The VDP-triad in Ideational Analysis

Toward a general theory of ideological thought-content in social and political communication, debate, thought and language – beyond the concepts 'ideology', 'culture', 'belief-system', 'discourse' and 'policy'

Part I

Mats Lindberg

Abstract

I will propose a unified analytical frame, or a general theory, of the inner structure of social and political thought or ideas, as well as idea-systems. I will reconstruct and modernize the (not totally original, yet partwise forgotten) hypothesis that all social and political thought consists of three generic thought dimensions, underlying the symbolic surface of the language-use: first, *values* or value-judgements (V); secondly, *descriptions* and judgements of reality (D); thirdly, *prescriptions*, recommendations or practical proposals for action (P). These three, I hold, are always directly or indirectly combined in argument-sequences of *practical reasoning*. I term these argument-sequences *VDP–triads*. Such triads – this is the kernel of my proposed general theory – form the argumentative (dialogical or dialectical), action-guiding and action-directing backbone of the common ideal-type political ideologies (such as liberalism, conservatism, feminism etc.). They are also present as the inner argumentative backbone of deliberative political debate, public policy, and opinion-forming political propaganda; and of the cultural beliefs and action-guiding or action-accompanying thoughts in everyday, social and political communication and language. My proposed general theory is thus *content-oriented and morphological*, regarding the thought-content and inner structure of ideas and idea-systems; *not functional or causal*, regarding the societal role or spread of ideas, or the psychological or historical origins of them.

The theory-developing method is synthesizing and reconstructive, based on a concept-historical, concept-critical and theory-critical investigation of the prevailing knowledge situation. I use already existing theoretical building-bricks from the three main theoretical traditions regarding ideas: the political science knowledge tradition regarding 'political ideologies', as well as a bunch of approach-specific concepts like 'policy' or 'doctrine'; general social theory regarding 'culture' respectively

Mats Lindberg är professor emeritus i statsvetenskap vid Örebro universitet.
E-post: mats.lindberg@oru.se

'ideology'; and the Marxist and post-Marxist notions of 'dominant Ideology' and 'dominant Discourse'. All these three theoretical traditions have conceptual short-comings in some respects, as I see it, or have tenable theorems in other respects. Thus, I find some theoretical building-bricks useful, while others are disregarded or dismissed. My proposed general theory consists of three parts: 1) a theoretical anchoring in general social theory; 2) a theoretical model (the VDP-triad); and 3) a two-level analytical scheme, involving the fundamental and the operative lev-els of action-guiding or action-accompanying thought. As a scientific hypothesis, brought forth through critical analysis of the prevailing knowledge situation, and a subsequent, reconstructive and synthesizing effort, I consider my proposed general theory (hypothetically) as the argued 'strong alternative' compared to the other theoretical alternatives.

My elaborations start from a meta-theoretical perspective of *political under-standing* and from the notion of the *rationalizing mission* for the social sciences, especially political science, vis-à-vis the actual problems of the contemporary situ-ation, the proposed public policies and the positions of various actors in the polit-ical debate. The theory is intended for use in descriptive, content-oriented and classificatory analyses of social and political ideas *(idea-analysis)*; and in system-atic, empirically, logically and normatively *rationalizing criticism* of the same ideas *(idea-criticism)*.

Introduction[1]

> For it is not names [words] that constitute governments,
> but the use and exercise of those powers
> that were intended to accompany them.

John Locke, *Two Treatises of government* (1690).[2]

I have for a long time[3] felt the need to 'bring ideas back in'.[4] This essay is an attempt to do so.[5] On the one hand, with a substantial intention; pointing to the importance of ideas as objects of research. On the other hand, with an analytical intention, which is my main task; searching for a fruitful and appropriate conceptualization of 'the ideational phenomenon in society'.[6] In fact, the essay is a condensed version of a book-idea I once had. I imagined

1   This essay is divided into two parts, to be published in two separate issues of *Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift*, 2018:2 respectively 2018:3. Part I consists of Introduction plus Chapter One, 'Bringing ideas back in', and Two, 'Encircling the proposed general theory' (Sections 1-14), and Part II consists of Chapters Three, 'The inconsistent and fragmented knowledge situation'; Four, 'Working towards the general theory'; and Five, 'Proposing the general theory' (Sections 15-30). A shorter version of my views has earlier been published in Boréus and Bergström eds. 2017: Ch. 4.

2   Locke 1975 [1690]: 226 (§ 215). My brackets. The English word 'name' (Lat. *nomen*), was used interchangeably with 'term' or 'word' by Locke in his time. See also Hobbes *Leviathan* (1651), Ch. 4 "Of Speech" with the same interchangeable use of these terms; Hobbes 1968 [1651]: 109. This quote from Locke is the motto of Lasswell's and Kaplan's comprehensively paradigm-setting *Power and Society* (1950); pointing to the important role of symbols and language in political action and interaction.

3   I wish to express my sincere thanks to the many people who along the road have contributed valuable criticism and encouraging support. But some must be mentioned specifically. First, my old teachers and friends: Stefan Björklund, Sverker Gustavsson and Evert Vedung. The editor, Evert Vedung, has repeatedly made detailed and encouraging comments, and has shown remarkable patience (!) with my struggles and troubles. From the last rounds of writing Björn Badersten (with strategically important inputs), Magnus Jerneck, Kristina Boréus (who also read an early, untidy manuscript), Leif Lewin, Sofia Näsström, Ulf Mörkenstam (with invaluable critical support), Urban Strandberg, Stig Arne Nohrstedt and Ruth Wodak (via e-mail). From the conferences of *The Swedish Network in Political Theory* through the process, especially Ludvig Beckman, Göran Collste, Jörgen Hermansson and Peter Strandbrink. From Lund: Anders Sannerstedt. From Karlstad: Hans Lödén, Curt Räftegård, Malin Rönnblom, Line Säll and Andreas Öjehag-Pettersson. From Örebro: Jan Jämte (in Political Science) and Peter Berglez (in Media and Communication) who together with Stig Arne Nohrstedt made a constructive reading of an early, untidy manuscript. Without these wonderful friends and colleagues (and others not mentioned by name) nothing at all would have been accomplished! The remaining flaws are of course my own responsibility, in the continuing process of 'conjectures and refutations' (Popper 1963).

4   Paraphrasing the famous book-title of Skocpol 1974.

5   I have recently had the opportunity to publish a shorter version of my views in Kristina Boréus and Göran Bergström eds. *The Analysis of Text and Discourse* (2017: 86-121), namely Chapter 4 with the title 'Qualitative Analysis of Ideas and Ideological Content'.

6   I preliminarily choose the neutral term 'ideational phenomenon', alternating with 'ideas'. As the reader can see, there are several theory-laden alternatives to choose among, like 'ideology', 'culture', 'belief-system' or 'Discourse' (with a capital 'D', in the Althusser-Pécheux-Foucauldian sense, close to the Marxist 'Ideology' with a capital 'I'), and many other approach-bound terms, which we will meet below. These terms, and their attached conceptual content, fetched from various theories, will be discussed throughout this essay in my concept-critical and theory-developing efforts. See Section 3 below, and Sections 15-20 in Part II.

situating Herbert Tingsten's[7] content-oriented and morphological (regarding the inner structure) idea-analyses and idea-criticisms of the 1930's in the intellectual landscape of contemporary social theory and contemporary language philosophy. Tingsten's idea-analysis and idea-criticism was part of his programme for a democratically 'rationalizing' political science, emerging in face of the idea-struggles and the totalitarian ideologies of the 1920s and 1930s.[8] Inspired by his views, the subsequent 'Uppsala school of idea-analytical political science' (as I will term it) eventually developed this programme over the years. You may regard my elaborations as a modernizing reconstruction of the theoretical position of the mentioned 'Uppsala school', as part of the broader political science knowledge tradition.[9] But since I situate this programme in the wider context of contemporary social theory and language philosophy, my reconstructive elaborations in fact will turn out to be a contribution to *contemporary, basic social scientific theory*. Since my proposed theory is intended to be *basic theory*, it shall be regarded as a suggested representation of (hypothetical and argued) 'metaphysical' properties of all social and political thought, generically underlying the symbolic surface of all language and discourse, all expressive symbols and all cultural forms; as far as these are social and political, that is, involved in or related to the institutional or cultural configuration of society. Consequently, my theoretical elaborations – if considered fruitful and hypothetically valid – will be theoretically relevant for *all analysis of ideas* (or 'the ideational phenomenon') in both political and social life. Accordingly, my elaborations, hopefully, will be relevant not only in political science idea-analyses or sociological cultural studies, but also, for example, in the research-programme of multidisciplinary (Critical) Discourse Studies, as it has been developed over the decades especially by the leading, linguistic discourse analysts in Europe, Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodek.[10] All in all, I simply will propose a morphological *general theory* regarding the inner structure of *ideological thought-content* in social and political communication, debate, messaging and language.

7   Herbert Tingsten was a legendary Swedish political scientist, professor in political science in Stockholm between 1935-1946. In 1946 he became chief editor of the liberal *Dagens Nyheter*, very influential during the 1950s, contributing to the political culture of reasoned argument in Sweden.

8   See Tingsten 1933: 1-120.

9   I deliberately use the label 'political science knowledge tradition' to include all the studies of a broad empirical, historical and normative knowledge tradition (that historically was united in Plato's dialogues, Thuchydides' *History* or Aristotle's *Politics*). That is, I include both 'Political philosophy' or 'Political Theory' as well as (empirical and realist) 'Political Science' or (practical or normative) 'Government' under this label. But I also include investigations or knowledge traditions of Philosophy, History, Law, Sociology or Intellectual History, as far as those investigations or traditions concern *political* structures, processes, issues, events, ideas or thinkers.

10   See van Dijk 1998; van Dijk ed. 2011; van Dijk 2013. Van Dijk has also developed a theory of 'ideology' as the substantial thought-content of social and political discourse. On this track we will later also meet Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak (see Section 19, below).

Before I go more closely into my elaboration and proposed general theory, I wish to comment briefly on the contemporary historical, political and ideological situation, and my own standpoint in this situation, which motivates my task and purpose. Even if my effort is analytical it is not normatively innocent, like most social scientific contributions. Having lived through several generational, ideological trends in politics and social science, I have long experienced (and criticized) a critical or hesitating attitude among intellectuals regarding basic democratic, liberal institutions and principles.[11] We can think of the neo-Marxist wave about 1970 (representative democracy as capitalist class-rule);[12] the neo-liberal and anti-political wave about 1980 (the welfare state as oppressive of individual freedom); the post-modernist and post-structuralist waves about 1990 (enlightenment and rationality, as well as universal human rights, as oppressive); the deliberative and direct democracy wave about 1990 (parliamentary democracy as sham democracy); and the 'identity politics' wave about 2000 (representative democracy as an instrument of the oppressive majority); and several others. The indifference, or actual depreciating attitude, among leading intellectuals (often instead hailing some unreachable or untenable 'deeper' democracy or some more truthful, righteous principle)[13] has been pointed to by several authors.[14] The result, as I see it, has been a dangerous – and unnecessary – weakening of the defence line vis-à-vis the real threats to democratic institutions and principles that has been growing for some time

11   Since John Stuart Mill it has been convenient to make a distinction between 'political liberalism' and 'economic liberalism', where 'political liberalism' (connoting political equality, freedom of assembly and organization as well as freedom of speech and expression) is compatible with both a welfare state and a mixed economy. For the term 'parliamentary liberal democracy', 'representative liberal democracy' or just 'liberal democracy', see Müller 2011: 3-6. See also, for the idea-historical continuance, Oakshott 1950 [1939]: xii-xiii, and Ch. 1 equating 'political liberalism' with 'representative democracy'. For a comprehensive survey of the use of the term 'democracy' about 1950 from a UN perspective, see Naess and Rokkan (1951) 'Analytical survey of agreements and disagreements' in Richard McKeon ed. (1951): 447-521.

12   I have been there myself, *culpa mea*, in my own '1968' (inspired by Nicos Poulantzas and Ralph Miliband) in a criticism of the representative democracy, the rule of law and the social-democratic welfare state in Sweden (!) as being supportive of 'monopoly capitalist class rule' (!) and remote from any true socialist society (!) (see Dahlkvist 1975). My public self-criticism of this 'left socialist' position of the 1970s, and my return to a social democratic reformism, or left-liberalism, centred around the institutions of liberal political democracy, appeared in some articles in the 1980s, first signalled in the Introduction of the Swedish translation of Jürgen Habermas *Bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit* (Swed. transl as *Borgerlig offentlighet*, Arkiv förlag 1984). In this move I was of course not alone among the members of my political generation! Today I am glad, as many others also are, to meet even the tiniest fragment of these institutions in any country of the world.

13   To rally around deeper or more advanced democratic goals is of course desirable in principle, but in face of the mentioned actual and real double threat (to our hard-won polyarchal advances) we must be realists about our resources, goals and strategies. We must not repeat the mistakes of the divided democratic forces of the 1920s and 1930s, respectively holding tight to their own banners, that simplified for right-wing extremism to win the upper hand. For some insightful analyses, see Berman 1998; Berman 2006; Müller 2011.

14   See e.g. Hollander 1998 [1981]; Ellis 1998; Lilla 2001; Lilla 2017; Wolin 2001; Wolin 2004; Wolin 2006; Wolin 2010; Gregor 2006; Stedman Jones 2012.

and which we experience more fully today. I am deeply concerned, and I am not alone, about the growing Nationalism, right-wing Populism, Fascism, neo-Nazism or general reactionary or ultra-conservative themes of our time – on a global scale. We are seemingly thrown back to a historical situation similar of the 1930s, and with similar conflict-lines between traditionalism versus modernity and between authoritarian versus democratic rule – on a global scale. But I am also deeply concerned about the efforts of economic and political elites in perceived stable democratic countries trying to put their own partial interest before any suggested 'common' or 'public interest'. They seem prepared, in country after country, to disregard any democratic value or principle, and in the worst-case scenario, utilize right-wing populism or nationalist sentiments for their own, particular or private urge for political or economic power. In face of this double threat we ought all together, if we regard ourselves as democratic citizens and researchers, to rally around and defend – at least – the most basic democratic institutions and principles in our societies, that is, the base-line of liberal, representative, procedural democracy.[15] To speak now only of Europe, the issue is perhaps even more serious, since the mentioned double threat, since decades, coincides with similar disregarding attitudes of leading, practical politicians and administrators, which has been demonstrated by Jan Werner Müller in his important *Contesting Democracy. Political Ideas in Twentieth Century Europe* (2011).

My own value-standpoint in these matters – to make the value-standpoint transparent from the start[16] – consists of a bouquet of base-line democratic principles or values. First the normative principle (not the practice, of course) of pluralist, 'procedural' democracy (Dahl 1989; Dahl1998), or 'parliamentary liberal democracy' (Müller 2011). As I see it, this is the institutional minimum of any democratic society, posed against semi-democratic, semi-authoritarian or outright authoritarian constitutional views, so common today on a global scale. Secondly, the principle of 'reasoned argument' (Naess 1966; Albert 1985 [1968]; Meehan 1981; Vedung 1982) posed against the imminent dangers of propaganda and power-speech, or any subjective *voluntarism* or voluntarist will on the part of strong political actors. Thirdly, the principle of 'enlightened understanding' (Dahl 1972; 1989; 1998), stated as an important value for any attempted democratic society, posed against any proclaimed, monolithic 'absolute truth'

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15   Robert Dahl has launched a (normative) political theory of 'modern representative democracy' with five basic 'criteria' or values (Dahl 1998: 37-38) and six basic institutional complexes (Dahl 1998: 85-86).

16   The programme of making the value-standpoint transparent in order to make a critical and intersubjective discussion possible (as the only variant of 'objectivity' in the social sciences) was launched by Max Weber in his essay on objectivity in the social sciences (1949 [1904]: 50-112) and was developed by Gunnar Myrdal to a whole meta-methodological programme for social scientific research, presented shortly in an appendix to *An American Dilemma* (1996 [1944]: 1037-1070), and developed further in the first chapters of *Asian Drama* (1968).

resulting in indoctrination (see classically Popper 2006 [1945]; Brecht 1959; Popper 1972).[17] Fourthly, the principle of 'democratic reformism', or 'piece-meal social engineering', posed against any alleged value-objective, radical or utopian revolutionary voluntarism (see e.g. Hermansson 2003; Bernstein 1961[1899]; Popper 2006 [1945]).[18] Consequently, I adhere to the established – but sometimes forgotten – view of the mission and moral obligation of the social sciences, especially of political science, to make historically contingent *enlightening* or *critically rationalizing* contributions – as transparent as possible – to the public debate in 'polyarchal', that is, attempted democratic societies.[19]

As I see it, systematic, descriptive, content-oriented and classificatory analysis of ideological and political alternatives is needed for the enlightened political understanding among the public, especially in this contemporary historical situation. Likewise needed is also the critical scrutiny – empirical, logical and normative – of the various propagated ideas or political proposals. In such analyses a systematic analytical frame or a general theory is of importance, both for the descriptive and the critical tasks. (See sections 4, 10 and 12, below.) Thus, my effort here is not to make a substantial political and ideological analysis of our time, however important such an intervention would be. Instead it is to bring out *a theoretical and conceptual contribution*, aiming at a unified analytical frame, or a general morphological theory of the inner structure of ideas or idea-systems, to be used in descriptive idea-analysis respectively scrutinizing idea-criticism. As I see it, *ideas* – or 'ideological thought-content' (as I will term it below) – are inherent in all social and political debate, communication, messaging, thought and language; normally hidden under a symbolic surface of rhetorical figures or cunning, discursive language-use (choice of words,

17 Since outright or absolute 'truth' is no option in the scientific community, 'argued relative truth' must be taken as the appropriate view. See Myrdal 1996 [1944]: 1035-1070; Popper 2003 [1945]: Ch. 25; Popper 1972: Ch. 2. The same perspectivist, but intellectually argued, stance also goes for values, directed against every alleged 'value-objectivism' or alleged absolute moral 'truth'; see classically Brecht 1959: Ch. III, VI, VIII.

18 Eduard Bernstein must be regarded as the classic point of departure for the modern theory of democratic reformism; see his 1961 [1899]: xxxii and Ch. III. A similar argument is proposed by Popper 2006 [1945] Vol. 1: 22-25, 157-168). I do not adhere to all of Popper's positions in this work, of course, but the general argument against essentialist, holistic (totalitarian), utopian thought is an important contribution to the democratic heritage. For insightful critical analyses of the contrary position, that of radical, essentialist, totalitarian, utopian or voluntarist thought, see e.g. Tingsten 1973 [1941] (analysing the internal abandonment of 'orthodox Marxism' in Swedish Social Democracy); Talmon 1960 (analysing, in the vein of Popper, the intellectual history of 'political messianism' in European political thought, and 'totalitarian' thought to the right and to the left); Larsson 1970 (analysing classical Social Democracy before 1917); Lundquist 1982 (analysing Lenin); Gregor 1968 (analysing fascism and communism); Gregor 2005 (analysing 'Mussolini's intellectuals'); Brekke 2012 (analyzing the contemporary 'fundamentalist mindset').

19 Robert Dahl terms our attempted democratic societies 'polyarchies' so that we should not mix up the shining ideal of 'democracy' with the necessarily soiled reality of 'polyarchies'. See Dahl 1971; Dahl 1998.

grammatical forms or discursive forms). Ideas preferably present themselves as non-contested, natural 'common sense' or some 'natural truth', sometimes even as 'the voice of God', 'the true national culture' or 'the voice of the people'. Ideas may also present themselves, or rather hide themselves, as parts of some non-ideological, 'instrumental', or science-based, solution to 'technical' social or political problems. The actual origins of ideas may be found in socialization processes or cultural traditions, transmitted between generations. They may also be found in sheer propaganda, as well as in critical deliberation or reasoned argument. However disguised or presented, or whatever the origins, social and political *ideas* are: 1) always there; 2) always 'essentially contested' by at least some social actor; and 3) always argumentative or dialectical-dialogical, either directly involved in argument or indirectly argument-laden vis-á-vis the discursive situation. Finally, and generally, 4) they are involved in and are important for the historical preservation or change of the institutional and cultural configurations of society.

My theory-developing argument is roughly as follows. From Herbert Tingsten, the Uppsala school, and other political science studies of *political theories, political ideologies* and *principled policy debates* – which together have been my initial laboratory – comes the hypothesis of the *inner structure* of all political thought as consisting of three basic or generic thought dimensions: first values or value-judgements (V); secondly, descriptions or judgements of reality (D); and thirdly, prescriptions or practical proposals for action (P). These three are always directly or indirectly combined in argument-sequences of *practical reasoning* (a term I borrow from linguistic philosophy).[20] I term these argument-sequences 'VDP-triads'. Such triads form not only the argumentative, action-guiding and action-directing backbone – the inner structure – of the common ideal-type political ideologies (such as liberalism, conservatism, feminism etc.), but also the manifest or latent inner structure of deliberative political debate, public policy respectively opinion-forming political propaganda. Would it be possible to synthesize this three-tiered view into a common theoretical model, which could represent the underlying thought-dimensions in all messages, communications, thoughts and languages throughout the whole political system? After investigating various empirical approaches, I found that the answer was 'yes'.

However, the theory of political life as a *political system*, that is, a system of 'political actions and interactions' (following in the ever widening foot-steps of Harold Lasswell and David Easton), points to the *General Theory of Social Action* – in theoretical Sociology – where all 'social systems' are proposed to consist of 'actions and interactions' (with Max Weber and Talcott Parsons as godfathers with ever widening legacies). Would my VDP-triads get support

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20   See originally Gauthier 1963; see later e.g. Walton 1990; Richardson 1994.

even from General Social Theory and thus be valid in all social domains and fields? To my surprise this proved to be the case. Consequently, it would be possible to conceive my proposed general theory as being valid not only of the thought in the formal political system with its parties, lobby-groups, media sites and governmental institutions, but also of the thought in informal, 'para-political' smaller social systems, such as business enterprises, trade unions, congregations, voluntary organizations or families which also have a 'political' aspect and possibly ought to be analysed as carriers of field-specifically 'politicized' or 'contested', or 'contestable', inherent ideas. Having reached that stage in my projected task, it became necessary to consider and assess some alternative, theoretical traditions – mainly the Marxist concept of 'the dominating Ideology' and the Althusser-Pécheux-Foucauldian concept of 'the dominating Discourse' – in the search for support for, or counter-arguments against, my proposed general theory.

