g., journalism and partisan organizing.⁷ Since practical action depends, at least to a degree, on knowing how one's values confront other values in specific choices, the practical value of social science depends on the autonomy of inquiry.⁸ If this autonomy is not preserved, social science research cannot effectively serve its public purposes.

5.3. Levels of Persuasion in Social Science

Post-modernism and Facts. Post-modernists would have us believe that it makes no sense to speak of "facts." They claim that all "facts" are embedded in discourse, that perceptions are utterly dependent on pre-given and interconnected categories, and since those categories are socially constructed, we can never locate a ground which does not already presume theory. Thus, all we can do is show the links between "facts", discourse and social practices.

I disagree. The embeddedness of facts in pre-given categories does not mean that one cannot use facts; rather, it means that one ought to acknowledge circularity, bias and politics-in-social-science as practical problems, not as theoretical ones. We can speak of

⁶A similar critique could be made of Popkin's work, because he describes norms as not normative, i. e., as merely equilibria that can be reduced to self-interests, yet he points out the normative consequences of peasant political economy and takes a normative stance, explicitly, against moral economy approaches.

⁷Ragin, Constructing Social Research, 17-30.

⁸"I end as I began, with loyalty to the principle of the autonomy of inquiry. But a concern with the interests of policy need not express subservience to them, and indeed *demand*s independent thought." Kaplan, Conduct of Inquiry, 403. Emphasis added.

facts for pragmatic rather than positivist reasons. Let us first acknowledge that there are things we describe in our ordinary language discourse as "facts." And let us also acknowledge that sometimes we disagree on what falls into the category, "fact." Both of these statements should ring true to common experience, and thus be self-evident. Although the word "fact" is sometimes used to mean true (e. g., "It's a fact that history shows Marx was wrong"), this conflates the philosophical issue of epistemic realism with the practical question of whether we should or can appeal to facts to support our claims. I will use "fact" in a more limited sense, to refer to statements that are taken as true, but are highly limited in their scope.

As a community based on deliberation over issues, it helps us to distinguish levels of generality in our discourse. Facts are to be taken as statements that we can disagree about, but about which we have strong standards for reaching consensus. That is to say, I can disagree with you about, e. g., whether the Iranian Revolution was a petit bourgeois revolution or a charismatic transformation of authority relations, but I cannot disagree with you for long over whether the Shah left Iran on January 19, whether demonstrations and killings by the security apparatus occurred in forty day intervals, or whether Khomeini was sending instructions to his followers by cassette and international phone calls. If we cannot agree on these very discrete claims, there is no room for thoughtful discussion, since our disagreements are too fundamental; we do not share enough evidentiary criteria.⁹

Acceptance of such elementary and implicit evidentiary criteria are the admission price to scholarly debate. This is what keeps out Creationists ("God made fossils to test our faith, so they can't count as evidence!"), Holocaust revisionists ("Don't trust all that photographic and eye-witness evidence, it's part of a Jewish plot!") or other demagogues,

⁹On a personal note, having tried to discuss highly charged political issues across a friend-enemy divide (e. g., as a Jew speaking to Egyptians about the Arab-Israeli conflict), I can tell you how much even what seem to be the most obvious facts are dependent on acceptance of authority—trusting one's sources for highly discrete claims.

who define evidence at the factual level in terms that are circular with their broader conclusions.¹⁰

In other words, the embeddedness of facts in discourse and practice is a question, that should not be used to knock the feet out from under social science claims (or other kinds of claims either), but should be used with discretion. To function in the knowledge-making business at all, we must rest our statements somewhere, and to deny the usefulness of facts in a blanket way is to deny us access to our own common sense and experience.¹¹ One cannot simply go on to object to every category or attempt to generalize because it is embedded or socially constructed. This is both obvious and irrelevant. As Aristotle notes, all persuasion that addresses contingent topics must rely on commonly held opinions.¹² The charge only becomes helpful when one shows us how the construction violates some important value we hold, or conflicts with another field of knowledge we adhere to.