My effort is synthesizing and reconstructive. I use already existing building-bricks, well-known to some readers (and not so well known by others), and reconsider them, as well as rearrange them, in a new structure in a new context. To accomplish this, I have felt the need to go beyond the horizons of contemporary, common paradigms and meta-theoretical perspectives; and many readers may feel disturbed or even offended. Consequently, it has also been necessary to throw concept-historical, concept-critical and theory-critical light on half-forgotten, paradigmatic highways and cross-roads. At the end I will (somewhat frivolously, I admit) call my proposed general theory 'the strong theoretical alternative' – proposed as a hypothetical proposition for critical discussion – compared to the other alternative conceptualizations (hypothetical in principle) regarding ideas or idea-systems in society. We will also eventually see that the three basic thought dimensions V, D and P, and the proposed analytical use of my general theory, stand in a special relationship to, yes, are necessary for, the *rationalizing mission* of the social sciences, especially political science.

Chapter One: Bringing ideas back in

1. THE ALL-EMBRACING PRESENCE OF IDEAS IN POLITICS AND SOCIETY

Ideas and idea-systems have insistently come to the fore – again – in domestic as well as world politics. Ideological tensions and seemingly irreconcilable views inform the strife between social and political actors, nationally as well as internationally. It seems as if we live in a dramatic historical period where the future outcomes to a large degree depend on idea-struggles and their parallel mass-based opinions; in the Middle East, regarding the future

of Islamism and authoritarian rule; in India, regarding Hindu Nationalism or more secular alternatives; in Russia, China and Turkey regarding variants of authoritarian rule; in Europe and the USA regarding Conservatism and Left Liberalism as well as Nationalism and Fascism;[21] and in the UN regarding, for example, the idea-struggles on gender-equality respectively global warming. Who remembers, or will adhere to, the perspective of 'the end of ideology' (Bell 1960) or 'the end of history' (Fukuyama 1992); or the Marxist perspective of one 'dominant Ideology' (Althusser 1971) with an accompanying 'dominant discourse' (Pécheux 1986 [1975])? Instead we are experiencing intense, pluralistic, political and ideological tensions and struggles where opinions and attempts at opinion-formation are decisive factors in social and political life – as always. In his impressive *Contesting Democracy. Political ideas in Twentieth Century Europe* (2011) Jan Werner Müller suggests that the whole twentieth century has been a century of ideas;[22] and more generally the period after the French revolution in European history is often referred to as 'the age of ideologies'.[23]

The *idea-struggles*[24] of today display a plurality of various *values, worldviews, goals, situational images, means-ends assumptions* and *practical proposals*. Regarding political thought, though, it is astonishing how little is new under the sun, or how strong is the grip of tradition.[25] For every new generation, some rejuvenated (neo-) Marxism, (neo-) Conservatism, (neo-) Liberalism or (neo-) Feminism seemingly opens a 'brave new world' for its new followers. The same recurring pattern of upgrading rejuvenation also goes for the contemporary variants of Racism, Nationalism, Nazism, Fascism, Islamism, Christian social doctrine, Hindu political thought and others; as well as their antagonists, whether radical or moderate. We are seemingly re-experiencing, today, in Europe and the US, the intensity of idea-struggles of the 1920's and the 1930's.[26] Remarkably the main contending ideological alternatives are the same, like the main conflict-lines, although their weight and strength is displaced.[27]

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21   The standard ideal-type political ideologies will be written with capital letters.

22   Müller 2011: 1-6.

23   See e.g. Aiken 1956; Watkins 1964; Bracher 1984; von Beyme 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). This term usually connotes the downgrading of religion and philosophy in social and political thought, or the 'disenchantment of the world' in the vein of Auguste Comte, J.S Mill, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx and Max Weber and their twentieth century followers.

24   I will express important theoretical terms, or just important terms, in italics; at least the first time they occur. But I know I am not very consistent on this point.

25   'Men make their own history', Karl Marx himself noted in a famous dictum in the aftermath of the revolutions of 1848, 'but not under circumstances chosen by themselves'. And he continues: 'The traditions of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.' (From the opening passage of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852.)

26   This period, and its main contending alternatives, is comprehensively described in e.g. Tingsten 1933; Oakshott 1939; Gross 1948. See also Sabine and Thorson 1974 [1937].

27   For an elementary over-view of the main comprehensive social and political ideologies of today, in

However, conflicting ideas are not only present among political parties or interest-organizations, lobby-groups or media sites. In a parallel polyphony, the same ideas are present in the diverging beliefs and attitudes among the citizenry. But conflicting ideas and views are prominent also in the principled debates, or even expert debates, regarding the conceptual framing and problem definition of various policy fields; for example, regarding energy and environment, education and health-care, immigration and family policy, economic policy or foreign policy.[28] Moreover, regarding the organization of democratic government (Müller 2011) or of the role and size of the public sector (Flora and Heidenheimer eds. 1981), we meet and have met basic diverging values and views as a constant trait of twentieth century political history.[29] Even the organization of public administration itself must be regarded as permeated by political interests and ideological images (see e.g. Therborn 1977; Rothstein 1998a; Olsson 2016).[30] The brave attempt of James March and Johan P. Olsen, once, to picture political and administrative life as mainly a process of rule-abiding or submission to a dominant 'logic of appropriateness' (March and Olsen 1989: 21-26) is giving way to a picture pointing at a plurality of 'competing...logics of appropriate behaviour' in formal, governmental bureaucracies (Olsen 2010: 135-38). The political character of bureaucratic organization has become especially visible and debated regarding the administrative program *New Public Management*. This reform program presented itself in a 'technical' and 'apolitical reform language', despite its deep ideological roots in neo-liberal political philosophy and neo-liberal economic theory. Consequently, this program led to an open 'politicization' in much practical reform work, as noted by several observers (see e.g. Olsen 2010: 9-10; Nyberg 2017).[31]

I will introduce another example from my own research, together with Urban Strandberg, on the political history of Swedish local government. The development of the Swedish *communes* was largely seen, in hand-books and research, as a 'natural' development of professionalization, government steering and enlargement of functions and tasks. Looking more closely into this

Europe and the USA (at least), see e.g. some of the following works: van Dyke 1995, Bronner ed. 1997; Gregor 2006; Larsson 2006; Heywood 2007; Ball and Dagger 2011; Brekke 2012.

28 See e.g. Levine 1963; Petersson 1964; Gustavsson 1971; Lundquist 1980; Stone 2002 [1988]; Strandberg 1998; Boman 2002; the examples are legion.

29 See e.g. Lewin 1967; Miliband 1972; Lindblom 1977; Flora and Heidenheimer eds. 1981; Lepage 1982 [1978]; Rothstein 1998b; Hoover 2003; Müller 2011; Stedman Jones 2012.

30 Rothstein's remarkable work (inspired by Therborn 1977) features the ideologically tinted ways of organizing administrative bureaucracy in the policy fields of education, respectively the labour market, in Sweden; the first one organized to support liberal-conservative views of education, the other one deliberately designed to promote social democratic reform politics in the labour-market. Note that Rothstein's analysis relies on an idea-analytical awareness of underlying ideological standpoints, which informs his investigation; thus, supporting my general argument here, of the general need of a consciously elaborated idea-analytical perspective.

31 See also e.g. McLaughlin, Osborne and Ferlie eds. 2002; Diefenbach 2009.

historical development, we instead found a fundamental idea-debate and idea-struggle. From the very beginning of the modern *communes*, in 1862, there was already a controversy between conservatives and liberals about what values and ideological imaging should be instituted in the organization of the local community. A century later, social democrats and left-liberals together imposed their modernizing, state-centred will over a weakened, conservative resistance, and transformed local self-government into mainly a government instrument of social reform policies. An interesting thing was that the contending 'commune ideologies', as we termed them, all through this long period were mirror images of the main comprehensive political ideologies in parliament and government; although customized to the field-specific constitutional issues in question (see Strandberg 1998; Dahlkvist and Strandberg 1999).[32] Thus, there is good reason to make an analytical distinction between the *comprehensive*, main political ideologies regarding government and society (since 1789 at least) and *field-specific* ideologies regarding various policy-fields or sub-fields of society (for this distinction, see Lindberg 2017: 90-91); appearing both in the idea-struggles over family policy, environmental policy, educational policy and others, and also in business companies, work-places, congregations, unions, families and so on. Field-specific ideologies, however, are up to now mostly studied case-wise, as by-products of policy-studies or cultural studies. They are yet to be systematically investigated – as significant idea systems or ideologies – in broad comparative and classificatory studies; even on a global scale.

But ideas and idea-systems are also found outside the formal political system. They are found in the cultural sphere, in the production of art, film and literature as well as architecture and monuments; of course, also influenced by political programmes, funding and steering.[33] On top of that, we meet astonishingly heated debates in and about everyday life, regarding anything from codes of conduct to consumption habits and dating habits; as if the idea-struggles of 'identity-politics' have a parallel in a colloquial 'politics of identity'. This 'politicized' norm-debating small-talk is of course permeated by ideological values, views of (wo)man or deeply held beliefs and attitudes related to the preservation or reform of the informal institutions and the cultural traditions of society or a sub-culture of it. They may be reflexes of both *comprehensive* and *field-specific* ideas and idea-systems. Viewed in a long-term perspective, though, this ideological and politicized small-talk may be part of a larger historical process, with unforeseen consequences for the future changes in values,

32   I have changed my surname from Dahlkvist to Lindberg. See the reference list below.

33   See e.g. Habermas 1989 [1962], Swed. transl. 1984; Willet 1978; Johnson 1988; Wheeler 2006; Gordon and McCormick 2013.

views and institutions of society, as measured for example in the global *World Value Survey.*[34]

So, ideas are all around in the organizational structure of society: ardent or solemn; manifest or latent; contested in idea-struggles; resting in 'naturalized' common sense; 'reified' to the point of habitual naturalness that they reveal no contested thought-content at all; appearing in emergent fluidity or in 'cemented' fixation. Ideas are inherent in all actions and interactions, as well as in the corresponding communication-patterns and language-use of all actors, whether individual or collective. (The simplest illustration of this proposition is the observance of the everyday actions of the reader herself and her social and political environment.) Hence, ideas – as action-accompanying, action-guiding thoughts – are inherent in all institutions, organizations or cultural traditions which make up the institutional or cultural configurations that 'society' consists of; since these are made up of repeated and institutionalized patterns (or structures) of actions and interactions and the corresponding patterns (or structures) of communication and language-use. Ideas, thus, are important for the persistence of – or change in – all society and all politics.

2. THE NEED TO FOCUS ON IDEAS

Considering the prominence and significance of ideas involved in the processes of historical and political *preservation or change*, we, as researchers should always focus on this ideational aspect of society, irrespective of what we would like to term it. Preferably we should also use concepts anchored in a systematic theory, or in a systematic comparative or classificatory analytical frame. However, in my opinion, the social sciences, including their Marxist and 'critical' compartments, have since long underplayed the role of ideas or the need to describe and analyse the *intentional political meaning* or the *ideational thought content* accompanying or guiding the society-constructive and history-forming actions and interactions; whether of networking elites or mobilized masses. The focus has most often been on the *explanation* of the origins, spread or functions of ideas, and not on the question *what it is, that is to be explained.*

It is not enough, in my opinion, as in the last decades, to have made a 'language turn' in the humanities and the social sciences (from which we of course have learned a lot). We also need an *ideational turn*, as I will call it, a direct focus on *the ideational side of language* and the specific *ideas* (the specific *ideological thought content)* inherent in communication and language-use. Neither is it enough, as in the canon of much contemporary political science (from which we have also learned much and will continue to do so), to study the spread of citizen-attitudes in various segments of the population; the

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34   See e.g. Inglehart and Norris 2003; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Norris and Inglehart 2011.

citizen support for one or the other political party; the results of elections; the processes of mass-mobilization or the emergence of social or political movements; or the causes why and how a specific policy-change is taking place; all this is not enough, in my opinion, *unless the political meaning inherent in the action-guiding thought-content is specified first.* In most political science studies, as I see things, the *intentional and ideational side of politics,* or the *political meaning,* is underplayed by the researcher in the investigations of actors, events, situations or processes. In some investigations ideas are not known or specified at all, neither as background nor as the object of research. In other investigations, intentions and ideas are in fact present, but cloudy, or tacitly assumed, perhaps hidden under some conventional or dubious concept of 'interest'. (The concept 'interest' is often used as an 'objective' Archimedean point, attributing specific 'objective interests' to various actors; the simplest one is the self-interest to maximize individual utility. More complex ones regard the 'interests' of business, farmers or labourers, or even the state.) In fact, though, these 'objective interests' always turn out to be 'subjective', that is *subjective social constructions* consisting of values, identities, intentions or cultures, as well as subjective perceptions of the alleged problems and possibilities of the situation; for example, by the various business lobby groups,[35] the various farmer's organizations or the various labour parties or unions. (This does not rule out the objectivity of real situational facts; only that the actors' perceptions and evaluations of them are necessarily value-loaded, perspective-bound and subjective.) To put it briefly: without knowledge of the ideas, the intentions and the perceived situational images of the actors, there will be a low degree of *political understanding* from the side of the researcher.

Moving to another territory, it is consequently not enough, as in the traditions of left 'critical theory' or left 'deconstruction' (from which we have also learned a lot), to reveal the fact that an established mode of thought and language involves a *power aspect,* or that it is an instrument or outflow of some 'dominant power', 'hegemony' or 'hierarchy'. This *power-critical perspective* receives its momentum from a two-sided political theory, which starts out from the assumption of a conflict line between *dominance and power* of elites, on the one hand, and *subjection and suppression* of common people, on the other.[36] Having this view, the power-critical perspective (similar to political sci-

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35   The ideas of American business are in fact studied in a classic work, and the reader may be surprised by the advanced and systematic ideological thinking that is found. See Sutton, Harris, Kaysen and Tobin 1956.

36   Even Jürgen Habermas in his post-Marxist tour de force *A Theory of Communicative Action* (1984 [1981]) continues this two-sided power-perspective, now 'reified' into the dominating 'system world' and the dominated 'life-world'. In this way he abandons the Marxist class-perspective, signalled in his (1979 [1976]), while at the same time perpetuating and reifying the basic two-sided pattern of Marxist political theory (some would say 'political ontology'). The same two-sided post-Marxist 'political ontology' is found with Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985), or with most

ence, but from another starting point) underplays *the ideational side of politics* and the various plural directions of action-guiding thoughts which are present in the political and ideological struggles. In the face of the plural idea-struggle pointed to above, I find (and I am not alone) this two-sided perspective of power and subjection too blunt. Instead I hold: *The interesting thing is not the existence of dominance and power as such, but the content or direction in the exercise of 'power'.* This becomes especially obvious if you compare the left intellectual 'power-critical' notions and rhetoric to the right-wing populist, parallel 'elite-critical' notions and rhetoric. Right-wing populism has simply taken up all the pet critical arguments of the left. The populists criticize the 'liberal' democratic political establishment for being 1) a 'ruling political class' or a 'ruling elite', 2) hiding its treacherous interests behind an ideological veil, that of 'political correctness', and 3) with an attached media establishment that 'distorts reality' and imposes a 'weird view', allegedly oppressing or ridiculing the (truthful) attitudes and feelings of the 'common people'. In my view, both these variants of the power-perspective indiscriminatingly impose a two-sided political ontology: that of a power-holding elite (or class) vis-à-vis subordinated common people. Instead, we ought directly and sharply to focus on *the ideas and the idea-systems* held by the power holders, but this is not enlightening as such. To get a deeper *political understanding* of the ideas of the power-holders, we also need to focus on the ideas of power-contesting or oppositional actors with a comparative and classificatory view.

I will propose and argue for a *pluralist, idea-struggle perspective* from the point of view of the analyst, thus bringing ideas (in plural) back in. In this perspective, the interesting aspects instead will be: What (manifest or latent) ideas (among many) are institutionalized in the social and political institutions and interaction-patterns that make up society? What (manifest or latent) basic ideas can we discern among the main *power-holding, power-seeking, action-mobilizing* and *opinion-forming actors* regarding the preservation or change of the same institutions and interaction-patterns? What (manifest or latent) ideas are integrated in seemingly non-ideological, instrumental *policy-proposals* and seemingly 'technical' *policy debates* regarding various fields of legislation and steering, aiming at the preservation or change of society's institutions and interactions-patterns? Or more generally: What institutional or cultural configurations, and subsequent allocations of values, do the various actors defend, respectively criticize? What general or specific values, ideological views, situational pictures or practical measures do the various actors propagate (manifestly or latently)? And what is the comparative or classificatory *political meaning* or

Foucauldian analyses of the 1980's, while leaving classes behind and focusing on the two-sides of power respectively subordination as the most important and most interesting aspect in any social field. In my study here, I start out from another political ontology, the pluralist idea-struggle hypothesis.

ideological thought-content of their ideas and proposals? (There really is a difference between left-liberal values and views – ideas – and right-wing populist or nationalist ones; as it also is between patriarchal and gender equal ones.)

Such questions make an *elaborated idea-analysis* necessary, as well as an elaborated analytical frame and analytical concepts. Working out from a pluralist perspective of social and political ideas and idea-systems, all idea-analysis must be based on a *comparative and classificatory* view, since the *social or political meaning* of ideas is understandable only in comparison (and in dialectical or dialogical relation) with other ideas. Allegedly 'left' ideas are not possible to understand except in comparison with 'right' or 'centre'; as defined by the analyst. Allegedly 'liberal' ideas are not possible to understand without 'conservative' respectively 'socialist'; as defined by the analyst. Similarly, the 'secular' is not possible to understand without 'religious' or 'sacred', 'modern' not without 'traditional', and so on.[37] Thus, we need *a general analytical frame* of the *inner structure* of ideas or idea systems, in order to systematically discern, interpret and describe them; possible to connect to a *classificatory* scheme of social and political ideas and idea systems; possible to use in *systematic comparative analyses*; making it possible to bring forth and understand their social and political *meaning*, since they receive their meaning in a reflexive and dialectical relation to each other and to the institutional, structural and cultural configuration of society. In this essay I will concentrate on the first of these tasks, to bring forth a *general analytical frame* regarding the inner structure of ideational thought-content. Accordingly, I simply assume that the classificatory respectively comparative aspects are known to the reader as background knowledge.

3. THE SHORTCOMINGS OR INCONSISTENCIES OF THE PREVAILING, THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE SITUATION

As I will argue below, there exists no over-arching *general* theory or unifying *analytical frame* in the prevailing knowledge situation, ready to use in classificatory or comparative studies of various social and political ideas or idea systems. The closest we get are the presentations of the *common inner structure* of the ideal type 'political ideologies', found in the beginning of several political science textbooks regarding the main, comprehensive ideal-type ideologies since 1789. But even these presentations are seldom anchored in a systematic social or political theory. Rather they seem to be heuristic, occasional accounts, even if they result in a rather similar pattern of the general inner structure; inductively produced but seldom conceptually problematized. This lack of a systematic general

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37   'All definition is negation', said Spinoza wisely, and this epigram is carried further in contemporary logics and scientific semantics; as for example in the conceptual distinctions between 'sub-set', 'set' or 'universal set'.

theory of the inner structure of ideological, action-guiding thought makes this elaboration of mine necessary (see Part II, Sections 15-19, below).

However, there is another problem with the concept of ideology, found in comprehensive ideal-type 'political ideologies', in the political science text-book tradition. First, they regard only 'the input side' of the political system, referring to the thought of parties, organizations or media sites. But as we saw above, ideas and ideologies (reasonably, in my opinion) are also found on the 'output side' of the political system, in public policies and implementation structures. Secondly, we must be aware also of field-specific ideologies which perhaps are not identical to the comprehensive ones. Moreover, in some specific fields or idea-struggles quite other ideas than the main comprehensive ones may be at issue; thus we need a really *general* analytical frame to discern them as ideologies. Or to put it otherwise, not all ideological thought in society may be either 'liberal', 'conservative', 'socialist' or 'feminist', or the like. Many idea-struggles cross-cut these divides, mixes old idea-elements or invents new ones, while others relate to quite other (contested) value-dimensions, situational images or preferences. Any *general* theory, or unified analytical frame, thus, must be open for and applicable to all kinds of social and political ideas and idea-systems.

Beside this lack of a general theory in the prevailing knowledge situation, we also meet, in the social sciences, a whole bouquet of approach-bound theoretical concepts. To take but one, yet central, example, we meet three main different concepts expressed by the term 'ideology'. The *first* concept of 'ideology' is anchored in the General Social Theory (the general theory of action) of Talcott Parsons, fundamental for all contemporary Sociology. There the term 'ideology' refers to the (tendentially monolithic) 'culture' of a social system, whether large or small, that holds the system together by giving the individuals a similar set of cognitive and moral 'action-orientations'. It is also used referring to a 'sub-culture' which may have a 'counter-ideology'. The *second* is the concept 'the ideology of society' in the Marxist tradition. Here the term 'ideology' is the (monolithic) dominant thought that supports and legitimates an unjust class-rule and an unjust, class-based social system, such as feudalism or capitalism. Oppositional or liberating modes of thought, thus, are not termed 'ideology', especially not the liberating 'theory' of a militant Marxist-Leninist party or an anti-colonial liberation movement. The *third* concept is the 'political ideologies', in plural, found in the political science knowledge tradition; most notably in the mentioned text-book tradition on the subject. Here the term 'ideology' refers to the (action-guiding) thought of *any* social or political party or movement among contending alternatives, not only the dominant or reigning one. However, as we saw, this concept is limited to ideas on 'the input side' of the political system; referring only to the thought of thinkers, leaders, parties, organizations or media sites, not to the

political language and processes on 'the output side', as in legislation, policy or implementation.