Claims Operate at Different Levels of Generality. Having said all this, social science categories, while value-laden, are not all value-laden in the same way. Breaking down levels of evidence shows how we can get beyond the notion that the "implications" of values in theories tautologically predetermine substantive, empirical conclusions. For example, although at the level of general theory neither Lustick nor Fanon can avoid presuming which actors are critical in this event—because their categories entail a causal story—this does not make their use of categories equally problematic. Because Fanon's categories are value-laden, it is impossible to reproduce his analysis in a way that produces the opposite evaluation of the actors' relative importance in shaping events; by contrast,

¹⁰Ernest Gellner, "An Ethic of Cognition," 165-7.

¹¹This is also why falsificationism has served so well as a benchmark for the attainment of the purely cognitive aims of social science: falsification as an ideal demands only a reasonable discipline, i. e., one that recognizes the *relative* autonomy of science.

¹²Aristotle, On Rhetoric, I. 2. 13.

Lustick's neologisms, by their very abstraction from events, leave open a different assessment of the empirical significance of the balance of forces, and thus make his claims contestable. Thus, values enter into social scientific analysis in different ways, and although they always enter into the formulation of the most general categories, some formulations are superior to others. Value-commitments in social explanation may be problematic, but are not necessarily so.

Evidence as it is commonly used in political science refers to specific facts; since by definition evidence stands in relation to a claim, the specificity of facts means that they are only called evidence when supporting a clearly defined and usually limited claim. Such claims are generally not on the level of an author's general theoretical framework, but are the interpretations and descriptive summaries that undergird it.

The reader is convinced of theoretical conclusions only when interpretations are convincing, and interpretations cannot persuade unless the reader trusts that facts are correct. As one moves from facts to interpretation to theory, claims become more general or abstract. Likewise, they become less discrete. Interpretations depend on facts because general statements about a situation depend on organizing numerous discrete observations into more inclusive frames. By analogy, theoretical conclusions rely on numerous relatively discrete interpretations.¹³

Empirical evidence actually consists of both the factual pole and interpretation about facts. Facts are the basic building blocks of all social science persuasion. Facts are simply a scholar's most discrete claims, those which require the least use of judgment. Ultimately, all arguments in social science depend on acceptance of an account's facts. For example, in December 1960, de Gaulle rebuked General Massu and removed him from his position as Super-prefect of Algeria. If one doubts such a factual claim, then every interpretation

¹³For this reason, hermeneutically inclined social scientists view theory as identical with broad interpretation.

reliant on that fact is also in doubt, which would make Lustick's whole account less believable. At some point arguments must rely on perceptions, otherwise infinite regress prevents any resolution. Two scholars can only argue productively when they can share agreement on something. Facts are the baseline perceptions that a reader and author must share for the author to persuade.

The concluding level of persuasion is theory. This is the payoff of empirical study; it is the sexy part, the aspect of social science emphasized in college and graduate course work. Conclusions are of sufficient generality that scholars build whole careers debating them. The development of theory entails a considerable use of judgment: these claims require one to, in effect, define a universe of facts as relevant. In a broad scope qualitative account like Lustick's and Fanon's, controversy will take place at this level, and in the links between theory and more discrete interpretations.

I have labeled that which mediated between facts and theory, description. This is the main arena of scholarly dispute, but it does not contain the social theorist's overriding point. Rather interpretation consists in rendering innumerable facts into a comprehensible synthetic picture.¹⁴ One example is Lustick's mid-level claim that de Gaulle removed partisans of Algérie française from key positions where they posed a threat. Many compound pictures together form a complex and highly particular image of the case as a whole. Likewise, France's disengagement from Algeria is comprised of de Gaulle's political maneuvering, plus the collapse of the Fourth Republic, settler violence, and numerous other aggregate events.

Facts, interpretation and theory constitute different levels of authority. While scholars will accept an author's word at the basic fact level (until proven otherwise), and

¹⁴Ragin sees most of social science research as occurring, in practice, at this intermediate level. He sees it as an interaction of mostly deductive "analytic frames" and mostly inductive "images" of social processes. The interaction is "retroduction." Ragin, *Constructing Social Research*, 57.

often even demur at the interpretation level, everyone has something to say about theory. At the fact level we can speak of genuine authority—the author is boss. Until he makes a glaring error, we assume him right. By contrast, authority at the theoretical level is disrespected in the academy: we are here to debate claims at this level. Thus, persuasion in social science texts is *about* claims at the theoretical level, but *occurs at* the intermediate levels. Persuasion occurs as an emergent property of multiple interpretations and how well they fit theoretical claims. It is our job to explain how these interpretations are linked to theoretical claims through the selection of facts and interpretations, with interpretations depending on facts, and theory depending on interpretations.

The Tension between Falsifiability and Generality of Theory. Middle-level claims play a critical role in preventing deductive theories from lapsing into unfalsifiable tautologies. Falsification is only possible when one's standards of evidence are autonomous from one's analytic categories. Since descriptive summaries of events and interpretations of motives operate on a less general level of analysis than theories, one can increase the likelihood of disconfirmation by using interpretive schemas that are not reducible to one's theoretical categories. Conversely, the drive for generality in theory can conflate the different levels of argument, i. e., collapsing theory into descriptions, and prefiguring what facts can be used in interpretations. In other words, if the goal of social science is to explain as much as possible with as little as possible, we run a serious risk that deduction will slide into tautology. There seems to be an inherent tension between positivism's demands to empirically test theories while expanding their parsimony and robustness.

Some of the scholars examined here successfully preserved evidentiary autonomy by using several schemas; others have not. The extreme case was Tignor, whose evidentiary standard was so autonomous it undermined the coherence of his theoretical framework. (Indeed, diachronic historical writing is the polar case, for reasons which will

be discussed in section 5.4, below.) A highly successful case was Lustick, whose argumentative strategy combined a Gramscian analysis of institution-discourse linkages with a "soft" rational actor interpretive scheme. Likewise, Scott married a comparative analysis of peasant behavior at various aggregate levels with an analysis of discourse seen through individual utterances.¹⁵ Popkin, as the only "hard" positivist reviewed in this dissertation, presented an almost relentlessly deductive theoretical framework; this forced his analysis into a mode which evaluated causal claims only on predictive power, because his theory prevented him from documenting intentions through utterances. Since rational choice theory already specifies how facts are linked to descriptions, his solution was to utilize the comparative method in a highly structured way, thus creating distance between his theory and his descriptions. Mitchell and Fanon, by contrast, rejected the relative autonomy of claims—because of their shared social constructivism. In Mitchell's case this was ameliorated by his use of striking contrasts, while Fanon's descriptive categories merged almost entirely with his theoretical framework.

5.4. Theory, Causation, and Political Action

As we looked at causal options at the end of chapter 3, we saw that neither the narrative nor the tautological variety is sufficient. In their pure forms, neither style of explanation can function and must rely on the other, either openly or furtively: causal chaining and deductive theorizing in social science are both necessary. Tignor, despite his inductive, diachronic story telling, is still forced into a deductive, synchronic framework; otherwise, he cannot end his story. Conversely, Mitchell, despite the inherent logical force

¹⁵Scott's deductive notion of "the peasant" combined with his unsystematic approach to evidence means that his evidentiary standards are somewhat less autonomous than Lustick's.

of his deductive theory, must still import causal chains with all their human agency; otherwise, he cannot tell a story about social life. Chaining is inevitable because social life exists in history, in the realm of cause-effect that spreads out into the undefineable future and the unknown past. Without chaining there is no human agency. But conversely, there is no scientific agency without deductive theory, because without its tautological rigor, there is no way that human beings can articulate a story that enables conscious action.

This is also true in terms of helping political actors make wiser decisions. In order to use social explanation to help us make political choices, we must combine both forms of causation. We must use microcosm and tautological causation, so that we can understand what may happen according to given factors. We must also use causal chaining in the narrative mode to see how human choices can influence those factors. At the same time, we need human agency, on the one hand, and closure and predictability, on the other. To the extent that either is lacking, a theory will be unconvincing, useless, or both.

The Need for Closure. We need tautological causation to see what sorts of unintended consequences arise from factors not controlled by human beings. A purely narrative explanation is unwieldy. Bounded as it is only by the causal links between events, it has no logically necessary beginning or ending point. We can see a virtually limitless number of causes of an event if we accept that framing conditions are also causes in their own right. Causes in the narrative sense proliferate. Thus, to organize them, we must impose order by some device. This device is the simple scholarly virtue of parsimony. Tautological causation provides this essential parsimony.