Other approach-bound concepts, aiming to represent (some part of) the ideational phenomenon in social and political life, are 'beliefs and attitudes', 'action-orientations', 'policies', 'regimes', 'doctrines' 'creeds', 'frames', 'discourses', 'mindsets', 'mentalities'; or Pierre Bourdieus's 'habitus'.[38] These concepts make up a diversified *smorgasbord*, or, should I say, a tower of Babel; they are often used as self-sufficient starting points with no connections to each other. Some of them are systematically anchored in social or political theory, others are seemingly used without any such systematic anchoring. In my opinion, this diversified self-sufficiency, and the lack of a general theoretical language, is detrimental for the *comparison between fields*. It is also detrimental to the emergence of illuminating parallels, or fruitful, original conjectures. Furthermore, it hampers the over-arching understanding of *broad, historical trends* (if they should appear), since these normally occur simultaneously in different domains or fields of social and political life; those which, in older idealistic philosophy, once were termed 'the spirit of the age'. Finally, the absence of a general theoretical language generally hinders communication between researchers; and, thus, *the general growth of knowledge* (see Part II, Section 20, below).

All in all, the contemporary social scientific study of social and political ideas and idea-systems in society – whether in qualitative or quantitative studies – faces conceptual problems and theoretical weaknesses, lacking a unifying theoretical language and a unifying common understanding. (These problems will be more closely discussed in Part II, Sections 15-20. below.) In this situation I seek a general and unifying theory.[39] *We need a unifying basic understanding as well as a unifying analytical language* in the analysis of the ideas or the action-guiding thoughts in society, found in party platforms, citizen opinions or governmental policy programs as well as in all the social sub-fields of everyday-life and every-day conversations.

In this peculiar and uneven knowledge situation, with its strengths and shortcomings (see Part II, Sections 15-20), I will make *a synthesizing and reconstructing effort*. I will focus on *the inner structure* of idea-systems or

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38   In my opinion, Bourdieu is fruitfully and originally (internal critically) developing the Marxist tradition with the help of traditional or Parsonian sociological and cultural theory (or developing sociology with the help of Marxist theory); his limitations, though, are the same as those discussed internally in the later, great post-Marxist re-orientation (see Part II, Section 18).

39   Theories are 'systems of statements', writes philosopher of science Mario Bunge, and continues: 'Scientific research…starts with questioning but…it culminates with the construction of closely knit systems of ideas' (Bunge 1998, Vol. One: 433-34). A theory is: '…a more or less refined and consistent system of statements that unifies, enlarges and deepens ideas which, in the pre-theoretical stage, had been more or less intuitive, blurred, sketchy and disconnected' (Bunge 1998, Vol. One: 511-512). From my own theory-developing work-shop I can underline every word in Bunge's account of the pre-theoretical stage. Especially the talk of intuitive hints, blurred accounts and sketchy or disconnected ideas and hypotheses!

belief-systems; that is, the generic systemic, formal or morphological character that gives ideas and idea-systems their *action-guiding capacity,* or *action-guiding direction and force.* I will *propose a general theory* of action-guiding thought-content (the outline of which I have presented in another form, see Lindberg 2017). Such an analytical frame is intended for use in investigations and analyses aiming at a *political understanding* of all the processes and situations where social and political ideas and idea-systems are involved and are significant; which is almost everywhere.

4. THE META-THEORETICAL PROGRAM OF 'RATIONALIZING' POLITICAL UNDERSTANDING

So, there is a basic need for *political understanding* of ideas and idea-struggles, and hence the *political meaning* and significance of ideas in the – historical – processes of preservation or change of society. When we stand before new actors (as Bernie Sanders or Donald Trump), a new event (the debate of public health or tax reform in the US), a new situation (the growing tensions between left liberals, right liberals, conservatives, nationalists and white supremacists in the US polity) and other similar examples, we always ask: What do the actors say or mean? What intentions do they have? What perceived situational images, values and beliefs motivate and orient their actions and proposals? In my opinion, and I am not alone, such *content-oriented political understanding* is (and ought to be) the basic epistemic outlook of the political science knowledge tradition; embracing or inscribing both descriptive and explanatory studies as parts of the project of an overarching political understanding.[40] And of course, content-oriented *studies of ideas* – whether interpretative, descriptive, comparative, explanative or classificatory – are important and even basic of this epistemic outlook.[41]

Political understanding can be viewed as the adjusted, contemporary variant of Aristotle's epistemic outlook *phronesis,* 'practical knowledge' or 'practical wisdom', which is central in the political science knowledge tradition. As a contemporary view it high-lights the core mission of the social sciences, and especially political science, to contribute to *the enlightened understanding* and the critical and knowledge-based *practical handling* of problems and possibilities in the situations and processes of social and political life. This view of the mission is formulated by many iconic, political science classics, with similar

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40 See e.g. Hermansson 1993:15 arguing that political science is basically a *verstehende Wissenschaft;* see also Lindberg 2017: 94-98.

41 I have argued elsewhere, in the mentioned chapter 4 of Boréus and Bergström 2017 eds., for the central place of descriptive, content-oriented studies of ideas, being *logically prior* to both empirical or historical, explanative or functional, descriptive investigations of ideas, on the one hand, and critical or normative analyses, on the other. See Lindberg 2017: 94-98. Consequently, I regard *interpretation* – of the social and political meaning in text or talk, in documents as well as speeches or interview answers – as a *basic meta-method* of all humanities and social sciences, whether qualitative or quantitative. See Part II, Section 29.

formulations by sociological colleagues. Harold Lasswell, for example, speaks of the need of 'partial enquiries that can illuminate situationally localized problems in empirical ways' and of a 'progressive realization, not only of the democratic ideal, but of the scientific ideal as well' (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: xxiii-xxiv). David Easton means that the 'understanding of political life', as the subject matter of political science, is 'central to the solution of our present social crisis'; further he states that 'the whole of scientific reasoning is a way of helping us to understand social problems', pointing to 'the adequacy of scientific reasoning in social matters' (Easton 1953: 1-7). Finally, Robert Dahl speaks of the need to 'understand politics' in order to 'comprehend what is going on around you', or 'in order to make the best possible choices among the alternatives open to you'; he also blinks toward Aristotle's *phronesis* and adds: 'in order to act wisely' (Dahl 1984 [1963]: 1-2). In an epigram the Swedish Political Scientist Herbert Tingsten, in 1935 and 1940, as a democratic social reformist, formulated this same generic mission of political science in a programmatic statement: 'to contribute to the rationalization of the political debate'.[42]

Being part of this knowledge-producing and illuminating effort, all analysis of ideas and idea-systems, ought to be *rationalizing*. Hence, the basic meta-theoretical outlook ought to be a position of *rationalizing political understanding*. This epistemological position, though, does not assume that political thought and action, as such, is 'rational' in its substance; as in utilitarian theories of 'homo oeconomicus' or 'public choice'.[43] Rather it means that *the researcher's* contributions ought to be, or must be, 'rational', or 'rationalizing' in the context of the democratic public debate, which I stated above and which has been stated by several authors.[44] (We will shortly come back to this in Sections 10 and 12 below.)

To play with terms a little, you might say that a *rationalizing political understanding* attempts to discern and analyse the inherent *'rationale'* in any piece of social and political communication, thought and language; irrespective of the political inclination, value-loading, action-guiding direction, rhetoric packing or alleged truth or validity; or if it is present among the citizenry as a result of indoctrination, habitual socialization or deliberate and 'enlightened'

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42 We will return to this below. This mission is also the starting point for Max Weber's methodological considerations. See e.g. his essay on 'Objectivity in social science and social policy' (Weber 1949 [1904]: 50-52).

43 Instead all social and political science since Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, David Easton and Robert Dahl, or the social-psychological theory-tradition of *behavioural studies* (not behavioristic!) rely on a fundamental critique of the utilitarian axioms of *homo oeconomicus*. The contemporary flair in some circles for an 'economic' theory of politics, has never produced a detailed anti-critique of this mainstream(!), but has relied on the intellectual authority of Economis as an alleged, specifically 'scientific', discipline(!).

44 Close at hand are e.g. Naess 1966: 9-36; Meehan 1981: 19-29; Vedung 1982: 13-17; Swed. Orig. 1977: 9-13; Majone 1989: 1-41.

consideration. The humanities and the social sciences have a long methodo-
logical tradition of (in principle) neutral, transparent and rationalizing inter-
pretations and descriptions of actually existing *ideas* from the fields of politics,
religion, philosophy or culture. Prominent examples of such idea-analytical
and idea-critical studies are legion in our diverse, yet connected, disciplinary
traditions.[45]

5. THE PROPOSED GENERAL THEORY

What is the mechanism in the *inner structure* of idea-systems or belief-systems
that gives them the capacity to motivate, orient and direct actions and interac-
tions, and hence also the future propensity to act? How do we analytically get
to grips with the *action-guiding thought-content* inherent in all the social and
political communication and language-use around us?

My starting point has been the general view of the inner structure of the
main political ideologies proposed by Herbert Tingsten in the late 1930s. Based
on a comprehensive over-view (1933) and incisive studies of Fascism and Nazism
(1936), Conservatism (1939) and Social Democracy (1973 [1941]) he launched
a theory and method of idea-analysis and idea-criticism, summarized in his
work *Idékritik* (Idea-criticism) (1941). His theoretical sketch involves the con-
ception that political ideologies basically consist of three kinds of statements:
value-judgements (Swed. '*värdeomdömen*'), judgements of reality (Swed.
'*verklighetsomdömen*') and practical proposals for action.[46] In this he was indi-
rectly inspired by the earlier Uppsala school of analytical philosophy, of Axel
Hägerström and Adoplph Phalén, regarding the difference of value-statements
and descriptive statements. Tingsten's sketch was later further developed by,
what I have termed, 'the Uppsala School of idea-analytical political science'.[47]
Analytically strengthened especially by Arnold Brecht's grand work (1959)
regarding 'the is-ought question', this school reached a peak, in about 1970,
in the works of Carl-Arvid Hessler (1964), Leif Lewin (1967), Stefan Björklund
(1970), Sverker Gustavsson (1971) and Evert Vedung (1971). The interesting thing
was that this school, with the help of Arnold Brecht, enlarged the field of appli-
cation of Tingsten's sketch, which was focused only on party ideologies. Now,

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45 I feel ashamed of trying to mention a rare few. But see e.g. any of the following: Tingsten 1973 [1941];
    Myrdal 1996 [1944]; Hessler 1964; Lewin 1967; Gregor 1968; Larsson 1970; Berman 1998; Strandberg
    1998; Skinner 2002: Vol I-III; Gregor 2005; Müller 2011; Israel 2012; Brekke 2012; Nyberg 2017; or large
    parts of my list of references below.

46 As far as I can see, this early hypothesis by Tingsten is highly original. Even if it is only a sketch, it
    is on the other hand used in methodological practice in a series of incisive empirical studies. Few
    of his contemporaries are on the same track, but if they are, they are not as conceptually sharp as
    he is; e.g. Sabine and Thorsson (1974 [1937]); Oakshott (1950 [1939]) or Gross (1948). Not until the
    1950s do the moral philosophers and linguistic philosophers catch up; e.g. Hare 1953, Toulmin 1958
    or Gauthier 1963; although they not are contributors to *political* language and thought. In political
    theory, as we saw, Arnold Brecht 1959 stands out as the synthesizing and comprehensive land-mark.

47 See the Foreword above. This 'school' will also be mentioned at some points below.

it was widened to principled policy debates, where the triad of values, descriptions and prescriptions was used as the analytical frame for both descriptive, content-oriented analysis and critical assessment. In Stefan Björklund's work (1970), the triad is even presented as *the inner structure of all political thought and language*; he also explicitly places the three factors of the triad in the logical, argumentative sequence of *practical reasoning*, following Arnold Brecht (although neither Brecht nor Björklund are using this specific term).[48] From the Uppsala school – in fact being my own *alma mater* – I got the idea that these original propositions ought to be reconstructed and modernized, and consequently transferred to the intellectual landscape of today. After all – since 1970 – there has occurred a 'post-behavioural stage' (Easton 1971); a 'Marxist watershed' (Blackburn ed. 1972); a 'neo-institutional' wave (March and Olsen 1989); a 'post-Marxist re-orientation' (Habermas 1979 [1976]; Giddens 1981; Mann 2011; Mann 2012 [1986]); a general 'language turn' in the humanities and parts of the social sciences; and not the least an impressive theoretical development in the disciplines of Linguistics and Semantics (see e.g. Evans 2009; Evans 2014; Evans 2015); to mention but a few. All these trends have deeply affected the theoretical and empirical consciousness and have left considerable traces in the general intellectual landscape. If the three-tiered model of Tingsten and the Uppsala school is to have any significance today, it must be transferred to and reformulated in this new theoretical environment. Consequently, my research-guiding *working-hypothesis* has been to investigate the possibility of the survival – or failure, respectively, success – of the basic tenets of Tingsten and the Uppsala school in the wider context of *contemporary general social theory* as well as *contemporary language philosophy and linguistic theory*.

The central core of my proposed general theory,[49] is the basic (hypothetical) proposition that all *social and political communication and language* – involved in or related to the institutions of society – consists of *three generic, underlying dimensions of thought*[50] or three basic kinds of ideas.[51] 1) *Values*: value standards, ideals, goals or preferences (V). 2) *Descriptions*: cognitive

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48 Tingsten speaks of 'logical derivations'. Vedung speaks of 'practical conclusions'. The term 'practical reasoning', following Gauthier 1963 and (practical) language philosophy, is introduced by me here; connecting to Aristotle's *enthymeme*. See below.

49 As I mentioned, the theory is presented in Lindberg 2017 as well as illustrated by two mini-analyses; one regarding the party platform of the newly constituted (2015) Women's Equality Party (WEP) in Britain, the other regarding Pope Francis' speech in front of the General Assembly of the UN in September 2015.

50 Generically lying under *the symbolic surface* of language, or other expressive symbols or symbolic systems, as in monuments, art, literature, film, music or architecture.

51 More generally a similar three-tiered view is present in the handbook tradition on political theories or political ideologies as we saw, although not always very distinct and clear. All this has been my hypothesis-generating laboratory. See e.g. Sabine and Thorsson, 1973 [1937]: vii-viii; Oakshott 1950 [1939]; Björklund 1970: 28-30; Gustavsson 1971: 16-19; Vedung 1971: 48-51; Larsson 2006: 9-24; Adams, 2001: 3-6; Heywood, 2007: 11-15; Ball and Dagger, 2011: 4-11. See, though, especially Brecht 1959: 118-32.

beliefs and attitudes; descriptive, explanative or evaluative accounts or nar-ratives (D). 3) *Prescriptions*: recommendations of action, practical proposals, suggested, upheld or defended rules or norms (P). [52] As ideal-type examples of such dimensions of thought, I will mention the value 'Equality' (V), mani-festly or latently expressed in an Oxfam report; the explicit description: '1% of the world's population receive 80% of all produced wealth' (D) of the same report; and the sometimes manifest, sometimes latent, prescription: 'Distribute wealth more equally!'(P). Since my proposed theory is intended to be *basic theory*, it shall be regarded as a suggested representation of (hypothetical and argued) 'metaphysical' properties of all cultural, social and political thought, *generically underlying the symbolic surface of all language and discourse*, as well as all expressive symbols and all cultural forms; as far as these are social and political, that is, involved in or related to the institutional preservation or change of society. This means that below all symbolic surfaces that we encoun-ter all around us – in all language-use, cultural signs and cultural forms – there is an inherent, underlying dimension of cultural, social and political *meaning* or *thought-content*. To discern and interpret this dimension, laying bare the intentions and meanings vis-á-vis the institutional preservation and change of society, is the task for the content-oriented and *idea-analytical*, as well as *idea-critical*, social scientific study of ideas.

The three generic, underlying[53] dimensions of thought,[54] of course, dif-fer in substance between various actors and idea-traditions. Values, descrip-tions and prescriptions differ in substance between the main, broad social views; whether traditional or modern, egalitarian or segmented, secular or religious, as well as universal or particularistic. Of course, they also differ in substance between conservative, liberal, socialist, fascist, racist, feminist,

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52 In the social-psychological theory of empirical 'behavioural' studies in Sociology and Political Sci-ence, we meet the terminology of 'values', 'beliefs and attitudes', and 'norms'. In political theory, relying on political philosophy and analytical language philosophy, I have distilled the terms 'values' (V), 'descriptions' (D) and 'prescriptions' (P) from the many alternatives. In this essay, I have chosen the latter terminology, although I will keep keep close contact with the social-psychology terminol-ogy. The core intensions (or core connotations) of the two parallel terminologies are nevertheless the same, as I see it.

53 This term is perhaps misleading, but I think of the fact that thought-dimensions reside under a lin-guistic or symbolic 'surface', consisting of terms, sentences, symbols, metaphors, body-language and the like. For example, the meaning of words and sentences, and of metaphors and discur-sive forms, is not explicitly present on the messaging surface of symbols and vehicles but *must always be interpreted*; primarily, of course, by the practical hearers or readers, and secondarily by the researcher or analyst. Note though: the possibilities of misunderstandings or flawed interpretations are as legion as the possibilities of 'felicitous' understandings. What is right or wrong in these cases of interpretation is a matter of transparent scientific method and scientific transparent discussion; as with all scientific contributions. See Part II, Section 29.

54 Note that I do not speak of 'sentences', like 'value-sentences' or 'descriptive sentences', which much older linguistic philosophy used to do. By envisaging the three basic kinds of ideas as *thought dimen-sions*, the expressive symbols, words and sentences might be seen as *empirical indicators* of an inner conceptual thought-content. See Section 6 below and Part II, Section 29.

ecologist, Hindu, Christian or Islamist ideological positions, and all the rest. They also differ in substance between policy-debaters of different affiliations in various policy-fields, or between various views in everyday life of how to organize family life or work life, and so on. In my view, we meet these three basic kinds of ideas among different actors, and in all communications and debates, in bygone history as well as in ongoing societal processes of today. The three dimensions of thought may be *manifestly* expressed in language or *latently* residing beneath the words and the sentences; of course, in combination with other symbolic expressive tools, like choice of words, grammatical constructs, tone, body language, rhetoric figures, metaphors, discursive forms or literary styles. Hence the need for *textual interpretation* – of the social and political meaning or thought-content – as a basic meta-method in all social science; whether qualitative or quantitative. (See Section 6 below, and Part II, Section 29.)

However, taken one by one in isolation, none of these three basic kinds of thoughts are action-guiding in themselves. *Not until they are combined in triads, they receive an action-guiding capacity or force.* In such triads, all three elements – qualitatively seen – play equally important roles. This leads to a second basic (hypothetic) proposition in the general theory. The action-guiding capacity or force emerges out of *the specific combination* of these three kinds of thought in a specific pattern, the quasi-logical or argumentative sequence of *practical reasoning*. (This concept will be discussed below, especially Part II, Section 25-26.) There the values (V) and the descriptions (D) function as (quasi-logical) premises, while the prescription (P) functions as a (quasi-logical) practical conclusion. As we saw above, the prescription 'Distribute wealth more equally!' follows argumentatively-logically from the value 'Equality' when it is combined with the descriptive account of the lop-sided distribution of wealth in the world.[55]

The prescriptions (P) have a specific function. They are manifestly expressed or latently implied[56] *imperative statements*, such as orders, urgings or recommendations. Hence, they are the *immediate action-directing mechanism* of the action-motivating and action-orienting thought, giving the triad an action-guiding direction and force. And in all languages of the earth, imperatives occur as a basic sentence-type,[57] as in for example 'Bring some water!', 'Beware of the bull!' or 'No fossil fuel after 2030!' So, this basic action-directing *mechanism*, whether manifest or latent, is anchored in universal traits of human communication and communicative skills.[58]

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55   See also the presentation in Lindberg 2017: 98-105.

56   As John Austin's 'locutionary' respectively 'illocutionary' speech acts (Austin 1975 [1962]: 91-132).

57   See e.g. Levinson 1982: 40.

58   See e.g. Steeck, Goodwin and LeBaron 2011; Evans 2014: 229-58.

I will give you some real-life examples of this triadic pattern. The members of *The New Society for Homeless Cats in Huddersfield* (which I happen to be acquainted with) are motivated by certain *values,* or emotional moral standards, regarding suffering animals (V). Furthermore, their actions are oriented by certain evaluative *descriptions* regarding the difficult situation of lost cats in the city (D). The V and the D in combination are logical grounds for the *prescriptive* conclusion 'Take care of the lost cats!' (P). A further example is the young couple next door (whom I recently happened to overhear): 'How come, you never help putting the children to bed or making the dishes?' Listening more attentively (although not very politely) I suddenly discerned the ingoing three dimensions of thought in the rather verbose argument: 'I thought we should always share house-hold work equally' (the value-dimension, V); 'You have repeatedly not done your share' (the descriptive dimension, D); and finally, 'From now on I demand a fair share from your side!' (the prescriptive dimension, P).

Moving back to the public realm, the presidential candidate Donald Trump repeatedly used the media-bombing slogan 'Make America Great Again!' in his campaign of 2016. This slogan may look like a simple prescription, expressed in a grammatically correct imperative sentence with exclamation mark and all (P!). But a closer investigation into the *action-guiding force* of this expression, using a larger and more varied source material, reveals the latent presence also of the other two basic dimensions of thought. First, we meet the noble *value* that America in all circumstances and all time ought to be 'Great' (V). Secondly, we meet the captivating and tragic, latently descriptive associative image that 'America once was great but is no more' (D). Hence, the grammatically simple imperative sentence turns out to involve a whole associative or poetic narrative, involving *all three* basic dimensions of action-guiding thought. Consequently, this simple slogan acquires a strong and emotionally deep action-guiding force; that is, for those who have the appropriate experiences, associations, fantasies, views and feelings to take this narrative to their hearts.