Tautological thinking clearly delimits factors: it closes off the edges of our model of the world. By doing so, we decide what factors are important. An explanation that lacks such closure is, at best, a chronicle of events: its teaching value is very limited. When we choose certain factors as critical to an explanation, we are making a model, one whose inputs and outputs can be controlled. Moreover, since tautological causation

emphasizes relationships rather than agents, it highlights the unintended consequences of human actions. An unbounded system cannot be controlled, just as one cannot ride a beast until one knows what parts can be used as hand-holds. In a sense, our delimiting of factors puts a handle on phenomena we study. Tautological causation says, in effect, "these are the parts that make up the beast." Since for our purposes, the beast is that which we want to control—our social world, to one degree or another—when we make a model, we are creating a closed system. In order to control the system, we must stand outside it.

The usefulness of closure can be illustrated with an example. The universal gas law, $PV=\alpha T$, states that gases have exactly three relevant parts: pressure, volume and temperature: this is the nature of the beast. These parts are understood as essentially related; each part reacts necessarily when any other part is altered. Together, they constitute a seamless whole. When pressure goes up, volume goes down; when temperature goes up, volume rises, and so on. Taken in itself, causality here implies no element as cause, and none as effect; they are simply parts of a whole. However, causality in the narrative sense occurs when one element is altered. This comes from *outside* the system, most especially, it comes from human action. This is how hot air balloons are made to fly—a person heats a mass of trapped air, which makes its volume increase, which makes its density decrease, and which thereby causes the balloonist to rise in a lighter-than-air vehicle. All our social explanations must contain such limitation of factors, if we are to know through them how to influence events. If we are to shape events, we must stand intellectually outside the factors we wish to control. Controlling events entails intellectual parsimony, or closure.

The Need for Agency. At the same time, we must stand inside those same processes, because we are those factors, we are those parts of the beast. In order to influence politics, it is necessary to see how we, or other actors, can influence events,

institutions, and beliefs. Narrative causation "brings the people back in," enabling us to see how individuals impact the social world of which they are only a part. Through causal chaining, we can see how people, as distinct, individual human beings, are ultimately co-authors of social life (along with whatever is given by nature and past action). Our common sense notion of causation, moreover, locates some kind of special relation between cause and effect, and the clearest examples of cause are ones where we can attribute causes to human beings.¹⁶ An explanation that lacks narrative thinking will, at best, produce fascinating correlations. It is through the sequence of events in time that we can see human choices rendered effective, both in the past and in the future. Since everything of social significance occurs through people, drawing out these links entails human agency. Human agency is the ways humans are agents in shaping events. In order to make manifest that agency, we need narrative causation. In short, narrative causation is required because politics entails human agency.

The Cognitive Values of Narrative Causation. Ironically, it is the theoretical problems built into narrative causation which make diachronic descriptions helpful for rendering deductive theories debatable. Causal chaining forces the researcher to confront the unboundedness of social action in time, as well as address what I called earlier the "principle of density," i. e., that every event seems capable of disaggregation into ever smaller events.¹⁷ Thus, the tensions caused by the boundary problem lead the researcher to evaluate the relevance of her boundary conditions. On an *abstract* level, a deductive account may be preserved by claiming that "all other things being equal" the causal explanation is valid, but a defense of the judgments behind the *particular* framing are

¹⁶"We acquire the notion of causation in virtue of our experience as agents . . . Roughly, to think of *A* as a cause of *B* is to think of *A* as a potential *means* for achieving . . . *B* as an *end* ." Huw Price, "Agency and Causal Symmetry," *Mind* 101: 403 (July 1992).

¹⁷See "Limitations of Narrative Causation", third subsection of 3.5, above.

demanded. Likewise, questions about the causal mechanisms that link particular events yields observable implications that can falsify the account.¹⁸

Positivism. From the above, one can see why a hybrid notion of causation has been so appealing to social scientists. In their understanding of generalization and theory, social scientists usually bring both kinds of causation to every subject. As a hybrid of these two notions, positivism combines both a directional aspect ($A' \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow B'$) with an invariable relationship between factors ($A \alpha B$). It should be clear by now that positivism creates closure through invariable relationship, which greatly expedites the winnowing of relevant from extraneous information. Let me now explain how positivism deals with human agency.

Positivism's main failure is its inability, at the level of theory, to recognize the bivalent nature of human beings, as both inside social processes and outside them. On the one hand, positivist social science strives to establish definitive causal mechanisms which explain human action. If this could be achieved, all human activity would appear simply as the operation of social processes. Everything human would fall inside those causal mechanisms. On the other hand, positivist method proceeds *as if* the social scientist is external to social processes, otherwise, his findings would merely be a function of social forces. When working, the positivist exempts himself from his view of social causation. For practical purposes, the social scientist sees himself as outside social processes.

Positivism obscures the difficulty entailed by our bivalent role as both objects and subjects in social life. It does this by building our intentions into its causal explanations, through its presumption that there are dependent and independent variables. In common language, dependent variables are effects and independent variables are causes, but as causal chaining illustrates, cause and effect are relative terms. Positing certain factors as

¹⁸King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, 85-7.

dependent variables means that they are not to be controlled directly, that they can only be influenced by affecting their causes, e. g., when you heat a kettle, the steam passes through the whistle. A dependent variable is a phenomenon which we wish to control, either reinforcing or preventing it. Because independent variables are the cause of phenomena we wish to control, implicitly we can control those antecedent causes. Thus, under positivism, human agency is found in the implicit notion that we can (in principle) directly control independent variables, and thus indirectly we control dependent variables.

Positivism oversimplifies the causal relation, choosing one direction or the other in a framing account. For example, a positivist model might describe cultural effects on economic development. This sense of fixed direction is misleading because it posits a one way relationship for what is, in reality, a complex of ambiguous causal relations between compound objects.¹⁹ Human beings make economic choices with cultural inputs, and also alter cultural norms in response to economic imperatives. Positivism freezes social motion at a single point in time for the sake of parsimony.

It is here that interpretivist critics can rightly accuse positivism of bias, because there is no overarching rationale for how positivists decide to freeze the direction of causation one way or the other in a framing account. It thus depends on what is important to them. These decisions are often quite justifiable, but they are also ad hoc and inarticulate. In effect, the researcher's purpose enters through the back door: what is chosen as the dependent variable is ultimately something to change, and the independent variable is usually the tool which we should grasp if we wish to make change. In this way positivists combine the causation of a kettle whistle with that of the universal gas law,

¹⁹"Even the most complex of multiple causal relations . . . must in fact be disassembled into constituent relations to be logically interpreted . . . Yet while methodologists need not recognize . . . that human affairs are in principle non-formalizable, it is clear that serious work must be done on the problem of univocality." Andrew Abbott, "Transcending General Linear Reality," 176-7.

$PV=\alpha T$. Combining directionality with invariability, positivism can artfully achieve both parsimony and agency, but at the same time, it leaves important decisions unarticulated.

Theoretical Closure, Human Agency and Lessons for Politics. If a social science explanation is to help in politics, it must utilize both narrative and tautological causation, both human agency and closure. So far, so good. We know that we want neither too much closure, nor too much agency, neither too much tautological causation, nor too much narrative causation. But consideration of the aims of political science must produce more than a "three bears" answer.

Ultimately, narrative causation is more critical because human agency is the sine qua non of politics. Only narrative accounts adequately speak to politics. Closed accounts prevent genuine political thinking, because they fail to consider how actors could have chosen differently. Tautologies hide important things about politics, specifically the need to convince others, and the importance of non-structural factors, such as contingencies and voluntaristic factors. Thus, while Mitchell's study is more technically brilliant than Tignor's, he squanders the power of his insights by wrapping them in a sterile necessity.²⁰ Much the same can be said of Fanon's revolutionary functionalism. On the whole, the complications and contingency built into narrative explanation is preferable on political grounds. Even Tignor's account, where the framing narrative is not terribly interesting, is politically helpful in that his causal chains are very thought-provoking.

The parsimony of tautological causation can be politically sterile for a number of reasons. For Fanon, the problem with synchronic, atemporal explanation is that as soon as one reads in individual agency, one is left wondering why only Algerian subalterns enjoyed agency in the Algerian revolution; both nationalist elites and French colonizers seem to follow a script that serves only to instigate the revolutionary transformation of the Algerian.

²⁰Mitchell's skill is seen partly in his innovative use of comparison, and partly in how he uses strategic location and suspicious coincidence to smuggle in narrative causation.