As we saw the three basic kinds of ideas are sometimes – nay, rather often – not manifestly expressed in grammatically and logically well-ordered words and sentences. Normally, as dimensions of thought, they must be distilled or sifted out from a larger flow of verbosity, speech-acts, symbols and communicative discourse. We will come back to this later (see Section 29, below).

The combination of the three basic kinds of ideas V, D and P, into the argumentative sequence of *practical reasoning,* I will term a *VDP-triad.* We met such triads in all the three examples above. The VDP-triad is central to my proposed *general theory* – hence the title of this essay – and it makes up the structure of the central *theoretical model* of the theory and the attached, *analytical scheme,* which will be presented below as important parts. We will soon see how this proposed theory and the attached analytical scheme can be (in

principle) used in insight-giving descriptive idea-analyses and assessing idea-criticisms, aiming at an enlightening and rationalizing political understanding (Sections 10 and 12, below).

6. A PECULIARITY WITH THE INTELLECTUAL CLIMATE OF THE 'LANGUAGE TURN' – WHERE ARE THE IDEAS?

The indicated shortcomings of the prevailing knowledge situation, sketched above (see Section 3), will be more closely discussed later (see Part II, Sections 15-20). However, they are accompanied by another, more general or diffuse shortcoming in the intellectual climate of 'the language turn' – which some would call 'the linguistic turn'[59] – prominent in at least some quarters of the humanities and the social sciences. I will not say that the language turn has been detrimental. The general focus on language has been largely constructive for the social sciences, and inspiring for myself, strengthening my knowledge-base from my background in idea-analysis, theory-criticism and idea-criticism.[60] Moreover, many case-studies produced on these premises have been considerably enlightening. However, from the perspective of my theory-developing purpose here, the climate of the 'language-turn' has – paradoxically – not furthered the precision of our conceptions of 'ideas' or 'idea-systems'. Several studies have started out from research-guiding concepts such as 'constructions', 'narratives', 'rhetoric', 'discourse' and 'language'. These research-guiding concepts have certainly been fruitful in their respective environments, often contributing with new insights. Generally seen, though, and in their common usage and common academic jargon in various quarters, they involve a problematic lack of clarity. A wide-spread loss of theoretical focus has occurred, I hold, regarding *the ideational side* of language. And of course, a focus on the *ideas as such* was not the intention of these research-guiding approaches and concepts. For example, in rhetoric and linguistic studies the focus is on *the symbolic side* of the text, the use of

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59   The expression 'the linguistic turn', in my opinion, blurs our common intellectual heritage. The expression 'the linguistic turn' in scholarly terminology traditionally and originally refers to the development in philosophy in about 1900 and onwards to the 1950's. (It has nothing to do with the development of the humanities or the social sciences in the 1990s!) The main 'linguistic' thing about this new program in philosophy, since about 1900, is the view that philosophy should be limited to the logical and concept-critical analysis of scientific respectively ordinary *language*; submitting the production of factual, substantial knowledge of 'the real world' to the various special sciences. For an authoritative over-view of this new program, see Ayer et al. *The Revolution in Philosophy* (1956) (with an introduction by G. Ryle) (Swed. transl. 1957); or Anders Wedberg, *A History of Philosophy. Vol. 3. From Bolzano to Wittgenstein* (1984) (Swed. orig. 1966). See also the authoritative selections of key texts in Richard Rorty ed., *The Linguisitc Turn. Essays in Philosophical Method* (1992 [1967]); or Hans Regnell, ed. *Readings in Analytical Philosophy* (1971). It is rather ironic that the sweeping reference 'Rorty ed. 1967', featuring analytical philosophers like Schlick, Carnap, Ryle and Quine, is often used (thoughtlessly as it seems) to indicate an alleged 'linguistic turn' in the humanities and the social sciences of the 1990s!

60   See Lindberg 2013 [1979]; Dahlkvist 1982; Dahlkvist 1995; Dahlkvist and Strandberg 1999.

rhetoric figures or discursive forms in the language-use expressing ideas, not the ideas as such. Especially in rhetoric studies, or linguistic studies of discourse and language-use, the research focus is on how *any given set of ideas is expressed* in rhetoric figures or discursive forms – not the conceptualization of ideas as such.

However, it is obvious – and here is the paradox – that many, or most, of these studies, while starting out from concepts referring to the symbolic side of language, in fact are motivated by an underlying quest for the *inherent ideas* – or the *ideological thought-content* – of the language or discourse under study. At the same time, the inherent *ideas* or the *idea-systems*, unfortunately, are not directly conceptually grasped or problematized *as such* or theoretically specified *per se*. We look in vain for specific theoretical and analytical concepts trying to grasp the 'ideas', the 'beliefs' or the 'content', that is, *the ideational side*, of the 'language' in question. The theoretical or analytical aspect of the ideational side – present in an analytical conceptualization or a classificatory scheme of ideas – seems to have slipped out of focus as a specific research object. The result is that the inherent *ideological thought-content* of the 'narrative', 'rhetoric', 'discourse' or 'language' under study – the actual *ideas* – become theoretically diffuse or conceptually obscured; notwithstanding the obvious, underlying research interest. Thus, the inherent ideas seem to be draped in a misty gauze of prudish 'post-modernism light', as if their naked content, or political character, is to be merely indicated and not explicitly exposed.[61]

Following the tracks of these diffuse central concepts, we can hear a journalist report about the Islamophobic 'rhetoric' of a political speech; although both the speech and the report obviously concern Islamophobic *ideas*. A colleague may study 'the discourse of Kurdish nationalism'; while she is obviously studying Kurdish nationalist *ideas* (Bal 2014). An internationally prominent researcher apparently investigates into 'right-wing populist discourses' while she in fact and explicitly makes a detailed, and extremely enlightening analysis of the right-wing *ideas* inherent in these discourses (Wodak 2015). Finally, we have (all too often) listened to the jargon that 'language', 'narrative', 'rhetoric' or 'discourse' are part of the construction of social relations and the power structure. This is of course true, if it not were for the fact that it is *the ideational side of language*, the thoughts or the ideas – admittedly, expressed in 'language', carried forward by 'language' an reaching the minds of actors through language – that guide the actions that produce or construct the institutions and their accompanying social relations. (See Section 8 below, and Part II, Section 16.)

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61 Yes, as argued above, in social and political affairs *ideas*, admittedly expressed in communication, language and discourse, are partisan or 'political' things; always directly or indirectly involved in processes of political cooperation, conflict, power exercising or in societal value-allocation.

In my view (and I am not alone) it is namely the *ideas* (following the terms of older, idealistic philosophy), or the social and political *action-orientations* or action-guiding thoughts (following contemporary, empirical social and political theory), that initiate, motivate, justify, legitimate, orient, guide or direct: a) the patterned *actions and interactions* which make up b) the *institutions* of society and c) their accompanying social relations and social structures, including power relations and power structures. It is also *ideas* that are central in all the debates, struggles and processes on the *preservation or change* of institutions, cultural values, venerable traditions or habitual social relations in society. This has been elementary social and political theory since Karl Marx, Max Weber and Talcott Parsons (in analytical social theory) or since Arthur Bentley, Harold Lasswell and David Easton (in analytical political theory).[62] The gauze of 'postmodernism light' – from the intellectual climate of the alleged 'language turn' – unwittingly hampers a clear and sharp view, and a concentrated conceptual focus, of the inherent ideas or action-orientations.

I will illustrate this paradox by pointing to a fruitful and extraordinarily successful research programme, central in the 'language turn', which deliberately filled its basic research-guiding concepts of 'language' or 'discourse' with a pointed notion of the initially missing conception of ideas. I think of the (Critical) Discourse Studies. This research programme emerged in the discipline of linguistics about 1979 as 'critical linguistics', to be stabilized as a research programme about 1990 (see Part II, Section 19). Starting out from a dissatisfaction with the formal and grammatical paradigm of the discipline, some young linguists, inspired by Marxism and the 'critical' wave of the 1970s, became interested in the power aspect of language and the presence of power and ideology (regarded as capitalist class-power and capitalist ideology) inherent in the prevailing discourse and pragmatic language-use in politics and the media.[63] To be able to investigate 'language as ideology' (Hodge and Kress 1979), 'language and power' (Fairclough 1989) or 'discourse and ideology in the press' (Fowler 1991) the concepts of 'power' and 'ideology' had to be borrowed from the outside and added to the conventional linguistic theoretical concepts

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62　In the social scientific tradition – at least since Arthur Bentley's 'thought activities' (1908) and Max Weber's 'meaningful actions' (1921) – *ideas* are studied as *'action-orientations'*, though with diverging terminological clothing; as 'beliefs', 'belief-systems', 'attitudes', 'values', 'doctrines', 'creeds', 'policies', 'idea-systems', 'ideologies', etc. Although being the naked thought-content, all ideas, of course, are *expressed in language* and studied in a *linguistic* (textual or spoken) primary source material. I do not know how thoughts can exist (as human thinking) without language of some kind; and language can similarly not exist (as human language) without thoughts of some kind to express. For some insight in this double-sided 'complementarity', so to say (alluding to quantum physics), see e.g. Ogden and Richards 1922; Morris 1946; or Evans 2009, 2014 and 2015.

63　For an account of these origins, see Simpson 1993: 1-8; Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011: 357-61. For original works, see Hodge and Kress 1993 [1979]; Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew 1979; Fairclough 1989.

like morphology, syntax, pragmatics and discourse. The linguistic researchers simply had to make a 'social scientific turn' if I may say so. The most common loan was the Marxist concept of the (capitalist) 'dominating Ideology' and its connection to the social power of the capitalist class. Not until this external conception of 'Ideology' and 'power' was attached to the prevailing linguistic concept of 'discourse' (meaning any text or talk in pragmatic language-use) an original and highly successful 'critical' research programme emerged. It was termed *Critical Discourse Analysis* and focused on the issue how 'ideology' and 'power' was expressed in public or political communication and language. This theoretical process of a conceptual loan from Marxism is visible in most basic works from the first decade of this emerging research programme.[64] In Norman Faircloughs widely read *Discourse and social Change* (1992), to take an elaborated example, he turns to Marxist or post-Marxist ideology theorists like Louis Althusser, Michel Pécheux and Michel Foucault in his original and fruitful theory-developing move (Fairclough 1992: 37-100).

To complete the picture, though, I will premise that the leading linguist discourse analyst, Teun van Dijk, followed another path and borrowed his basic conception of ideology from traditional sociology (Talcott Parsons' social theory), and from traditional political science (Martin Seliger), critical of the Marxist stance (van Dijk 1998). From the beginning he also was using the more open label *(Critical) Discourse Studies* for the common research-programme.[65] On this path van Dijk has been contributing fruitfully to the general theoretical discussion of the concept 'ideology' in the social sciences. Furthermore, Norman Fairclough himself recently has abandoned the Marxist tradition, and the Marxist concept of ideology and politics, and instead turned to the political science knowledge tradition in an interesting theoretical move (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012). (See Part II, Section 19.)

If we return to the general intellectual climate of the alleged 'language turn', and the common ambiguity in the use of terms like 'narratives', 'rhetoric', 'discourse' or 'language', we can see, from the example of (critical) discourse studies above, the need of an *explicit conceptualization of the ideational side of language*. I will thus argue for a thorough and concept-critical 'ideational turn' if I may play with words a little. Luckily, we find, in the traditional social scientific research-traditions (in history, sociology or political science), established conceptual traditions of ideas and idea-systems. We find research concepts,

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64 See e.g. Hodge and Kress 1979: 6; Fairclough 2001 [1979]: 1-4; Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011: 357-61.

65 The issue of the label in a paradigmatically interesting story by itself. Teun van Dijk, all from the beginning in 1990, termed the programme *(Critical) Discourse Studies*, while the more Marxism-inclined, or 'critical theory-inclined' leading figures Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak, long preferred *Critical Discourse Analysis*, without parentheses. About 2013 this duality was settled in favour of Teun van Dijk's since long preferred label; see van Dijk's criticism of the expression 'Critical Discourse Analysis' (van Dijk 2013). See Section 19, below.

regarding the ideational phenomenon, like 'values', 'world-views', 'situational images', 'means-ends assumptions', 'action-orientations', 'beliefs and attitudes', 'stereotypes', 'frames' and even 'culture', 'idea-system', 'belief-system' or 'political ideology'. These concepts are examples of *the since long, traditional study of ideas, or the ideational side of language, as such.* This is assuring and comforting. But as we saw, we cannot take these concepts at face value. They must be critically scrutinized in a theory-critical and theory-reconstructive move; signalled above (see Section 3) and followed up below (see Part II, Sections 15-20).

In my suggested 'ideational turn', to complement the theoretical and conceptual ambiguities of the 'language turn', the basic starting-point must be a pointed and basic distinction – borrowed from language philosophy and semantics – between, on the one hand, the *symbolic side of language* (the words, sentences, signs, symbols or 'vehicles'); and on the other hand the *ideational side of language* or the *intended or perceived meanings* (the 'conceptual content', the thought-content, 'the mental representations', the associations, 'the cognitive models').[66] It is this inner, perhaps misty or dusky, world of inherent thoughts we are out for, residing as the inner thought-content of the words, sentences and language-use of the actors.[67] As we know, there is no clear or conventional

66   For this semantic view of all human language, see e.g. Evans 2009: 92-101; Evans 2014: 229-58. See also the far-sighted classical work of Ogden and Richards (1922: 9-15). Very illuminating is Naess 1966: 9-72. Still, though, the semantic classic Ogden and Richards (1922: 7-16, 208, 209-235, 243-250) is a valuable starting point, placing ordinary language semantics in the model of a pragmatic communicative 'symbol situation'. See also the foundational work in modern Semiotics, Charles Morris (1946: 17, 36, 60-79). However, the actual semantics of *ordinary* (or natural) language may differ (in principle) from the semantics of *analytical* (or artificial) language used in science and philosophy (see Section 14 below). For this important point, see Bunge 1998, Vol. One: 3-6, 52-61; see also Sartori 2009: 99-153. The most prominent difference is the fact that the *inner meaning* of the words and sentences of the natural, ordinary language is unwittingly residing in the socially embedded actual language-use, and the words are given meaning in cultural practice and tradition; reproduced, preserved or changed in everyday language-use over time. In the artificial and analytical language of a scientific field of knowledge, on the other hand, the conceptual content of the basic terms must (in principle) be determined by manifest, stipulative, definitional speech-acts, as in for example: 'semantics' =*def* "the branch of Linguistics and Logic concerned with meaning" or 'politics' =*def* "a systemic societal process reflexively related to and productive of the authoritative allocation of values for a society". This distinction between semantics of ordinary respectively scientific languages is fundamental for me here.

67   I must add: In my opinion, it does not matter if the inner meaning of the action-guiding thoughts is manifest or latent, expressed in locutionary or illocutionary speech-acts, to use J.L. Austin's influential terms (Austin 1975 [1962]). We are out for *the actual*, inner, action-guiding thought-content which exists in the communicative situation; from the point of view of both speakers and hearers. The action-guiding intent, *pace* Austin, may be expressed in seemingly innocent indicative utterances; yet pragmatically understandable as prescriptive and action-guiding imperative statements by the language-intelligent, social participant of the situation; hence understandable for *ordinary people* involved in the *ordinary pragmatic discourse* going on in their social 'life-worlds'. (See Ogden and Richards 1922: 15-16, 79-81, 209-242; Naess 1966: 9-18; Habermas 1984 [1981]: Ch. III.) The actual presence of a shared system of meanings attached to words, in a shared common language in a social system (whether spontaneously emerged as in every-day life, or deliberately stipulated as in formal organizations) makes the *interpretation and discerning of meanings* (the old

one-one connection between words and their meanings, nor between sentences and their meanings. Especially not in ordinary language, and social and political language are siblings in the family of ordinary languages. Thus, contextual interpretation is always necessary to grasp (or get a hypothetical hint of) the inner meaning of words and sentences in all ordinary language (see Section 14 below and Part II, Section 29). On this point, I would like to bring in support from John Locke – at last – and his insightful formulation in *Two Treatises on Government* (1690), quoted as the motto above, that it is 'not names [words] that constitute governments', but the use of the powers and passions brought forward by them.[68]

In my opinion, the common research-guiding concepts in the intellectual climate of 'the language turn', or the analytical approaches using them, ought simply to be complemented – following the example of the of linguistic (Critical) Discourse Studies and its laborious theoretical journey regarding the concept of 'ideology' – by a more precise, theoretically anchored conceptualization regarding the ideational side of language. My hope is to offer such a completion here with my *general theory of ideological thought-content*. At any rate I hope that my efforts here may be fruitful and useful in at least some respects, for example, to my linguistic colleagues of (Critical) Discourse Studies, who are moving towards a broader concept of 'ideology' in their move away from the limitations of the Marxist conceptual tradition. But I also hope to be useful for my Foucauldian, post-Marxist colleagues and their (possible) dissatisfaction with the theoretically ambiguous concept of 'Discourse', close to the meaning of the Marxist 'Ideology' (see Part II, Sections 18).[69] To complete the picture I also hope that my elaborations will possibly be contributing to traditional sociology or political science regarding their conceptualization of the ideational phenomenon, or the concepts of 'culture', 'belief-system' or 'ideology'. The shortcomings of traditional sociology and political science, as I see them, have already been indicated above (see Section 3). We will return to these issues later (see Part II, Sections 15-17 and 20.)

7. THE SYNTHESIZING AND RECONSTRUCTIVE METHOD IN OUTLINE

My proposed general theory, thus, regards ideas or thought-content. It aims at theory construction and concept formation. It is, of course, not totally original, like most scientific attempts starting out from a prevailing knowledge

art of hermeneutics) a fundamental task for all cultural and social sciences. On the methodology of interpretation, see Naess 1966: 9-72; Hirsch 1967: 164-244 (an underestimated work today); Riceur 1981: 145-193; Vedung 1982: 99-122 (Swed. orig. 1977: 59-112) (also an underestimated work today).

68   On this point see also Bourdieu: 'Words alone cannot create...belief' (1991 [1977]: 170).

69   My main criticism is that they are conflating or not analytically separating the symbolic surface from the ideological thought-content, as in 'racist discourse' or 'nationalist discourse'; an analytical separation that for example Teun van Dijk mean is of utmost importance: see van Dijk 2013 or in several passages of his works.

situation. Rather it consists of bits and pieces from several research traditions. Most of these bits and pieces will be familiar to the reader. However, it is their high-lighting and renewed combination, I think, that has some original and constructive touch. My project is thus synthesizing and reconstructive.

Above we saw that I am in general dissatisfied with the prevailing theoretical knowledge-situation regarding the study of ideas. In Part II of the essay, will follow a more detailed presentation of the main alternative concepts in contemporary theories of the ideational phenomenon in society. I will use selected conceptual elements from these theoretical traditions as fruitful building-bricks in my reconstructive effort, while of course dismissing some other elements as unfruitful. I start with a critical over-view and assessment, looking for concepts and propositions, which can be contributive to my purpose (Part II, Chapter Three, Sections 15-19). After this critical over-view starts the constructive effort, laying the ground for my proposed theory (Part II, Chapter Four, Sections 20-22). Finally, my proposed theory is presented (Part II, Chapter Five, Sections 23-29), which we are acquainted with from the preliminary sketch above (if not from the earlier, short version in Lindberg 2017). But before that we must continue with some further 'encircling' preliminaries (see Chapter Two, Sections 8-14, below).

My main sites of theory-critical and concept-critical work are three broad theoretical and conceptual traditions in the prevailing knowledge-situation.

1) First, the *General Social Theory* (or the *general theory of action*) reconstructed and synthesized by Talcott Parsons in path-breaking works of 1937 and 1951, building on the earlier social science classics Émile Dürkheim, Vilfredo Pareto, Alfred Marshall and Max Weber, including Karl Marx and George Simmel as side-kicks.[70] The General Social Theory is mainly used as the anchoring ground for my theory, especially the general concepts of 'actions and interactions', 'action-orientations', 'institutions', 'social system', 'structures', 'functions' or 'culture', trying to grasp the elementary facts of all social and political life. This theoretical and conceptual tradition, which I will term the Weber-Parsons tradition, is common sense in the mainstream of empirical sociology and political science since the 1950s and up to now. It is this broad and synthesized Weber-Parsons tradition I will adhere to and which will be my anchoring ground for my proposed general theory (see Section 8 below, and Section

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70   The foundational synthesizing works are Parsons 1968 [1937], as well as Parsons 1951 and Parsons and Shils eds. 1951; later developed to an established general social theory of action, in successive works over several decades. Parsons' followers, users and critics are legion; critically relating to and discussing this same paradigmatic frame of reference during more than a half-century. (See Section 8 below, and Section 16 in Part II.)

16 in Part II). However, the Weber-Parsons tradition was fiercely criticized in 'the Marxist watershed' of the 1970s. But after the great 'post-Marxist' reorientation of the 1980s, by, for example, Jürgen Habermas or Anthony Giddens, the Weber-Parsons tradition is returned to, reinterpreted or defended by several theorists, for example by Jeffrey Alexander, or by the 'analytical sociology' of Peter Hedström or Jon Elster, or in the Weberian view of power and politics by the historical sociologist Michael Mann. So, I regard myself as being in good company.

2) Secondly, the political science knowledge tradition.[71] From this knowledge tradition I fetch the basic pluralist view involved in *the idea-struggle hypothesis*, as I have called it. This knowledge tradition has from the origins been founded on a long, centrally placed tradition of political philosophy, political theory and political thought; often viewed from a normative or action-oriented, practical perspective of *political understanding*, as I mentioned above. This knowledge-interest has long triggered historical and empirical case-studies of the *political ideologies* of parties and movements, sifted and stylized into reconstructed *ideal-types*, which we already have met. This knowledge tradition of political theory and ideal-type political ideologies has functioned as a kind of analytical laboratory for me. From there, as from 'the Uppsala school of idea-analytical political science', I have fetched the basic hypothesis of the three basic kinds of ideas, V, D and P. On this ground I also reconstruct and sharpen the concept of *practical reasoning*, as used in social and political communication and language, as well as the concept of 'the VDP-triad', as I have termed it. From this laboratory I also fetch the important distinction between *fundamental* and *operative* levels of thought, found in idea systems or ideologies (see Schurmann 1966; Seliger 1976). The shortcomings of the political science knowledge tradition, in my view, though, will be discussed in more detail later (see Section 17 in Part II).

3) The third theoretical tradition is 'Marxist Ideology-theory' and its

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71 I deliberately use the label 'Political Science knowledge tradition' to include all the studies of a broad empirical, historical and normative knowledge tradition (that once was united in Plato's dialogues, Thuchydides' History or Aristotle's *Politics*). That is, I include both 'Political philosophy' or 'Political Theory' as well as (empirical and realist) 'Political Science' or (practical or normative) 'Government'. But I also include investigations or knowledge traditions of Philosophy, History, Law, Sociology or Intellectual History, as far as those investigations or traditions concern *political* structures, processes, issues or events. The central place of Aristotle and the others, outlining the borders of a specifically *political* discourse or disciplinary territory, is acknowledged in many prominent works of the disciplinary tradition. See e.g. Sabine and Thorson (1973 [1937]: 7-33, 95-109; Easton 1953: 309-14; Friedrich 1963: 17-18, 37-52; among many others.

Neo-Marxist or Post-Marxist outflows, especially the Althusser-Pècheux-Foucauldian concept of 'Discourse'.[72] The Marxist 'theory of Ideology' is by birth and habit focused on the outer, functional, legitimating role of the (monolithic) 'ideology of society'. Consequently, I do not get so much help there, regarding the action-guiding *inner structure* of the plural set of idea-systems or ideologies we meet all around. The main positive contribution to my efforts, from the Marxist tradition and its 'critical', 'neo-Marxist' or 'post-Marxist' offspring, is the consistent conflict-perspective, deepening the understanding of the functional role of political ideologies in relation to the institutions and structures of society. However, to be useful for me, this conflict-perspective must be transferred into the theoretical realm of *the pluralist, idea-struggle hypothesis* (and thus be de-constructed and then re-constructed again), and consequently be transformed to an *empirically open perspective*, where the concept of 'ideology' is not essentially defined as the 'dominating' mode of thought in a society, but can be used to refer to oppositional or contesting modes of thought as well.[73] As we saw, I regard the pluralist, idea-struggle hypothesis, as it has been developed and practised in the political science knowledge tradition, as empirically superior to and theoretically more fruitful than, any monolithic view of a single, 'dominating ideology', 'dominating discourse' or 'dominating culture' in society.

Beside these three main theoretical traditions there are two empirical research traditions regarding ideas that have, at least, an indirect significance for my efforts; thus, they will not be discussed in detail, but are present mainly as backdrops. 4) Fourthly, the wide-spread research tradition of *beliefs and attitudes* and the *political cultures* among citizens, in the intersection of sociology and political science. This quantitative, empirical research tradition, as a broad scientific paradigm, is sometimes called (especially in political science quarters) 'the positivist', 'the behavioural' (not 'behaviourist'), 'the electoral', 'the

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72 I sincerely think that the awkward expression 'Althusser-Pécheux-Foucauldian' is a more accurate and informative label than plainly saying 'Foucauldian'. This will be explained later. Nevertheless, I want to add the following on the term 'discourse'. This term really has two different basic meanings, a fact that perhaps needs to be pointed out (see e.g. Johnstone 2008: 2-3) which we brushed against above (see Section 6). The Althusser-Pécheux-Foucauldian concept of 'Discourse' (written by me with a capital 'D') is close to the Marxist concept of 'Ideology' (written by me with a capital 'I'), and thus has quite another meaning than the concept of 'discourse' in Linguistic theory (written by me with a common 'd'). In Linguistics the term 'discourse', much more openly and fruitfully, refers to a part of pragmatics (beside morphology or grammar) meaning "conversation" or a piece of "coherent and contextually appropriate text or talk". For this distinction, see Part II, Sections 18 and 19.

73 This is a theoretical journey undertaken e.g. in Ball and Dagger 2011, a work I have been lecturing on for some twenty years for undergraduate students, and which has been very useful for me in my general understanding of ideologies and the ideational phenomenon in society.

sociological' or even 'the systems' approach; depending on the speaker and her stand-point. Being elaborated out of the Weber-Parsons General Social Theory as of above, these empirical studies can be an *indirect support* of my three-tiered general theory; as a counter-check, regarding the general morphological inner structure of political thought.[74] In the terminology of this research tradition all action-guiding thought consists of values or goals, as well as beliefs and attitudes, together with practical action or actual behaviour. If I were to find these three basic kinds of thought also in this tradition of empirical studies, it would be a strong *empirical support* for my proposed general theory. 5) Fifthly, chosen studies of *public policy*, and even more of *principled debates* over policy-fields or policy-issues have been important for me. Also studies of policy-ideas and policy-debates have functioned as indirect empirical support or critical counter-check to my efforts, right from the start, as in the studies of the mentioned 'Uppsala school', they also have served as starting points in my theory-developing laboratory.[75] Finally, there is one more thing. A general interest in language philosophy and semantics has been with me as a constant meta-scientific baggage from my student years. This also goes for a keen interest in the Philosophy of Science. Both these strands of analytical, critical thinking, of course, have been very useful for me in the theoretical and conceptual criticism, reconstruction and development attempted here.[76]

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74 I spent a dozen instructive years, first as post-doc and later as associate professor, at the Department of Political Science at Gothenburg University, 1979-1993, hosting the empirical survey-tradition of Jörgen Westerståhl, Bo Särlvik and Sören Holmberg. This department is carrying out the official Swedish election studies; it also performs issue-centred opinion studies of all kinds among Swedish citizens. It is really an advantage to have benefitted, for many years, from this theoretically pointed and methodologically advanced milieu.

75 Studies of ideas and idea-debates in various policy-fields or over important policy-issues really is my intellectual mother's milk, which nurtured me as a young student in both History and Political Science at Uppsala University in 1968-1971 as a basic way of understanding politics. See e.g. the historical-hermeneutical, as well as concept-critical works on *principled idea-debates in policy-fields* of (what I termed) 'the Uppsla school of idea-analytical political science' by Hessler (1964); Lewin (1967); Larsson (1970); Vedung (1971); Gustavsson (1971); Holmström (1972) or Lundqvist (1980). Of course, Herbert Tingsten's idea-analytical and idea-critical studies were very important for these researchers, as they eventually became for me. See e.g. Tingsten 1933, 1936, 1939, 1941 and 1973 [1941]. As for public policy studies, I have been the supervisor, or a member of examining committees, of some twenty doctoral dissertations.

76 One first semester of analytical 'theoretical philosophy' at Uppsala University in my student years, in about 1968, starting with Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, developed a life-long interest in semantics and concept-formation. Later studies at Håkan Törnebohm's Department of the Theory of Science at Gothenburg University, in about 1972-1973, generated in me an obsession with the Philosophy of Science. These two strands constituted important intellectual tools for my later doctoral dissertation about the theoretical structure and meta-theoretical significance of Karl Marx's *Capital* (Lindberg 2013b [1978]).

Chapter Two: Encircling the proposed general theory

8. ANCHORING THE PROPOSED THEORY OF IDEOLOGICAL THOUGHT-CONTENT IN GENERAL SOCIAL THEORY

In my elaborative effort here, I do not regard 'ideas' or 'idea-systems' as abstract entities as in the old idealist philosophy of 'objective idealism' or 'idealistic realism', such as the Platonic 'world of ideas' or Hegel's 'world spirit'. Nor do I view social and political idea-systems as essential entities in themselves, [77] as when some text-books in political science bluntly take 'the political ideologies' for granted, as if they *existed a priori* of themselves, in a quasi-idealistic way;[78] avoiding the most fundamental question of all science: *Of which genus is this species a kind?* Instead, I will explicitly start from the *genus proximum* in order conceptually to situate the *differentia specifica* of the species; I will conceptualize social and political ideas and idea-systems in the frame of the General Social Theory (The General Theory of Action) of the Weber-Parsons tradition, as it has been used in most empirical-analytical theorizing in sociology or political science since the 1950s and 1960s and onwards. According to this 'general theory in the social sciences' (Parsons and Shils eds. 1951: 3) all social systems, structures, institutions, cultural systems and symbolic forms – including language – basically and ontically consist of 'communicative actions'.[79] This has been the basic, general view in theoretical Sociology since Max Weber's 'interpretative understanding of meaningful social action' (Weber 1947 [1921]: 88)[80] or Talcott Parsons' 'action-orientations' of acting individuals in 'social systems' (Parsons 1951: 4-7).

77   On this point my view is close to Michael Freeden's, in his urge to view 'ideology' in the 'social studies perspective', 'namely that people in all walks of society think about politics in discernible patterns' (Freeden 2013:115) (for the same, reasonable view, see also Heywood 2007: 2-4). Nevertheless, I am critical of many of Freeden's main theoretical propositions of 'the morphology' of ideologies. Unfortunately, there is no room for a closer critical discussion here.

78   This is the view of Eugen Lemberg in his *Ideologie und Gesellshaft* (1974), where the 'ideological systems' are viewed as secular religions, emerging out of the anthropological 'need' of humans to have something to believe in. This view is not totally flawed, of course, but too holistic and idealistic; and it assumes that we already know (undefined) what 'ideological systems' are.

79   This latter short expression, which I find handy, is not as such used by Parsons himself, but was coined by Hans Zetterberg when he once summarized the basic concepts of Parsonian general sociology (Zetterberg 1962: 49-54). Zetterberg, in the year 1962 – of course – does not use this term in the normative way suggested twenty years later by Jürgen Habermas (1984 [1981]) where 'communicative actions' are speech-acts performed in an ideal knowledge-seeking discourse, free of power-exercising and power-speech. No, Zetterberg's term is instead neutral, referring to all kinds of actions in society, even power-exercising or instrumental ones, since even these are 'communicative' and need be 'communicated'. For a similar view of communicative actions and interactions, now as basic concepts for Political Science and the analysis of power in society, see e.g. Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: 2-6, 74-102.

80   See also Ch. I:1-2 in his grand work *Economy and Society* (1947 [1921]) concerning the fundamental concepts of the emerging new science Sociology.

This general view of society, as consisting of meaningful, communicative actions and interactions, was theoretically introduced and developed also in political science about 1950.[81] The important thing was that abstract concepts like 'state', 'power' or 'sovereignty' could be broken down to individual or collective 'acts' and 'actions' and hence be analyzed empirically as 'concrete interpersonal relationships' (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: xiv). The common-sense notions of 'political life', 'the state', 'power' or 'authority' could thus be theoretically and empirically specified to 'the activities' making up the institutions and processes of 'political life'. In consequence, and following the example of Talcott Parsons, the paradigmatic foundational concept of all political science was proposed to be 'the political system' (Easton 1953: 142-148, 318), viewed as 'a system of actions and interactions' (Easton 1965a: 15, 21, 35-38). The introduction of this sociological and social-psychological General Social Theory in political science is commonly referred to as 'the behavioural revolution' or 'the systems approach'.[82] I also want to mention an important forerunner to Lasswell and Easton, namely Arthur Bentley (1908), contemporary with Weber, who points to the concept of 'activitiy' and 'process', and also 'language activity', as the basic elements of all political institutions like 'government', 'public opinion' or 'general will'.[83] I will thus speak of a Bentley-Lasswell-Easton tradition, for short. To conclude, I find it important to point to the fact that that the concepts of 'actions and interactions', fetched from this tradition of General Social Theory, are fundamental and paradigm-setting in both Sociology and Political science[84] – as well as in all social sciences of today – being the (still developing) foundation of modern, analytical, empirically oriented social science.[85]

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81 The three chapters in Easton 1953: VI, 'Situational Data', VII. 'The Total Structure of the Situation' and VIII, 'Behavioral Data', can be regarded as *the* paradigmatic formulation of the theoretical foundations of modern Political Science, based on many earlier works and authors such as Arthur Bentely, George Catlin or Charles Merriam. In Lasswell and Kaplan (1950) a social-psychological basis is delivered regarding the same action-based paradigm; starting from G.H. Mead and 'symbolic interactions'. Both are connecting to Talcott Parsons' general social theory of '(communicative) actions' and 'systems of interaction'.

82 For an introduction to the 'behavioral approach' in the paradigmatic history of the discipline, see e.g. Robert Dahl's insightful and contemporaneous 'The Behavioral Approach in Political Science. Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest' (1963 [1961]). For an understanding of the friction between the older 'institutional' approach and the new 'behavioural' theory and method in Political Science disciplinary history, and the 'stages' of disciplinary development, I recommend a brief glimpse in e.g. Snyder and Wilson 1949; Easton 1953; Crick 1959; Easton 1971; or Easton 1991. For a biographical account of the

83 For the important role of Arthur Bentley, see e.g. Easton 1953: 171-99, 212-18.

84 In Political Science, all macro-political or abstract concepts like 'state', 'party' 'power', 'legitimacy', 'revolution', 'oppression', 'class', 'elite' and so on are bound to be operationalized and analysed as patterned actions and interactions. For this disciplinary development, see e.g. Bentley 1908; 175-199; Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: xiv-xix, 3-28, 74-102, 103-04, 200-84; Easton 1965a: 15, 21, 35-38; Easton 1965b: 334-40.

85 Of course, there have appeared significant completions and developing critiques over the decades. From my horizon, especially Garfinkel's micro-oriented criticism (1967) is an important contribution.

From the perspective of the general social theory of 'communicative actions', even seemingly cemented institutional and cultural configurations are through and through man-made, that is, historically transformed, social and political constructions.[86] On the one hand, institutions, structures, systems or cultural forms, are maintained and preserved by unconscious *habitual and repetitive* patterns of communicative actions and interactions, and the corresponding socialized, habitual vocabulary and language-use.[87] On the other hand, they may, especially when triggered by dissent and opposition to the prevailing order, be supported by *conscious and directed* political actions and cultural activity.[88] Subsequently, and on a similar basis, institutional and cultural configurations can also be criticised or changed. This change, however, cannot occur freely or 'voluntaristically'.[89] All change and reforming activity is conducted in the face of historical tradition and habitual conventions, in given situations of structural constraints and possibilities, and in the face of the actual, given strength of contending social and political actors in the actual situation;[90] situations which also involve, it must be pointed out, sudden historically contingent 'windows of opportunity' and the winning or losing of debates in idea-struggles. The theoretical *structure-action conception* (where ideas are reflexively and reciprocally related to the institutional and cultural configuration of society) which was so intensely discussed in Marxist social theory of the 1970s and 1980s, is involved in the Weber-Parsons theory of action right from the start, although expressed in other terms, such as 'situation' and 'situational constraints', or 'institutions' and 'institutional constraint', or of the 'latency'

Another important contribution is the post-Marxist re-orientation of the 1980s, wholly or partwise moving back into the previously much criticized Weber-Parsons' tradition. In this re-orientation theorists like Habermas, Giddens, Mann, Alexander and Archer (and others) have made important critical contributions to the 'general theory of action' (which we will return to below). Still, the fundamental theoretical assumptions and basic general concepts remain, or have been strengthened or improved. For some contemporary theoretical followers, see e.g. Alexander 1988; Luhmann 1995; Holmwood 1996; Hedström 2005; Münch 2010.

86 Quite in the spirit of the third of Marx' ingenious *Theses over Feuerbach* (1845), where he holds that 'even the educators must be educated', setting the stage, as it were, for all later structure-action discussions in social theory.

87 I come to think of Pierre Bourdieu's penetrating analysis of gender-roles in Kabyle society in his work *Masculine Domination* (1998); an analysis suggestive of the bodily-mentally-linguistically construction of gender-roles and gender-relations.

88 I come to remember Charles S. Maier's *Recasting Bourgeois Europe. Stabilization in France, Germany and Italy in the Decade after World War I* (1978); or Jonathan Israel's *Revolutionary Ideas. An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from The Rights of Man to Robespierre* (2014). See also Yuval Levin, *The Great Debate. Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine and the Birth of Right and Left* (2014).

89 As Karl Marx wrote in an epic statement: 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please…but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past', Marx, K. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1962 [1852]: 15 (the first page also in other editions of this text).

90 See e.g. Easton 1953: 149-218 in the chapters on 'Situational Data', 'The Total Structure of the Situation' and 'Behavioral Data' in the study of politics; a remarkable and still inspiring text, for its time.

and the (relative) 'autonomy' of the prevailing 'cultural system'.[91] The resulting (Marx)-Weber-Parsons *structure-actor perspective* is always presupposed here, when I speak of 'actions', 'interactions', 'systems', 'structures' or 'institutional configurations' or 'cultural configurations'.[92]

Consequently, I will anchor my elaborations on ideological thought-content in the general social theory of *communicative actions* in the Weber-Parsons, respectively the Bentley-Lasswell-Easton traditions, and the ensuing structure-actor perspective.[93] For me, therefore, ideas and idea-systems exist (ontologically) in two ways, following Parsons: 1) in the individuals as actual, ongoing social and political communicative interactions including linguistic or symbolic interactions; 2) as a relatively autonomous, institutionalized and established (yet, in principle changing and changeable) supra-individual 'cultural' or 'symbolic system', including established language structures.[94] Of course, the ideas in society, for every individual, appear as *given*, as given and established idea-structures or cultural patterns; at least if you are brought up in a specific, culturally confined social and political world, as most people are. The idea-systems, and the cultural or symbolic forms of the social *milieu*, are socialized into the child through language-learning, upbringing, school education and social, communicative practise. Socialized and habitual meaning-structures are

91 In a classic statement Pierre Bourdieu points to the connection between 'objective structures' and 'the practices or the representations that accompany them' (Bourdieu 1977 [1972]: 21). And in some post-Marxist 'discourse theory' the view is presented, that 'discourses' are parts of the institutions and structures of society. This might seem new and exciting, even something specifically 'Marxist' or 'critical'. However, this is exactly the view that Lasswell and Kaplan (1950) or Talcott Parsons (1951) stated in their foundational general social and political theory, based on the Weberian concept of 'meaningful social action'. See also e.g. Easton 1990.

92 A thought-through theory-developing discussion is presented by Margaret S. Archer (1995). For the general concept of structures as institutionalized patterns of actions and interactions, including institutionalized modes of thought, culture and language, see e.g. Lasswell and Kaplan (1950: 1-28, 103-41); Parsons 1951 (20-21, 151-153); Easton (1953: 149-218); and Easton (1990, *passim*). For the Marxist and Post-Marxist parallel wrestling with this problematic, see e.g. Poulantzas (1973 [1968]: 37-122); Bourdieu (1977 [1972]: 16-39, 72-86); Bourdieu (1991 [1977]: 163-170); Bhaskar (1979); Giddens (1984: xiii-xxxvii, 1-40); Alexander (1988:11-48); Archer (1995: 65-92, 135-61). For the structure-action approach in Swedish Political Science, see e.g. Berntsson (1975), Dahlkvist (1975) and Dahlkvist (1982) (both relying on and introducing the Parsons-inspired structural Marxist Nicos Poulantzas); the approach was later discussed more openly in the Swedish context by Lundquist 1984 and Rothstein 1988; see also Carlsnaes 1992 and Rundqvist 1998. A very interesting view on these issues is presented in Rasmussen, Erik (1987) *Complementarity and Political Science. As Essay on Fundamentals of Political Science Theory and Research Strategy.* Odense: Odense University Press.

93 I even think of this theory tradition in Sociology and Political Science (with critical additions) as the only tenable theory tradition of today, when the Marxist family of general social theory of the 1970s seems to have been dissolved into various post-Marxist streams of the 1980s, mainly re-orienting themselves back to the once so criticized Weber-Parsons direction (see Section 16 below). (Perhaps it would be reasonable to speak of the (Marx-) Weber-Parsons tradition, but that would take us too far away from the actual point here.)

94 This is exactly what Louis Althusser terms 'the dominating ideology' upheld by 'ideological state-apparatuses' like the family, the education system, the churches, the trade unions, the political parties and the governmental institutions (see Althusser 1971 [1970]). Anthony Giddens basically use language as the best example of structure-actor processes of social change.

in this way carried forward and transmitted – or changed – between genera-
tions; hence preserving – or changing – the cultural pattern. For the growing
child these cultural forms initially appear as given or natural, and all learning
of a linguistic mother tongue or of cultural traditions proceeds in this given-
ness and naturalness. First later, perhaps not until the threshold of adulthood,
the child comes to critically discern the conventional and constructed character
of cultural traditions, and the seemingly unnatural/natural *ordre de discourse*,
and starts to question its naturalness; especially when faced by other milieus,
ideas and perspectives than those already familiar.[95]

Hence, patterns of thought (idea-systems or cultural systems), as well as
social and political institutions, are historical, action-produced patterns which
in principle can be changed. Thus, they may be *objects of criticism as well as
defence*, both from the side of single individuals or thinkers, or from the side
of collective actors; whether conservative, reformist or revolutionary. Any suc-
cessful change in the institutional and cultural configuration of a society – as
when the Bolsheviks took power in Russia 1917 or the fascists in Italy 1922, or
when left-liberalism or social democracy acquired great influence in post-war
Europe after 1945 – also includes changing patterns of beliefs and valuations,
and correspondingly, *a changed discursive social and political language-use*,
introducing new terms, or a new conceptual content in old terms, with new
meanings and new understandings permeating social and political life.[96]

Thus, from the perspective of the general social theory of communicative
actions – in empirical sociology and empirical political science – ideas and
idea-systems are *action-guiding thoughts* or 'action-orientations', involved in
the patterns of 'communicative interactions' that society consists of. They are
commonly analysed and conceptualized as 'cognitions', 'perceptions', 'ideolo-
gies', 'beliefs', 'attitudes', 'valuations', 'values', 'norms', 'culture', or what have
you.[97] They are always (reflexively and reciprocally) related to the institutional
or cultural configuration of society; either by (unconscious) habitual repetition

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95   Accidentally, I come to think of Arnold Weskers expressive play *Chicken soup with Barley* of 1956 con-
cerning tradition and modernity; or of Sinclair Lewis' unpleasant but penetrating novel *Kingsblood
Royal* from 1947 concerning the detecting of multiple racial identities in the ancestry. The unsur-
passed Swedish novelist Vilhelm Moberg gives a self-experienced portrait of a young farm hand,
about 1910, drawn between the materialist Marxist view of The Social Democratic Party and the
idealist and humanist view of The Salvation Army, in the beginning of the novel *Soldat med brutet
gevär* (1944) *(Soldier with Broken Rifle)*.