His focus on the atemporal transformation of consciousness, as a kind of conversion experience, leaves unexamined the external impetus for the very commitment to revolutionary action which he finds transformative. And that transformation only occurs, by his own theory, as a by-product of struggle. The interaction between even the fiercest political opponents is lost in his polemical explanation. Although his contemporaries and later radicals may find his necessitarian streak inspiring, political choice is (necessarily!) about contingent action.

In Mitchell's case, his interpretation of modernity is flawed because his account ultimately does not tolerate human agency in any sense that speaks to the practice of politics—except perhaps as an exercise in demystification. He paints a picture of modernity which is coercive, and from which there is no escape. Mitchell's exposé of modern coercion offers little hope of resistance. To the extent that Mitchell exposes ideas which control us, he demystifies and liberates us, yet by the same token, one wonders how far demystification can succeed. After all, he maintains that there is no autonomous realm of thought. (This is apparent from Mitchell's conscious choice of the terms "discursive practice" and "practices of discourse" in his analysis.)²¹ If thought and social practice are indistinguishable, how can anyone's arguments—even Mitchell's—free us from coercive social practices which simultaneously constitute forms of thought?

To the extent that Mitchell merely describes the coercive nature of social practices, his account is of little practical import. One need not read Colonising Egypt to realize that practices such as the military draft and martial drilling are inherently coercive. Moreover, he barely acknowledges the coercive power of these practices to destroy cities and kill opposition, treating it all as part of their power to coerce "certainty." Even accepting that a

²¹Comments by Mitchell at his presentation to a joint meeting of the South Asia/Middle East Politics and Society Workshop and the Comparative Politics and Historical Sociology Workshop, University of Chicago, February 2, 1995.

"reality effect" is the key coercive aspect of certain modern practices. there is no practical upshot to his findings. Their coercive creation of certainty is not enough for us to trade away the practical freedom which they produce. Thanks to modern street design, we can travel with great ease through cities. Thanks to printing we can read news from distant places. Not one of us would be willing to forgo these "coercive" practices in the name of a non-representational view of truth.

Nonetheless, Colonising Egypt does contain potentially valuable insights into the nature of politics, specifically, how social practices create certainty and political authority. If one understood why printing, schedules, and street design lead people to see the social order as immutable, one could educate members of society and so expand their sense of real alternatives beyond the given social order. Doing this would require examining the psychological connection between theory and practice. However, as we have seen, his account masks the role of human agency in this process. As a result, a whole political psychology is left hidden, and the language needed to raise these issues is left unarticulated. Uncovering that psychology would greatly advance the study of hegemony and assist in expanding the awareness of subordinate groups.

Tignor's idea of modernization does not indict either modernity or modernizers. Although he does not expose European "mischief" nor elucidate "white mythologies", it would be a mistake to think he white-washes colonial authorities. Rather than essentialize the domination in modernization, he describes the processes of domination which together made up British colonial rule. We can see how power operates at the level of men making decisions. From this we can learn what sorts of influence might have been exerted on them to change policy, what were the effects of their rule, and to what extent they were responsible for Egypt's later difficulties. By the same token, his analysis of decisions seems to leave out an inherent tendency of the colonial encounter which Mitchell elucidates,

specifically, the way practices dictate discourses in unconscious ways and thus reproduce themselves.²²

In their methodological stances, Tignor the historian foregrounds people, whereas Mitchell the political scientist privileges theoretical propositions. This may make for a more interesting argument, but it makes ineffective politics. Without ever explicitly articulating a message about domination, power or resistance, Tignor leaves a story there for his readers, who can find it if they so choose. By contrast, Mitchell buries important lessons about political authority inside a seamless model. Thus, when an account is too ambitiously deductive, no matter how explicitly political its agenda, it ends up being surprisingly apolitical. Consequently, we learn more about politics from the conventional historian, Tignor, than from the metaphysical political scientist, Mitchell.