96   See e.g. the convincing argument in Hobsbawn and Ranger eds. 1983; or Hobsbawn 1990. See also
the insight-giving Kelley 1981; Whutnow 1991; Israel 2014. To take a striking example, see also the
detailed study of the changing vocabulary in Germany under National Socialism, written month by
month, by the linguist Victor Klemperer (2010 [1946]).

97   For these terms, or for close analyses of ideological thought-content in societal structures and
cultural forms, see e.g. Myrdal 1996 [1944]: lxxvii-lxxxiii or Skocpol (1979). See also Gregor (1968) or
(2005); Inglehart and Norris 2003: 8; Norris and Inglehart 2011:15. And, moving to the realm of reli-
gious political ideologies, see e.g. Almond, Appelby and Simon (2003) or Brekke (2012). The empiri-
cal examples are legion. This basic terminology is presumably also well known to the reader from

or (conscious) active attempts to preserve or change.[98] In this way, social and political action-guiding thoughts – whether individual or collective – are in fact *proposals for the preservation of or change in* the institutional and cultural configuration of society; for example in the (radical respectively moderate) defence of – respectively opposition to – conservative, liberal, socialist, nationalist, fascist, communist, Islamist, patriarchal or gender-equal social orders.[99]

As proposals or blue-prints for the future configuration of society (or smaller social systems), social and political ideas are involved in the political struggles, or cooperative processes, over the *institutional preservation of or change in* society.[100] This implies that all social and political thought (directly or indirectly) is involved in debates or idea-struggles. This makes them (direct or indirect) *arguments* for one or another institutional configuration.[101] To say, or imply, an approving 'like' to, for example, the institutions of private property and individualist capitalism, or the gender roles of the traditional family, is thus *a necessarily controversial – or in principle contested – stand-point.* It may also, be followed by *pro-arguments* (whether manifest or latent) in favour of that specific institutional social order. Hence, such 'likes' also are, by implication, a kind of *counter-position,* perhaps followed by *contra-arguments,* against alternative or opposite views in the discursive and argumentative situation.[102] It should be kept in mind, also, that every institutional order involves (in principle contested) social relations and power relations attached to the prevailing institutions, and that they consequently also involve an accompanying (in principle contested) allocation of values; such as security, identity, status, power, material riches or cultural assets. The struggle over the preservation of, or change in, the

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electoral studies, opinion research or value studies. See e.g. the paradigm-setting Campbell et al. 1960: 42-44, 188-194; Lipset (1959); Lane (1962).

98   By the term 'institutions' I mean "patterns of repeated actions and interactions with their attached action-guiding thoughts, such as values, beliefs and norms" involving patterns of social relations and hence power relations. I could equally well have spoken of 'structures', but there is a common contemporary flair for the term 'institutions', used in an (almost) synonymous way. See e.g. Parsons 1951: 26-58; Marsh and Olsen 1989: Ch. 2-4; Archer 1995: Ch. 2-5; Hedström 2005: Ch.2-4; Blondel 2006; von Beyme 2006; Peters 2012: Ch. 1-4. For my own view, which I hope is not controversial, see Lindberg 2013: xxv-xxviii.

99   For basic empirical knowledge of beliefs and attitudes, that has long inspired my views on ideas in politics and society, see the classical and paradigm-setting Lipset (1959: Ch. 1-5); Campbell, Miller, Butler and Stokes (1960: 188-215) or Lane (1962: 14-16); see also the more recent works of Inglehart and Norris 2003; or Norris and Inglehart 2011. Then I have not mentioned the many theoretical works of the role of ideas in history, like those exemplified in foot-note 92 above and on other places.

100 For an introduction to the concepts of conflict and cooperation as basic in politics, see classically Duverger 1964.

101 See e.g. Crowley and Hawhee 1999: 1-3. See also Oakshott 1991 [1962]: 70-95; Edelman 1977: 1-21. For empirical studies of real life political debate, see e.g. Hessler 1964; Lewin 1967; Larsson 1970; Vedung 1971; Skocpol 1979; Berman 1998, 2006; Müller 2011; Israel 2012.

102 See e.g. Naess 1960: 97-120, Swed. ed. 80-100; Vedung 1982: 123-38, Swed orig. 1977: 122-44.

institutional or cultural configuration in a society is thus a struggle over the (in principle contested) allocation of power and other values.[103]

In this sense, and in my definition of terms, *all social and political communication, thought and language will be termed 'ideological', so far as it is (directly or indirectly) related to the institutional or cultural configuration of society;* which very much of social and political communication is. Subsequently, all social and political communication and language, in my definition of terms, carries an (in principle) controversial *ideological thought-content* (whether manifest or latent); controversial in the eyes of at least one, but normally several, other actors in society. Directly or indirectly all social and political communication or language supports (defends, argues for, legitimates or justifies) one specific institutional configuration and not another one; and consequently (directly or indirectly) suggests (defends, argues for, legitimates and justifies) one specific allocation of power and other values, and not another one. For me, therefore, all social and political discourse, is (manifestly or latently, directly or indirectly) *argumentative* (or dialogical or 'dialectical', in the classical sense of this term) as will be argued later (see Section 22 in Part II). As members of society we all live in a kind of ongoing – manifest or latent – continuing debate or idea-struggle, where every concept, symbol or statement is a direct or indirect argument by its mere existence; reflexively and reciprocally related to the institutional and cultural configuration of society, and to the actor-structure and the conflict-lines of the social or political situation. This argumentative (dialectical-dialogical) character of all communication and language holds for both domestic and international issues and policy-fields. It also holds, this is my stated view, for all issues, debates and conversations in everyday life – mediated or not – and all cultural forms in music, film, literature, art and architecture.

9. AN INCLUSIVE, PLURALISTIC AND NEUTRAL CONCEPT OF IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES

I will point out – as the observant reader has already guessed – that I will use a more *inclusive, pluralistic* and *neutral* definition of the term 'ideology' or 'ideological' than the Marxist tradition does, as well as its outflows into the Althusser-Pécheux-Foucauldian concept of 'Discourse'.[104] The defintion of the

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103 See classically and paradigmatically Lasswell 1936; Ch.1; Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: 74-141; Easton 1953: 125-128.

104 The term 'discursive formation' is borrowed from Foucault as the basic concept in his studies in the history of science, knowledge and learning (Foucault 2002 [1972] [1969]: 119-132). The one who explicitly transfers this term to the field of Marxist ideology theory is the French philosopher of the 'structuralist' Althusserian circle, Michel Pécheux (1982 [1975]). (See the discussion in Part II, Section18, below.) Working further on Althusser's influential concept of 'ruling ideological formation' and its 'interpellations' of the subjects in a capitalist society, Pécheux complements this concept with the linguistic aspect, the 'ruling discursive formation', to make the theory of the socializing 'interpellation' of the 'ruling ideology' of the subjects more complete (see Pécheux 1982 [1975]: 97-129). From then on, the Marxist concept of 'Ideology', in the wide-spread circles of structural

term 'Ideology' in the Marxist traditions is basically *restrictive*. In the Marxist tradition, and its outflows, only the 'dominant' or 'hegemonic' ideas – legitimating or justifying the dominance of 'the ruling class' or any 'power structure' – is included in the concept 'the Ideology of society'.[105] Instead, I will follow the *inclusiveness* of the pluralistic political science knowledge tradition. I will let the terms 'ideology' and 'ideological' refer to *all social and political action-guiding thoughts and ideas*, oppositional or not to the social order, whether aiming at change or preservation; as these are expressed in various vocabularies and phraseologies of a plurality of social and political actors. This also means that my concept of 'ideological' does not have the *pejorative* or negative ring which is common, or even basic, in the Marxist tradition; as a 'distorted thought' which supports, conceals or legitimates an unequal power-structure. Unlike the pejorative language-use, the term 'ideological' is used *neutrally* here, referring to all kinds of social and political ideas, whether left or right, conservative or socialist, oppressive or liberating. In this inclusive and neutral conceptualization, I also follow the political science methodological tradition regarding concept formation, where 'minimal' definitions are preferred to 'thick' ones; and where empirically open and analytically neutral definitions are preferred to 'essentialist' or 'concept-realist' ones.[106]

I will bring in some illustrations from the traditional political science position. The renowned political theorist Carl J. Friedrich[107] states, regarding political ideologies, in his authoritative handbook, *Man and his Government* (1963):

> "Ideologies are action-related systems of ideas…related to the existing political and social order and intended either to change or defend it…The ideas an ideology contains are as such action-related, and may or may not be very true and appropriate…" (Friedrich 1963: 89).

And in a recent text-book by Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies. An Introduction* (Fourth edition 2007), we meet the following definitional formulation:

Marxism and its Pécheux-Foucauldian aftermath, is inextricably tied to the concept of 'Discourse'. See Part II, Section 18. See also Thompson 1984: 232-42; Fairclough 1992: 30-61, 86-100.

105 The concept of 'Ideology' in the Marxist tradition, is thus from the outset restrictive, monolithic and pejorative, as we will see in Section 18 below. For the analytical distinctions 'pejorative-neutral' and 'restrictive-inclusive', see mainly Seliger 1976 and 1977. Many Marxists though, since about 1980, in the 'post-Marxist re-oreintation', have been struggling with this main view and its variants. For a start, See, first, e.g. Therborn 1980 and Abercombie et.al. 1980.

106 About 'minimal' and 'neutral' definitions, and the critique of 'essentialist' definitions, see e.g. Popper 1945, Vol. 2: Ch. 11.2; Weldon 1953: 11-12, 17-20; Carlsnaes 1981: 3-18; Vedung 1982: 87-91 [1977: 107-109]; Lundquist 1982: 40; Bunge 1998, Vol One: 51-71; Gregor 2003: 127-140; Sartori 2009: 97-150.

107 Friedrich in one of the last old-fashioned theorists of the discipline, representing the paradigm of empirical, historical, normative, institutional and especially *pre-behavioural* Political Science in the tracks of Aristotle; nevertheless, full of insight. See Friedrich 1963: 1-3. For the concepts 'pre-behavioural', 'behavioural' and 'post-behavioural', see Easton 1971 and 1991.

> An ideology is a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides the basis
> for organized political action whether this is intended to preserve, modify or
> overthrow the existing system of power (Heywood 2007: 11).

For traditional political science, ideas and ideologies are thus action-related, and moreover (reflexively and reciprocally) related to the 'the existing political and social order' or 'the existing system of power'.[108] They are 'intended either to change or defend it' or to 'preserve, modify or overthrow' it, as we saw. In these quotations, as examples, we meet the inclusive, pluralistic and neutral concept of ideology, and the theoretical situating of ideological thought in its relation to the institutions of society. But Friedrich also adds another thing: That the ideas involved in ideologies 'may or may not be very true or appropriate'. This assertion of Friedrich's is rather close to, but not the same as, the essentially and holistically 'distorted knowledge' inherent in the Marxist concept of 'the dominant Ideology'. Heywood expresses a similar view when he adds that ideologies 'prioritize certain values of others' and 'invest legitimacy in particular theories or sets of meanings' (Heywood 2007: 15). For the political science knowledge tradition, namely, the possible 'distorted knowledge' in political messages is not a permeating *essential* property in *all* political ideologies. Instead it is an open empirical question *how much* and *what kind* of falsity, biased images or persuasive myth a specific message is promoting, advancing or presenting (of course, depending on the perspective and critical analysis of the observer). Furthermore, what makes a specific political ideology successful, according to the political science view, is *not the truth* of the message, in an absolutely valid or rational sense. What makes it successful is rather the fact whether – subjectively and phenomenologically – it is *held to be true* by its proponents and followers 'with such confidence that they hardly appear the character of assumptions' (Dicey 1926: 20; quoted in Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: 117).[109]

Such success, though, of political ideologies is not random, argue Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan (1950). For a body of beliefs to be successful among the citizenry, they hold, it requires at least *some* shared subjective empirical ('lived') experiences of the social 'world', and at least *some* shared

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108 The still unsurpassed work on ideology theory in the political science knowledge tradition is Seliger (1976). On this point, see also the classical and paradigm-setting work of contemporary Political Science, Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: 1-28, 55-141. I could of course also have gained support on this point from general social theory; see e.g. Parsons 1951; Ch 1 and VIII; Parsons and Shils 1951: Ch. 1. Political Science researchers, though, have quite naturally held (by birth and uncurbed habit) a more pointed, conflict-based, political, ideological and power-related view of the ideational phenomenon than their Sociological colleagues who have more deeply been into the question of social cohesion; so it seems, at least.

109 See e.g. Laswell and Kaplan 1950: 103-41, working out from Pareto, Mosca and Michels in a discussion of 'the political Myth', and the mythical aspects of all successful political doctrines. On the political myths in the support of regimes, see also Friedrich 1963: 83-106.

emotionally held values, to which the ideological content of the ideas propagated can connect; among at least *some* segments of the public (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: 116). This phenomenological character of social and political thought, of course does not hinder the possibility, of a rationalizing criticism of social and political ideas and ideologies, or even of political myths, from the side of political debaters, academic researchers or public intellectuals. On the contrary, the basically phenomenological character of social and political thought makes a continuous rationalizing and knowledge-seeking discussion even more important and necessary.[110]

The subjective ideological orientations of social and political actors (reflexively and reciprocally related to the institutional and cultural configuration of society) are thus indicators of the *political aspirations of actors* and their possible *propensities to act* (however irrational or illusionary they may appear from a rationalizing, critical point of view). Ideological orientations and imaginaries – the 'beliefs' and 'belief-systems' of political citizens as well as elite actors – are basic explanatory factors in political life. This fact is demonstrated by many years of empirical political sociology and empirical political studies; from Seymour M. Lipset (1959), Philip E. Converse (1960) and Robert Lane (1962) to Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart (2003; 2011). Consequently, the analysis of ideas, and of *ideological thought-content*, is basic to all *political understanding*.[111] As I see it, understanding and describing, as methodological procedures, logically precedes explanation. Before it is possible to causally *explain* the existence of some social or political fact (for example the rise of feminism in Europe and the US); you have to establish *what it is* you are trying to explain.

Accordingly, the interesting thing for me is not to establish the fact that the thought and language of social and political actors is legitimating or concealing some prevailing or future 'power' or 'power-structure'; this fact is rather self-evident. I am thus not very impressed by the notion of 'power-critical studies' aiming at demonstrating the existence of power and hierarchy as such. For me this ambition is too blunt, as I mentioned above, and *not sufficient for a genuine political understanding*. As we know, 'power' is involved in all social systems and organizations from the very beginning of human society. Since the influential works of Gaetano Mosca and Robert Michels, a hundred years ago, traditional social science, especially political science, is very much aware of this omnipresence of 'power' in some sense (see e.g. Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: 74-102; Dahl 1984 [1963]). As I pointed out above, all interpretation and analysis of ideas instead ought to abandon the two-sided perspective of power and

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110 This 'rationalizing' task for the social sciences, especially political science, of course never reaches an end, but is always *relative*, in a double sense: situation-relative to the everchanging circumstances and perspective-relative to the unattainable goal of 'true' pictures of the world.

111 For the fundamental notion of *political understanding*, as basic to political science as a discipline, see e.g. Sabine and Thorson 1974: 3-7; Easton 1953: 3-24; Dahl 1984 [1963]: 1-2. See Section 4 above.

subordination and instead start from the alternative, more empirically open perspective of *a plurality of contesting social and political elites and their ideas*; the 'idea-struggle hypothesis' as I termed it. The interesting questions will then be: *What kind* of power is suggested and argued for by the various contesting actors? *What kind* of institutional order, social relations and allocation of values (material or cultural) is suggested and argued for (manifestly or latently) from different sides? And finally, *what truth and validity* – considered from the point of view of a rationalizing social or political science – are to be found in the various propagated standpoints and arguments?

To answer these questions, we need a comparative perspective and a classificatory scheme over the plural idea-systems of a specific historical time or region, as well as a theory of the evolution of idea-systems, in a Darwinian , open-ended sense;[112] however unfinished such a perspective, scheme or theory may be. Without the comparative, classificatory and evolutionary points of view 'from afar', we are defencelessly exposed to the self-images and the self-perceptions of the observed actors. Thus, we cannot rely methodologically solely on the hermeneutics 'from within', however sophisticated it may be performed (see the 'Comment on hermeneutics' in Section 14, below). A comparative and classificatory analysis, instead, is always made 'from without' and at a distance, and may take the form of: 'The Women's Equality Party in the UK has a left-liberal and not a radical feminist political ideology' (in the terms of our transparently stated classificatory definitions);[113] '63% of the MP:s in X-land hold patriarchal ideas on gender and family issues, 30% regard themselves as in favour of gender equality, while 7% express outright feminist ideas' (in the terms of our transparently stated classificatory definitions); 'The political ideas of the Antifa leaders at Berkeley are throughout in the tradition of militant Anarchism and not in the tradition of Marxist socialism or Leninist communism' (in the terms of our transparently stated classificatory definitions); and so on.

However, the endeavour to contribute to a classificatory scheme or a theory of the evolution of different idea-systems (whether of the comprehensive ones, regarding the whole society or the field-specific ones, regarding smaller parts of it) is not the subject here; however important this may be. Fortunately, there is a prominent tradition of comprehensive handbooks[114] and pedagogical textbooks[115] to rely on, with titles like *Political Ideology* or *Political Theory*, where we can find classificatory and evolutionary presentations of stylized or ideal

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112 For the importance of the Darwinian, open-ended, sequential and iterative concept of evolution, in political science as well as in the general theory of societal evolution, see e.g. the innovative Sandberg 2017: 21-61.

113 See my own mini-analysis of the ideological content in the party platform of WEP (Lindberg 2017).

114 For this tradition, see e.g. Janet 1887; Sabine and Thorsson 1973 [1937]; Oakshott 1950 [1939]; Schmandt 1960; von Beyme 2013a, 2013b, 2013c.

115 See e.g. Björklund 1970; Adams, 2001; Larsson 2006; Heywood, 2007; Ball and Dagger, 2011.

type, comprehensive idea-systems or idea-traditions[116] (see Part II, Section 17). This handbook tradition, and its supporting primary research, is of course included in the background knowledge of my elaborations here. But as we saw above, the *extension* of the concept of ideology in these hand-books (being limited to the 'input side' of politics), as well as the incoherent or incomplete accounts of the *inner structure* of ideological thought, are shortcomings that I want to go beyond.[117] Be this as it may, in the following I assume that these main ideal types, and at least some of these hand-books, are known to the reader.

10. THE MISSION OF DESCRIPTIVE 'IDEA-ANALYSIS' AND THE NEED FOR A GENERAL THEORY OF IDEOLOGICAL THOUGHT-CONTENT

The normative and praxeological mission of the cultural and social sciences,[118] especially political science, as we touched upon above, is to contribute to the 'enlightened understanding' in a democratic society (Robert Dahl) or to 'the rationalization of the political debate' (Herbert Tingsten).[119] In order that democracy shall function 'well' – from the point of view of democratic, normative, political theory[120] – the citizenry generally must be properly informed about *what (social and political) problems* and *what (social and political) solutions* lies in front of them. The cultural and social sciences, thus, must stand up for the principle of *truthful knowledge* and the principle of *rational discussion* – at least as truthful and rational as possible.[121]

The information to the citizenry is normally delivered by the public media and the ensuing public debate among political actors; be it parties or organizations and their representatives as well as individual debaters. Different *images of the situation* and its *problems and solutions* are suggested by the contending actors. These images are normally couched in one or the other *ideological vocabulary* with implicit prejudice in stereotypical metaphors and imaginaries.

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116 The connection between a) a classificatory account, b) a historically evolutionary account and c) a model of the inner structure of political theories or ideologies, can be exemplified by the intriguing Swedish text-book by Stefan Björklund, *Politisk teori (Political Theory)* (1970: 17-21, 28-31, 119-129). This connection is also present in Ball and Dagger (2011), although less clearly specified and schematized; logically falling short of Björklund.

117 I have been lecturing on this subject for forty years; on both in graduate and post-graduate courses.

118 All scientific disciplines have a normative and praxeological inclination, residing in the meta-scientific orientation of their paradigms, or on specific running research programmes. See e.g. Törnebohm 1975 on 'Paradigms' or Bunge 1983: Ch. 14.

119 Dahl 1998: 38, 85; Tingsten 1935: 68 or 1940: 215. The commitment to the principle of 'enlightened understanding' is also developed by Myrdal 1944: 1030-72; Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: ix-xiv, xxii-xxiv; Brecht 1959; Karl Popper 1963; Meehan 1981; Vedung 1982; Habermas 1972 [1968]: 301-386; Habermas 1984 [1981]: Ch. VIII: 3; Albert 1985 [1968]; Kleinberg 1991; Gregor 2003: 1-15. See also Beckman 2005 and Badersten 2006. In this company, the famous Jürgen Habermas is remarkably unclear or ambiguous.

120 Some of the best basic works in *normative democratic political theory* (and its problems) are in my view Ross 1946; Tingsten 1965 [1960, 1945]; Pennock 1979; Dahl 1989; Rawls 1993; Dahl 1998.

121 See on 'truth' and the scientific approach, Popper 1972: Ch. 2-5; Bunge 1998, Vol. 1, Ch. 1.

This is inescapable. Hence it is a demanding task for the cultural and social sciences, especially political science, to penetrate below or behind these biased linguistic surfaces – the political languages and their specific ideological vocabularies, rhetoric figures and biased discursive forms – and reach the underlying (three) dimensions of thought and the conceptual-content worlds involved. The closer investigation then starts from a chosen analytical perspective ('from afar' as we saw) regarding: 1) the actual *situation* and its actual practical problems as they are seen by the researcher (the historical, social or political context or 'background', as it often is termed); 2) the various images of the situation and its problems (D), as they are held and propagated by different actors through their ideological vocabulary and rhetorical language-use; and 3) the practical proposals and lines of action (P), proposed by various actors, addressing the situation and its problems from a standpoint of held value-standards or goals (V). The starting point for the researcher is always *an independent investigation of the actual, contextual situation* without which the ideas and messages of the actors are void of meaning for the analyst. This is the precondition for *a contextual, critical understanding* and a rationalizing critical contribution to the social and political debate. This *contextual methodology* is basic in the political science knowledge tradition regarding idea-analysis.[122] The basic questions to pose in an investigation of the ideas of actors in their messages, propaganda or language-use are thus: What *situational images* and what *lines of action* are proposed? What values, attitudes, beliefs or world-views are (explicitly or (implicitly) propagated? What institutional futures are (manifestly or latently) suggested? To answer questions like these in a systematic way, we need a general theory that can serve as an analytical frame in content-oriented 'idea-analysis' (to use a Swedish methodological term since Herbert Tingsten) of the values, world-views, situational analyses and practical proposals put forward by the various actors or message-senders.[123]

11. THE BASIC DEFINITION: 'IDEOLOGICAL THOUGHT-CONTENT'

Above we have met the terms 'ideas', 'idea-systems' or 'ideologies' many times. In the main I have used them – and will continue to use them below – as colloquial non-defined dummy-terms for 'the ideational aspect of society'. However, in my effort to be analytically precise and to reconstruct theory, I will abandon the term 'ideology' and its varying conceptual contents. As we saw,

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122   For example George Sabine argues explicitly for it, and it underlies his influential work *A History of Political Theory* (Sabine and Thorsson 1974 [1937]: 4-7, 19) which has been studied in the first semester of nearly every Political Science department in the world from 1937 up to its fourth edition in the 1970s. For this basic methodology of (perspectivized) critical understanding, see also Tingsten 1933; Tingsten 1973 [1941]; Skinner 2002, Ball and Dagger 2011 or the methodology of Müller 2011.

123   For the established methods of *quantitative*, respectively *qualitative*, analysis of ideological *thought-content*, see Boréus 2017a, respectively, Lindberg 2017. See also Esaiasson, Gilliam, Oscarsson and Wängnerud 2004: Ch. 11-12.

this term commonly signifies three quite different concepts, which in itself is a good reason (among others) to avoid the term as far as possible. If I should start out from that term in my reconstructive effort, for example to launch a valid 'theory of ideology', I would immediately get stuck in the thicket of various preconceptions and linguistic associations from the three main theoretical traditions, not to mention the associations of the readers.

In the conservative tradition, for example, the term 'ideology' (since Napoleon) signals impractical, utopian ideals. In the equally conservative, so called 'totalitarianism school' the term signals the unreasonable faith and total-itarian thinking of Fascism and Communism. In the Marxist tradition (after Marx, Lenin, Lukacz and Gramsci) it signals a thought-steering and thought-disturbing consciousness, supporting and legitimating the unequal (capital-ist) economic system and the power position of the capitalist class; or any power-structure. These two traditions of defining the term 'ideology' imposes a *pejorative* conceptual content in the general definition of the term; creating an in-grown bias already in the definition, thus coming close to a 'persuasive definition'. The shortcomings of these two pejorative definitions is the main theme in Martin Seliger's *Ideology and Politics* (1976). These two biased defini-tions of the term 'ideology', along with others, were also enumerated, ordered and critically scrutinised by Arne Naess and his political science associates in the classic *Democracy, Ideology and Objectivity* (1956). As a result, they hold 'that the use of the term "ideology" in post-war social science' mainly functions as to 'keep prejudices alive'. This lead them to the conclusion that: 'The unfa-vourable history of its use [the term 'ideology'] and the present muddle [of its definitions] create biases too strong to be overcome by possible future investi-gators, [even if they are] introducing the term in a more precise way' (Naess et al. 1956: 171-72).

But there is another common definitional bias or shortcoming. We also saw that the extensional *limitation* of the neutral concept 'political ideologies' in political science was something I wanted to leave behind. Consequently, and following the recommendation of Naess and his associates, I will avoid the term 'ideology' as my starting point for my theory-developing reconstruction. As the reader already have noticed, I started from the beginning with the terms 'ideas' or 'idea-systems', using 'ideology' or 'ideological' as little as possible.[124] The conceptual alternatives, in various theoretical traditions, will be discussed in more detail, later (see Part II, Sections 15-19).

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124 However, neither Naess nor I myself, can totally do without the term 'ideology', at least in its adjec-tival form as the reader already has seen. But we anchor it, and define it, in a wider theoretical set-ting, using it as an adjectival attribute, avoiding an 'essentialist' definition of the concept 'ideology' as if there existed *a priori* autonomous phenomena, entities or essences of that kind. From that point onwards, we differ. Being an analytical philosopher, Naess investigates 'ideological sentences'; while I, being a social scientist, investigate the 'ideological thought-content' (or the action-guiding thought) of communicative actions and interactions.

Thus, I will propose a new term, *'ideological thought-content'*, which I will define in three steps, starting with 'thought-content' = undefined. Then follows: *'action-guiding thought-content'* = *def* "the thought-content involved in the action-orientations of actors in environments". Ending up in:

> *'ideological thought-content'* = *def* "the action-guiding thought-content involved in social and political actions and interactions, that is, such actions and interactions which are directly involved in, or directly or indirectly related to, the institutional or cultural configuration of society as its environment". [125]

As can be seen, this concept of mine is anchored in the General Social Theory of the Weber-Parsons and the Bentley-Lasswell-Easton traditions, presented above (see Section 8 above, and also Part II, Sections 16 and 21). With the new concept *ideological thought-content*, I follow the path of 'minimal definition'; trying to establish the general 'core intension' (or 'core connotation') of the concept. [126] Accordingly, if we want to speak of a specific variant of ideological thought, we need only to add the necessary contextual and ideal-type specifications to the basic definition. For example, 'liberal ideological thought-content' can be defined as: "the action-guiding thought content involved in, or directly or indirectly related to, a *liberal* [in need of definition] institutional or cultural configuration of society"; 'gender-equal ideological thought-content' can be defined as: "the action-guiding thought content involved in, or directly or indirectly related to, a *gender equal* [in need of definition] institutional or cultural configuration of society"; and 'power-legitimating ideological thought-content' can be defined as: "the action-guiding thought content involved in, or directly or indirectly related to the *legitimating process* [in need of definition] of the established *power* [in need of definition] of actor X".

In such more specific definitions of a specific ideological thought-content, the additional, specific connotations (intensions) marked with *...*, of course must be fetched from their respective social scientific theories, models or conceptual schemes. And as we know, these additional concepts are in themselves, as all science, issues of theoretical and empirical discussion; hence these concepts are almost always *contested*, as in the discussion of how to define 'liberalism' (market liberalism, social liberalism or political liberalism) or 'gender equality' (from liberal, socialist, respectively, radical feminist theory); and so on. For me, such chains of definitions – adding the *differentia specifica* of specific ideological thoughts to the *genus proximum* of the social

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125 This act of definition might well be more detailed and logically precise, but for now I let it suffice.
126 For definitions in science, in general, see Bunge 1998, Vol. 1, Ch.2.2; Sartori 2009: 97–150.

and political 'action-orientations' or 'action-guiding thought content' – represent a normal scientific definitional procedure, and hence a point of normal controversy and discussion. As such, this definitional procedure is also the way out from the various ingrown and thought-steering associations attached to the term 'ideology' that Martin Seliger (1976) and Arne Naess (1956) have pointed to.

Consequently, my proposed theory is not intended to be an 'ideology theory', which the Marxist tradition may produce, starting from the pejorative concept of 'the dominating Ideology in society'. Nor is it intended to be a theory of the thought content of the neutral 'political ideologies', which the political science knowledge tradition may produce, as this concept refers to the thoughts of political parties, lobby-groups or voluntary organizations. No, my aim is wider, as we saw. My proposed general theory regards the 'ideological thought content' not only of parties and organizations but of all communications and interactions in *the whole political system*; in the media and the social movements; in the institutions and processes of government and administration; in legislation and policy; in international politics and foreign affairs; *in so far as they concern or are related to the preservation or change of the institutions of the social and political order;* which most of them do. But I am not content only with this widening. I want to include the action-guiding force inherent in the communicative interactions also of *other social domains or fields* of society, in so far as the thought-content *is involved in or related to the preservation or change of institutions, cultures or traditions of society,* which most of them are. This means that I will widen the realm of this 'politicized' or 'ideological' thought-content also to smaller social fields or systems, consisting of 'para-political' (David Easton) communicative interactions, which may be directly or indirectly connected to the larger 'political system' (as I indicated already in Section 1, above).

12. THE MISSION OF 'IDEA-CRITICISM' AND THE NEED FOR A GENERAL THEORY OF IDEOLOGICAL THOUGHT-CONTENT

My suggested general theory of ideological thought-content (with the three tiers values, descriptions and prescriptions) is also intended for critical analysis as we saw; which I will term 'idea-criticism', using a Swedish term borrowed from Herbert Tingsten (Tingsten 1941). Idea-criticism is especially important in the contemporary social and political situation, where 'post-truth' fabricated information is common, where rationality-disturbing information strategies have become an industry, and where sophisticated propaganda-techniques flourish.[127] These thought-steering techniques are highly visible for all of us

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127 See e.g. Rabin-Havt and Media Matters 2016; Levinson 2017.

right now, in the case of the US, for example, but they are equally wide-spread, or even more deeply used, in many other societies around the globe.[128]

In this situation of wide-spread, deliberately rationality-disturbing political communication, the normative and praxeological mission of the cultural and social sciences becomes even more urgent. There is a seemingly never-ending need of rationalistic idea-criticism, in the spirit of Socrates,[129] or in the spirit of modern philosophers like Karl Popper, Hans Albert, Jürgen Habermas, Amartya Sen or Martha Nussbaum.[130] In this endeavour, we need a 'reasoned and defensible foundation for systematic criticism of intellectual claims', as Eugene Meehan has formulated it in his *Reasoned Argument in Social Science* (Meehan 1981: ix); or an elaborated *method* to scrutinize political messages in a 'critical and rational way', as Evert Vedung has presented in his *Political Reasoning* (Vedung 1982: 13).[131] To continue, the Swedish political theorist Stefan Björklund has recently elaborated on the principles of clear and reasoned argument in his *Det redbara samtalet. Locke och Popper mot Heidegger* (The Upright Dialogue. Locke and Popper against Heidegger) (2015). This work is a detailed critique of the dismissal of rationality and rational discussion by contemporary post-modernist philosophy, especially in the philosophy of Heidegger. And some decades ago, the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess elaborated a semantic, critical framework in his concise *Communication and Argument. Elements of Applied Semantics*, which ends with an enumeration of six principles for a rational and knowledge-based use of language (Naess 1966: 121-135). (In this enumeration, Naess is rather close to Aristotle's classical criticism of flawed rhetoric and false logical conclusions.) To cut a long story short I may say that these authors suggest three main criteria of rationality and rational argument in social and political discourse and dialogical deliberation: 1) linguistic and semantic clarity, 2) empirical validity and 3) logical and argumentative consistency.[132] To these three are added a fourth and a fifth,

128 Propaganda is of course an age-old phenomenon which time after time recurs in new clothes; George Orwell's novel *1984* is an incisive classic of this phenomenon. For the established knowledge tradition on political propaganda, see e.g. Lasswell 1927; Chakotin 1939; Lasswell and Leites 1949; Edelman 1977; Fowler and Kress 1979; Fredriksson 1982; van Dijk 1984; Chilton 2004; as well as many more.

129 See Plato *The Republic* (Book v-vii); especially as commented in Nightingale 2004: 123-127. I am indebted to my colleague Peter Hallberg for this reference and this reading of Plato as rational criticist of the *doxa* among the citizens.

130 See e.g. Popper 1963: 120-135); Albert 1985 [1968]: 3-11, 218-230; Habermas 1972 [1968]: 301-386), or 1987 [1985]: vii-xvii; Sen 2006: vi.xvii; Nussbaum 2010: 47-78. The examples are legion.

131 See also Majone 1989: 1-41; I am indebted to Sverker Gustavsson for this reference. The examples are legion. For the wide support of this general, enlightening, raison d'être of the cultural and social sciences, see also the position of Max Weber (1949 [1904]; Myrdal 1944/Vol. II: 1027-1031; Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: ix-xiv, xix-xxiv; Easton 1953: 3-15; Popper 1963: 135; Oakshott 1962: 70-95; Friedrich 1963: 3-23; Kaplan 1964: 379-81; Dahl 1984 [1964]: 1-7; Bunge 1983: Ch. 14; Albert 1985: 3-70; Habermas 1987: xvii; Kleinberg 1991: 5; King et al 1994: 49-50; Müller 2011: 1-6.

132 My once supervisor, and now friend and colleague, Sverker Gustavsson never get tired of pointing

4) normative or moral validity[133] and 5) argumentative relevance to the subject at hand.[134]

Suffice to say, all these authors also adhere to the view that our intellectual efforts – as researchers – inevitably rely on a *chosen perspective* of value-assumptions and ontic assumptions of the social and political world; assumptions that must be argued for. Our descriptions, interpretations, explanations and criticisms become valid only in the light of, and relative to, the chosen perspective. Thus, the normative and ontic assumptions, as well as our chosen basic definitions and methodological procedures, must be stated transparently and explicitly. Only then can a rational and critical discussion and analysis be possible, relying on the five criteria of rational argument presented above. The view that all social science is perspective-bound, and that the perspective must be made transparent and explicitly argued for, was suggested already by Max Weber in a classic stance as early as 1904 (1949 [1904]). Four decades later, Gunnar Myrdal developed Weber's position in an iconic Appendix to his classic *An American Dilemma* (1996 [1944]: 1030-70).[135]

The morphological theory and analytical scheme suggested here, thus, is intended to contribute to the tradition of *reasoned argument* and *rationalizing idea-criticism*, as of above; included in a general epistemic outlook of *rationalizing political understanding*. The theory is intended to guide the process of interpretation and analysis of social and political communication and language, with the aim of making it possible to: a) discern the three, basic thought-dimensions in the social and political messages or language-use; b) make them visible in a reconstructed, semantically clear, linguistic form, and, thus, c) make them subject to rational criticism in the light of the five criteria above. The necessity to reconstruct muddled political language into clear and

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to these criteria as basic in the rational and critical analysis of political thought and language. For him this is a founding programme for Political Science as a discipline; a view to which I am highly sympathetic and gladly would have discussed further. I am grateful for his recurring comments on this issue; shortage of space makes it, however, impossible for me to take advantage of all his constructive points.

133 The possibility and principles of argued *normative validity* is proposed e.g. in Brecht 1959: Ch. III; Vedung 1982: 181-205 [Swed. Orig. 1977: 159-180]; Björklund 1991: 101-134; Badersten 2006: *passim*. Mario Bunge suggests a theory of values and normative validity on a similar track (Bunge 1989: 1-90), which ought to be more thoroughly discussed and assessed. See also Vedung 'Fyra typer av statsvetenskaplig idéanalys' in the present issue of *Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift*.

134 See Vedung 1982 [1977].

135 This prescriptivist view of the scientific endeavor is also fundamental for the theorizing of Lasswell and Kaplan (1950: ix-xxiv), Parsons (1951: 536-555) and Easton (1953: 317-20; 1965a: x-xiii, 23-45); all viewing their own frameworks as analytical perspective-seeing, a meta-scientific position I consequently think (since we really are speaking of paradigmatic classics) must be regarded as *fundamental* in the general paradigm of contemporary social science. Thus, the allegation of a mainstream 'empiricist' or 'positivist' epistemology must be put in question. As I see it the mainstream epistemological position of all our paradigmatic classics is *normative and pragmatic*, using empirical investigations as parts of a broader, perspectivized *political understanding*.

stylized sentence-meanings for analytical purposes, and to translate biased and evaluative vocabulary into a (as much as possible) neutral and clearly defined terminology, understandable from the outside and at the same time true to the intended meaning of the author, is basic to *the rational attitude in inter-pretation and criticism* proposed here.[136] First, the theory makes it possible to single out, analytically, the (biased) *descriptions* in political messages (D) with their attached evaluative attitudes and prejudices (whether manifest or latent); and this makes possible a discussion on the *empirical validity* of the descriptive propositions. (Are the proposed descriptive images empirically valid?) Secondly, the theory makes it possible to single out, analytically, the *values or goals* in political messages (V) (whether manifest or latent); and this makes possible a discussion on the *moral validity* or the *instrumental practicality*. (Are the chosen values morally acceptable? Are the chosen goals practically attainable or instrumental for our values?) Thirdly, the theory makes it possible to single out, analytically, *prescriptions*, recommendations or practical proposals (P) (whether manifest or latent); this makes possible an argumentative-logical criticism. (Do the prescriptions logically follow from the value-premises and the descriptive premises? Do the prescriptions in fact lead to the achievement of the chosen values or goals?) As the reader may realize from her own experience of everyday deliberation or everyday debate, this three-tiered theory of ideological thought-content is not only a philosophical and theoretical construct; it is also inspired and supported by empirical studies and everyday experiences. The reader herself may have met these three dimensions of thought and argument in her private deliberations or in everyday conversations; if not in the acquaintance with *The New Society for Homeless Cats in Huddersfield* or with the arguing young couple next door.

13. THE POST-MODERNIST CRITIQUE OF RATIONAL IDEA-CRITICISM; AND SOME ANTI-CRITIQUE

In the last decades, post-modern philosophers have denied both the possibility and the desirability of knowledge-based, rational criticism of social and political ideas. The position has been based on a general pessimistic view on truth and rationality – directed against the optimism of the Enlightenment[137] – and has expressed a pointed critique of 'positivist social science' with its alleged

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136 For this method of *semantic reconstruction* with the purpose of rationalizing *interpretation*, see e.g. Naess and associates 1956: 5-8, or Naess 1960: 9-36 (Swe. Transl. 1970: 1-22). See also Hirsch 1967: 164-207; Vedung 1982: 99-180, Swed. orig. 1977: 59-158; or Skinner 2002: 27-144. In part we will return to this issue in Part II, Section 29, below.

137 This pessimism about the social sciences is a recurring trend. See David Easton's classical critique of the pessimism in intellectual quarters after the end of World War II (1953: Ch. 1). And we can of course speak of a whole history of pessimistic trends regarding the possibility of rationality and truth. The optimists, though, seem to be both numerous and theoretically well equipped. See, in addition to those already mentioned, e.g. Nussbaum 2000 or Sen 2004.

claim to produce 'absolute' or 'infallible' truth. Since absolute truth anyway is impossible, goes the argument, any criticism of social philosophies and political ideologies based on scientific knowledge and rational truth-standards is impossible or illusionary. Hence the only possible position is to regard all positions as equal and basically *voluntarist acts of will and purpose*, in fact myths.[138] No philosophical or ideological claim can be said to be logically or empirically better grounded than the other; philosophy or science is on the same level as literature, literary criticism or political ideology. Science is 'just another discourse' as the saying has had it.[139]

On this point, I would like to bring in Quentin Skinner and his criticism of Jacques Derrida regarding *interpretation* and descriptive idea-analysis. Derrida argues, as we know, that we never can know with infallible certainty what a text or an utterance really means. Hence, we should abandon the endeavours to produce systematic and scientific interpretations about ideas and ideational intentions of actors. Skinner answers with a typical British understatement, signalling deadly attack:

> 'The outcome of the hermeneutic enterprise, I fully agree, can never be anything resembling the attainment of a final, self-evident or indubitable set of truths about any text or other utterance whatsoever. Even our most confident ascriptions...are nothing more than inferences from the best evidence available to us, and as such are defeasible at any time. It scarcely follows, however, that we can never hope to corroborate plausible hypotheses...Derrida appears to be...attacking a position that no theorist...defend' (Skinner 2002: 121-122).

The post-modern critique, Skinner holds, simply targets a suitable, fabricated straw-man. The method and attitude of actual scientists has of course never claimed to produce absolute truth or infallible knowledge. Maybe some philosophers, or even some scientists, of a positivist conviction have strived for that goal. But as Mario Bunge and Karl Popper have convincingly demonstrated, 'logical positivism', based on inductivism and empiricism, was, first, never equal to 'the actual scientific procedure' (Bunge 1998 [1967]/I: v-ix, 3-50); nor was it a tenable philosophy of science (Popper 1959 [1934]: 93-111; 1963: 3-65,

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138 In academic circles, post-modernism has almost always appeared as a critical stance, among other sources continuing the attitude of 'critical theory' of the Frankfurt school. But this position is dangerously close to, or has no borders against, the negative philosophy and cultural critical attitude of Nietzsche, Heidegger or the fascist philosophers; as has been repeatedly been pointed out by Richard Wolin (see e.g. Wolin 1993 [1991], 2001, 2004, 2006). (See also Gregor 2005.) But post-modernist philosophy really has shown its Janus-face, in its *positive and practical use* for political purposes; for example, in the works of Vladimir Putin's advisor-protagonist-ideologist, Alexander Dugin (see e.g. Dugin 2012, 2014a, 2014b) or the activity of Donald Trump's advisor-protagonist-ideologist Steve Bannon; two prominent 'practical post-modernists' (if I may say so) of our time.