5.5. Substantive Theory, Research Programs, and Political Action

The above discussion of causation does not adequately distinguish between the individual and collective dimensions of human agency. Implicitly, the two poles of causal explanation were given value at different levels of action. Thus, directionality is privileged at the individual level and parsimony is favored at the collective level. Directionality is essential at the individual level, because it provides the foundation for collective action in a philosophical or meta-theoretical sense: if individuals are not the motors that produce change in society, then there is no point in us speaking to each other of change at all. Conscious social change requires an active subject, and that subject is ultimately made up of individual minds.²³

²²See my comments above, section 3.3, 124, n. 17.

²³This is not to make a naive liberal claim about individuals as social atoms. I acknowledge that individuals are the product of their social environment. Indeed, identity is socially constituted. But as soon as one enters the realm of time—and time is the quintessentially human realm where change occurs—we

Conversely, we cannot offer advice for political choice if we do not offer an account of social life that stands outside time in its parsimony. As a practical matter, a social science must pick and choose its factors of analysis: an account that did not attempt to delimit factors would not be, in any meaningful sense a science, and even when it did (inevitably but only implicitly) limit them, it would not be sufficiently clear to be helpful. We need parsimony for action, in practice, as a collectivity. We need directionality as a matter of theory, for freedom grounds individual agency in principle.

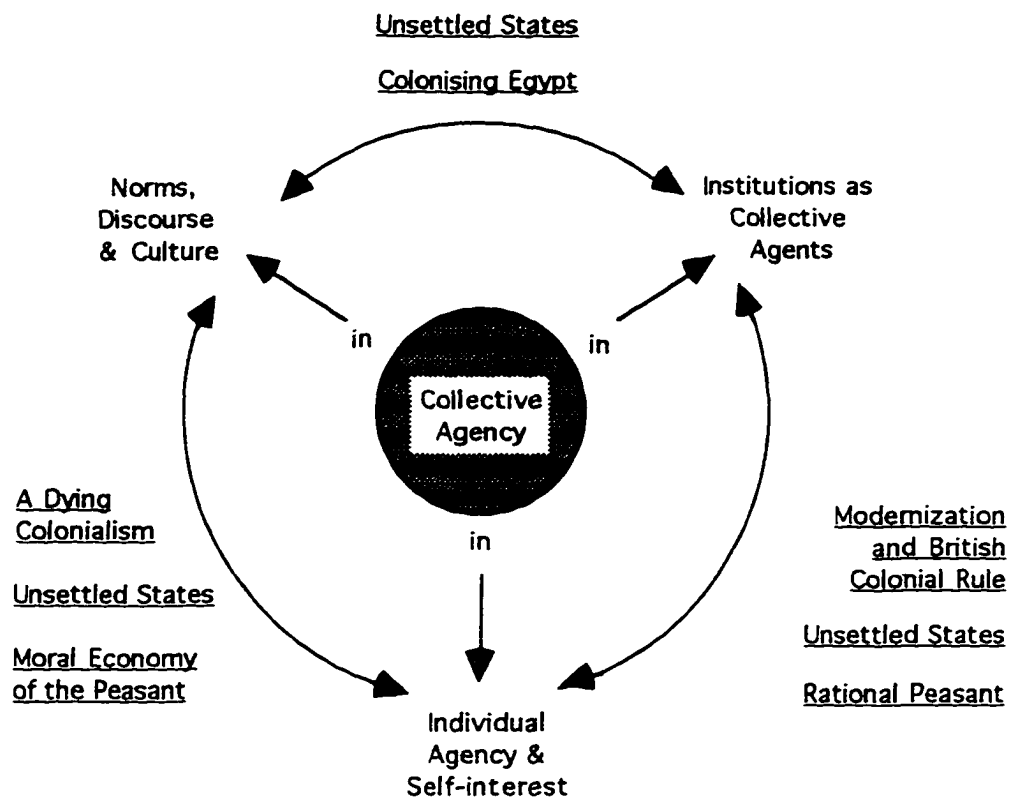
While rational choice and game theorists have lately made bold claims for methodological individualism, judging by the practical aim of a science for politics, methodological individualism should be used self-consciously as a heuristic. If used heuristically, much can be learned from rational choice framings, but if treated dogmatically, the discipline's core aims, both cognitive and practical are undermined. As I have already discussed the risks of highly deductive theory, I turn to the roles that different kinds of substantive theory can play in enhancing collective agency.

At the end of the last chapter I suggested that the agency of communities had three facets: individual agency, institutions, and discourse. Below, Figure 5.1 presents in schematic form the substantive linkages that are addressed by each of the works discussed in chapters 2, 3, and 4. As we saw in Figure 4.3, Scott and Popkin are concerned primarily with the discourse/self-interest and self-interest/institution linkages of collective agency, respectively, and neither addresses the linkage between discourse and institutions. Tignor and Mitchell are primarily concerned with the individual agency/institution and discourse/institution linkages, respectively. Fanon is primarily concerned with the link between individual and cultural change. The ambition of Lustick's Unsettled States is

can see that for us as partners in speech to deliberate on the common good and where we want to go, we must have autonomy as individuals in some existential sense. Otherwise, our collective effort is not meaningfully undetermined. Precisely to the extent that meaning is not fixed, that is the degree to which we have freedom of choice. And this presupposes that collective choice takes place through individuals.

apparent in the fact that he alone of the works discussed attempts to close the circle and account for all three aspects of collective agency.

Figure 5.1— Collective Agency in the Works Discussed



My placement of the works around the circle does not indicate the direction of causality, nor even if a scholar argues for directionality at all.

While a work need not address all three to be socially useful—especially since all three facets are not necessarily equally operative at all times—the social theorist must be careful to acknowledge the *potential* role of all three. Obviously, Lustick's analysis addresses all three, which he accomplishes by limiting the influence of individual agency on institutions to wars of maneuver and its influence on culture to wars of position. During

normal politics, the direction of causality flows downward, constraining individual agency. The remaining works all exhibit a division of labor, which should first of all be evaluated on the basis of whether they leave open the potential role of other dimensions of collective agency. Oddly, the poles of the methodological spectrum, Mitchell and Popkin, are both weak in this regard: Mitchell, because his account attributes logical necessity to discourses and practices alone, thus removing individual agency, and Popkin, because his argument explicitly renders culture as non-discursive (e. g., subsistence norms are equilibria reducible to self-interest), which denies the power of discourse to shape collective action. While Fanon, Tignor, and Scott all have (in principle) partial analyses, none of them explicitly reduces the the absent aspect of agency to their central modes. In essence, I am only insisting on the *principle* that all three dimensions be not directly denied, since the denial of one aspect or another has invidious consequences for political life: If there is no individual agency, there is no freedom, so why act? If discourse is irrelevant, then political contestation is solely about power, so why attempt to persuade on the basis of norms? And if institutions are irrelevant, why seek to influence them?

The contribution of each work can be evaluated not only on their relative success on their own terms, but on the extent to which they address a problem which is fundamental to collective action. This goes beyond the traditional arguments about whether the researcher has solved the problem she has set for herself, or even whether her role in the division of labor explains more or less of the empirical data shared with another account. (These two rubrics comprise the typical interpretivist and positivist grounds for dispute about scholarly merit.) For example, Scott explains why peasants are likely to rebel, while Popkin documents the devices needed to overcome the free rider problem, and thus shows what is needed for *successful* resistance. Explaining the success of rebellion seems more important for enhancing collective agency than merely the fact of rebellion. Likewise, Fanon explains why Algerians overcame colonial hegemony, while Lustick shows why, given the

breakdown of that hegemony, actual national independence occurred. Although the problems are different in the agents they focus on, Fanon's can fit inside Lustick's. Finally, Tignor explains the development and effects of British colonial rule, while Mitchell explains the inner logic of colonial practices; in this last case, it is difficult to use collective agency as a yardstick for comparing research programs. In effect, I am arguing that the aim of collective agency provides a partial means to evaluate problem formulation and research programs.

5.6. Conclusion

This dissertation has been an exercise in reading social science, and thus is an exploration of: (a) how one can become aware of the presuppositions in one's own choices of method, (b) the value in the work of opposing theoretical and methodological schools, and (c) how to rank and balance those values.

I believe the arguments above have shown that social science is and should not be seen as a speculative discipline. Political science is ultimately not undertaken for its own sake, but as an instrument to some other end, with the proviso that the integrity of the instrument must be respected. Realizing this integrity requires attention not only to the formal side of methodology, but to its substantive and normative entailments. Only by reflecting on those substantive and normative values can we hope to realize our own potential, both as political scientists, and as members of broader communities.

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