139 For a critique of the levelling of different discursive genres and language-levels, see e.g. Habermas, *The Discourse of Modernity* (1987 [1985]: 185-210). For a general critique of the post-modernist position in relation to political conservatism and political pessimism (Nietzsche, Heidegger), see in general Habermas 1987 [1985]; Wolin 2001; Wolin 2004. See also Björklund 2015.

120-35; Popper 1972: 1-31, 106-90). In fact, the procedure of actual science, as it historically has been performed, is inverse: *all scientific knowledge consists of hypothetical knowledge (relatively truthful)*; and the scientific mood and method consists of a constant discussion to improve the prevailing hypothetical claims to knowledge.[140] Thus, in his argument against Derrida, Skinner simply stands for the conventional view; the view that science is fundamentally a knowledge-seeking *discussion* about contingent and hypothetical propositions.[141]

If we take Skinner's view, it is possible for us to launch both descriptions and criticisms of *the thoughts and ideas of political actors as our objects of study* with a scientific attitude and ambition. It is thus possible, first, to launch (hypothetical) interpretations of the ideological thought-content of actors or authors, with the claim to produce hypothetical and relatively true pictures of their thoughts and imaginaries; using for example textual interpretation, interview, survey or quantitative content-analysis as our method. But it is also possible, secondly, to engage in idea-criticism of the same thoughts regarding semantic clarity, empirical validity, logical coherence and normative or moral validity. Of course, these attempts of ours must be conducted from a *transparently stated and rationally argued point of view*. We thus do not start out with the ambition of reaching absolute truth (following Popper and Bunge). Instead we are aware of the inescapable relativism that our own theoretical perspectives and conceptual worlds imply, as proposed already by Max Weber in his essay on 'objectivity' in the social sciences (1949 [1904]: 50-112) or stated in more developed form by Gunnar Myrdal in his impressive works *An American Dilemma* (1996 [1944], Vol 2: 1035-70) and *Asian Drama* (1968, Vol. 1: 49-70).[142] Thus, our ambition is rather modest, that of 'best available (hypothetical) knowledge' or 'best possible methodological efforts'; being aware of the perspectival relativeness, the theory-laden conceptualizations, the possible incompleteness of

140 For this general view, see Törnebohm 1973 and 1979. See also Karl Popper's or Mario Bunge's views of 'relative truth' or 'verisimilitude' in 'hypothetical' or 'conjectural knowledge'; e.g. in Popper 1963: 215-250; Popper 1972: 106-205; Bunge 1998/1: 3-12; Bunge 1974: 81-132 (Treatise on Basic Philosophy, Vol. 2, Ch. 8 on 'Truth').

141 During my methodological education, as an undergraduate student in History, Economic History and Political Science 1968-1971, as well as later as a Ph.D. student in Political Science, I have never met anything other than this hypothetical and contingent view of scientific knowledge and scientific method. This overall picture of science, received from my training in empirical social science, was deepened and strengthened by my subsequent studies in the Philosophy and Theory of science, at Håkan Törnebohm's *Department of the Theory of Science (Avdelningen för vetenskapsteori)*, at Gothenburg University in 1971-1973, where Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, Imre Lakatos and Mario Bunge were intellectual heroes.

142 See also Gunnar Myrdal's earlier criticism of the seemingly 'objective' marginal theory in Economics, demonstrating the presence of individualist, liberal political philosophy and ideology in the basic assumptions and argument-structure of this theory; Myrdal, *The Political Element in the Development of Economic Theory* (1990 [1953] [1929]); Swed. orig. *Vetenskap och politik i nationalekonomin* (1972 [1929]).

the prevailing knowledge situation and our own knowledge-contribution; as well as the possible methodological weakness of our own endeavours. Being aware of these unavoidable shortcomings (in principle), and the fact that all knowledge is fallible (in principle), we still try to deliver (hypothetical) substantial pieces of knowledge, as truthful as possible (in principle), to the community of researchers and to the interested public. But we are also, by our mere method and attitude, contributing to the fruitful – though always threatened – culture of reasoned argument in the public debate.[143] This is our double-sided (although never-ending)contribution to what Robert Dahl called 'the enlightened understanding' in a democracy, or what Herbert Tingsten called 'the rationalization of the political debate'.

14. THE NECESSARY DISTINCTION BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEVELS: ANALYTICAL LANGUAGE AND OBJECT LANGUAGE

The concept of 'language-levels' is fundamental and important for all analytical purposes in the humanities and the social sciences; and the general scientific attitude. It is an invention of Bertrand Russell, as it seems, in his Introduction to Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractacus Logico-Philosophicus*. Russell states that for every language with a specific structure there may occur 'another language with a new structure' which can be used when speaking of the first language. Thus, Russell conceives of a 'hierarchy of languages that has no limit' (Russell 1922: 23). Rudolph Carnap refines this conception and invents the concepts 'metalanguage' and 'object language', where the 'object language' is spoken of or analysed by the 'metalanguage' (Carnap 1958: 78-79). This distinction became especially important for analytical or linguistic philosophy, when *the object* of philosophical analysis was regarded as thought and language (no longer reality as such, which was left to the factual sciences to explore); either the languages of science or those of ordinary life.[144]

But the distinction between 'metalanguage' and 'object language' is not only possible to use in analytical philosophy. For Mario Bunge it is a basic tenet of the scientific approach as such and for scientific (that is, theoretical) language.[145] And in political science, Evert Vedung explicitly introduces this distinction as fundamental for the systematic ideational analysis of social and political messages. He speaks of the 'analytical language' of the researcher, which is a metalanguage, and terms the social and political language under investigation the 'object language' (Vedung 1982: 60-62). My proposed general

143 See Tingsten 1941: Popper 1945, 1963; Meehan 1981; Vedung 1982; Albert 1985 [1968]; Nussbaum 2010.

144 For this 'linguistic turn' of analytical philosophy, which we already met in a long foot-note above, see e.g. Wedberg 1984 [1966]: 33-36; see also Bergman 1992 [1953]: 63-9; Ayer 1976 [1973]: 44-51.

145 In his *Philosophy of Science* (1998) [1967] Mario Bunge states: 'The language we talk about is the *object language*; what we say about it we say in a *metalanguage*' (Bunge 1998 [1967], Vol. One: 53).

theory here – following Vedung – is situated on the language-level of 'analytical language', the language of research. This language-level is distinct, as a 'meta-language', from the *language of the research object* which is to be investigated and analyzed; that is, the 'object language', which is the 'ordinary' language of everyday social and political life.

In the actual and practical humanities and social sciences, the notion of language-levels is well known, both in theory and in practice; without, however, always using the exact terminology of Carnap or Vedung. The distinction between the (analytical) language of research and the (ordinary) language of the research object seems to be especially important and developed in political science; perhaps due to the obvious linguistic character of its research object, and the varying political meanings and vocabularies met in the varying linguistic source material of this discipline.[146] In their paradigm-setting work of 1950, Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan points to the important difference between 'the symbols used in the political process', and 'the symbols used in inquiry' (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: xix). And the more traditional political theorist Carl J. Friedrich spells out the same distinction, between the words of 'common speech' and the terms used in 'political analysis' (Friedrich 1963: 3). Moving outside political science this distinction is also self-evident in the disciplinary traditions of history and sociology, at least in practical methodological use.[147] The sociologist, Hans Zetterberg, distinguishes between 'sociological terminology' and 'everyday language' (Zetterberg 1962: 49). In a similar way the sociologist Anthony Giddens suggests the basic notion of 'the double hermeneutic'. On the one hand, the acting and language-using ordinary people, using their ordinary language in their everyday life and interpreting the meanings of others. On the other hand, the researcher, using her analytical language, interpreting the meanings and interpretations made by ordinary people as her object of research (Giddens 1984: 284-85).[148] The historian, Robert F. Berkhofer, talks of the 'point of view of the actor' as distinct from 'the point of view of the observer' (Berkhofer 1969: 67-69). If we move to the history of ideas and learning, the historian Michael Foucault speaks of the importance of a correct 'description' (by the researcher) of 'the ensemble of statements' which make up

146 See e.g. Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: xi, xix; Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960: 12-17, 39-41; Lane 1962: 1-11; Friedrich 1963: 2-3; Gregor 2003 [1971]: 1-15; Vedung 1982 [1977]: 60-62; Carlsnaes 1986: 15-23; Sartori 2009: 97-150 (a piece originally written in 1984); Müller 2011: 1-6; the examples are legion.

147 See e.g. Weber 1949 [1904]: 49-112, or pp. 39-47 [1905]; Zetterberg 1962: 47-73; Berkhofer 1969: 69; Foucault 2002 [1972]: 119-132; Skinner 2002: Ch. 3. Skinner is discussing another methodological aspect, but this basic distinction between analytical language and political language is present as an underlying assumption in his presentation. See the same analytical distinction which is vibrating between the lines of Vedung 1982: 13-28, Swed. orig. 1977: 16-17, but not expressly spelled out.

148 Giddens, though, does not use, or seems unacquainted with, the concept of 'language levels'. Nor does he use the terms 'analytical language' and 'ordinary language', which in my opinion would have strengthened his case of the 'double hermeneutics'.

the research object, in this case the statements of a scientific field or a scientific 'discursive formation'. Unpacking Foucault's formulation, we notice that the 'descriptions' of the researcher are on a higher language-level; they *are about,* supposed correctly to describe, the thought-content of the 'statements' which make up the ensemble of statements, the 'discursive formation', as the research object (Foucault 2002 [1972]: 119-132.) And in the discipline *Theory of Science,* the Swedish philosopher and physicist Håkan Törnebohm defines his research programme as 'studies of studies' or 'inquiries into inquiring systems', playing with words to indicate the different language levels involved (Törnebohm 1973; 1979; 1983).

We saw above that the source material of the humanities and the social sciences is mostly *linguistic.* We also saw that the methodological use of this broad array of source material thus rests on the meta-methodological assumption of the *general possibility of interpretation and understanding* of the meaningful and intentional language-use of social and political actors.[149] Consequently, all empirical investigations in the humanities and the social sciences – whether quantitative or qualitative[150] – require *interpretation* as a basic meta-method.[151] However, the distinction between *analytical language* and *object language* is subtle. Sometimes this distinction is difficult to observe and uphold. The difference is namely *analytical,* not substantial or verbal. This might blur the distinction, as such, and thus also the process of interpretation. In fact, the same words can be used on both sides of the dividing line. For example, the words 'privatization', 'domestic violence', 'xenophobia' or 'inequality' may occur in actual political discourse or debate 'out there', inside the research object. The same words, though, can at the same time be used by the researcher in her descriptions and analyses of the same discourse or debate.[152] On the other hand, there are many occasions where the terms and concepts in the analytical language of research are clearly different from ordinary language, as in 'party-identification', 'status-scale', 'intersectionality', 'secession' or 'second wave feminism'.

One can say that the construction and upholding of the dividing line between the analytical language of research and the ordinary language of social and political actors (the object of research) establishes the cultural or social scientific enterprise as such; as 'a specific style of thinking and acting',

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149 See e.g. Naess 1966: 9-36.

150 For quantitative, respectively, qualitative content-analysis, see Esaiasson, Gilljam. Oscarsson and Wängnerud 2004: 219-252 (Ch. 11-12); Boréus and Bergström eds. 2017: Ch. 2 and 4.

151 For interpretation as a scientific method, see e.g. Hirsh 1967: 169-217; Ricoeur 1981: 145-181; Vedung 1982: 99-122 (Swed. Orig. 1977: 59-112; Skinner 2002: 27-127.

152 At the same time the language of media and everyday communication is becoming more and more imbued with scientific or quasi-scientific concepts and parlance; the arrows of terminological influence between scientific and ordinary language go in both directions.

to use the words of Mario Bunge (Bunge 1998, Vol One, p. 3). Without the distinction between analytical language and object language – and its application in methodological usage – our cultural and social disciplines and research programmes simply would not exist as scientific enterprises. To this end, in this essay, I try to use a consequent *double-speak*. From the very first page I have used different terms to signify the fairly similar concepts on either side of the dividing line.[153] When I speak of 'words' in ordinary language I speak of 'terms' in analytical language; the word 'debate' in social and political language is 'discussion' in the language of research; 'vocabulary' and 'thought' in ordinary language is 'terminology' and 'thinking' in the language of research; political actors are said to have a 'perception of the meaning' of a message, while researchers have an 'interpretation of the thought-content' of the same message; last in this series of examples is 'the meaning of the words' in social and political language compared to 'the conceptual content of the terms' in analytical language. This may seem like snobbery or something quite unnecessary, and I admit that the different terms chosen on either side of the dividing line are largely synonymous; although they differ stylistically as 'low' respectively 'high' style. My reason is to install an immediate sense of the two, basic language-levels in the attentive reader's reading process already from the start.[154]

There is also a critical edge in my position. Post-modernist philosophy and post-structuralist language theory, being part of 'continental' philosophy, is based on a denial of the concept of language-levels.[155] More specifically the distinction between analytical language (as a tool of research) and object language (as an object of research) is ignored or erased. Jacques Derrida, for example, holds that there are no qualitative differences between literature, poetry, philosophy or science, since they all, in the last instance, are regarded as instances of the same 'writing'; thus, rhetoric is regarded as primary to logic or truthfulness. This position implies that the semantical and syntactical characteristics of ordinary language, fruitfully investigated by the later Ludwig Wittgenstein or John Austin, are regarded as characteristics also of the language used in science or philosophy. This position has been heavily criticised by Jürgen Habermas in his *The Philosophical 'Discourse of Modernity* (see Habermas 1987 [1985]: 185-210). This ignoring or denying of language-levels in post-modernism and post-structuralism is thus fundamental for their dismissal of the specificity of

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153 Riding on the ambiguity of terms is in fact a common, sly and efficient propaganda technique; so, I had better reveal my rhetorical trick here, and twist it into a pedagogical advantage.

154 The sense of snobbery emerges especially when you see all these coupled words manifestly assembled on the same spot, as above. But I am pretty sure that the reader has not even noticed that I already have been using this double-speak from the first page of my text and up to now. Hence the alleged 'snobbery' perhaps was not so disturbingly snobbish after all!

155 Perhaps this is due to its connections to 'continental philosophy', as to hermeneutical (Dilthey), phenomenological (Husserl) or existentialist (Heidegger) social philosophy.

the scientific approach. Science is 'just another discourse' the saying goes. I will answer: 'Exactly! *Another* kind of discourse!' and then state the following.

The qualitative distinctiveness of scientific discourse in relation to other 'types of discourse' is already presented in Charles Morris' classic work *Sign, Language and Behavior* (1944), basic in the development of modern Semiotics. In this work the author distinguishes the Religious, the Political, the Fictive, the Poetic, the Scientific 'types of discourse' from each other.[156] For philosopher of science, Mario Bunge, science is identified as distinct (in principle) from ordinary knowledge and consequently also distinct (in principle) from ordinary language (Bunge 1998: 3-6, 52-60). The specificity of scientific language, in my opinion (following Morris and Bunge), consists of mainly three aspects: Firstly, it is situated on a specific language level; directly or indirectly it always *is about* (trying to depict or describe) some (hypothesized) factual object or phenomenon, which even may be ideas or cultural forms as in the cultural or social sciences. Secondly, scientific language is artificial and not natural, which really makes it distinct from ordinary language; it consists of concepts, the meanings of which are stipulated in explicit, formal definitions as parts of artificial, abstract conceptual systems – theories. Thirdly the concepts derive their connotative (intensional) meaning or from their place in the theoretical system; either distinguished by their distinctions to siblings and cousins (as 'liberalism' to 'conservatism' or 'socialism') or by being distinguished upwards in the system (as being a sub-class of a larger class, as 'liberalism' to 'political ideologies') or being distinguished downwards (having sub-classes of their own, as 'liberalism' to 'right-wing liberalism' or 'left-wing liberalism'), and so on.[157]

However, the distinction between analytical language and ordinary language does not mean that all language in actual scientific works is completely different from or alien to ordinary language. On the contrary, good scientific language-use relies on and uses the vocabulary and phraseology of clear and educated ordinary language as far as possible.[158] But in a scientific discourse *a few specific analytical or theoretical terms and concepts* are still a necessary precondition for scientific-ness, and make up the backbone or the nervous system of *the theoretical or analytical meaning* of a scientific text.[159] Or in

156 Morris proposes an analytical 4 x 4 table with a total of 16 basic 'types of discourse' (Morris 1944: 121-52).

157 See e.g. Mario Bunge 1998: Ch. 1-2, especially the mentioned pages 3-6, 52-60. See also Nancy J. Nersessian 2008: Ch. 1.

158 This was a rule and an aesthetic canon, constantly preached by my methodology teachers of my student years in History and Political Science in Uppsala. This rule was upheld as an ethos of scholarship connected to the 'enlightening' mission of the cultural and social sciences to contribute to 'the rationalization of the political debate', mentioned above. As I see it, there exists a stylistically beautiful tradition of the humanities in Scandinavia, using educated ordinary language to a large and refined degree; see e.g. Hessler 1964 as but one, but especially prominent, example.

159 'Theories are the nervous system of science', Mario Bunge states (Bunge 1998, Vol One: 434).

the words of philosopher of science Mario Bunge: 'No piece of science can dispense with ordinary language but none can do without a language of its own' (Bunge 1998, Vol. One, p. 52). Furthermore, the most important of these few specific terms are directly involved in, or fetched from, linguistically specified theories, models or conceptual schemes.[160] All scientific efforts, even the closest empirical investigation, are by necessity 'theoretical' in this semantic and linguistic aspect; relying on at least some specifically and theoretically defined, central concepts.[161]

The *general theory of ideological content* suggested here is of course intended as a case of analytical language, made up of theoretical concepts and propositions; defined by their place in a theoretical system. The proposed general theory, and its ingredient analytical concepts, are: 1) anchored in the action *theory* of society; 2) consists of a formalized *theoretical model*, the VDP-triad; and 3) a two-level *analytical scheme*.[162] The analytical scheme is based on the VDP-triad in a double appearance, a) on the fundamental (philosophical) level and b) on the operative (practical) level of action-guiding thought. This theoretical package should be used as a heuristic and analytical frame; in the first place suggesting *aspects to look for* in the reality of communication and language 'out there'. In this way it is intended to be the starting-point for descriptions, interpretations and criticisms, as well as classificatory or explanatory analyses in the study of *ideological thought-content* as this is found in both official (formal) and colloquial (informal) corners of social and political life.

Excursus: A comment on hermeneutics

In the phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions, though, the whole point is to ignore the notion of language-levels and start the hermeneutical circle of understanding *from within* the language of the research object in order *not to miss important* parts or aspects of 'the point of view of the actor'. This

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160 Bunge continues: 'Every science builds an *artificial language* of its own that includes signs borrowed from ordinary language but is characterized by signs and sign combinations introduced along with the peculiar ideas of that science' (Bunge 1998 [1967], Vol I: 52).

161 The Swedish Theorist of Science, Håkan Törnebohm, in the very condensed and rich book *Studier av kunskapsutveckling* (1983) (Eng. *Studies in the Development of knowledge)* includes a theoretical language (L) among the five basic factors of a scientific paradigm. This language in turn consists of concepts and grammar from a natural language (N), together with formally stipulated concepts (F) and some mathematical terms and procedures (M). The language (L) usually also includes a specific control language (K) to deliver and discuss criteria of methodological choice, empirical support or refutation, and theoretical thickness and fruitfulness (Törnebohm 1983: 7-17). I think the reader can easily comprehend this view of what a scientific language consists of, and check it against her own practical methodological training, or against the language-use in exemplary studies of her own discipline, not to mention the language in her own scientific texts.

162 For the distinction between theory, theoretical model and analytical scheme, to be somewhat fastidious, see Bunge (1998, Vol 1: 380-389). See also James Gregor, *Metascience and Politics* (2003 [1971]: 119-197); or regarding classificatory schemes, see e.g. Sartori (2009: 97-150).

methodical procedure is gentle, respectful and preliminarily fruitful; an indispensable part of any empirical investigation of thought-content of *object-languages* in the cultural and social sciences. But this *understanding from within* of the object language is not enough; it brings about only a limited understanding, however contextualized it may be. Thus, the researcher must jump over the discursive fence of the object language – a virtual *salto mortale*. In my opinion, the more unpolished and disrespectful (!) manners of scientific analysis *from the outside* are indispensable. This *analysis from without* uses an *external* analytical language with a comparative, alien analytical frame, or an external classificatory scheme. This is the only way, as I see it, to widen the horizon of the analysis and get a perspective from without on the thought-content of an actor or a text. Such an external frame may be very simple, as in the use of a dichotomous conceptual scheme or a four-field table. It can also be more elaborated, as in the use of a comprehensive classificatory theory or an analytical model.[163] Personally, I really appreciate diving into hermeneutical textual-intertextual-contextual interpretations of meanings and intentions; it is my methodological mother's milk from my student years in source-critical empirical history and idea-analytical political science at Uppsala University of the late 1960s. But *hermeneutics from within*, however contextual and elaborated, is not enough for a *comprehensive understanding*, that is, a both comparative and classificatory understanding, of social and political ideas. This is especially obvious in the study of political thought and language. The comprehensive *political understanding* of the thought-content of some source material, anecdotally or commonly assumed to be, for example, 'neo-liberal', 'conservative' or 'right-wing populist' is impossible to carry through until the thought-content is systematically compared with some other political ideas, or inserted in a comparative, classificatory scheme. As we remember, all definitional meanings of analytical concepts appear in the distinctions from other concepts. To take another example, the political meaning of some text pretending to be 'Feminist' is impossible to interpret and classify unless compared with, at least, 'Socialist Feminism', 'Liberal Feminism' or 'Radical Feminism'; and in these latter of days, perhaps also 'conservative', 'Christian', 'Hindu' or 'Islamist feminism'.[164] All this illustrates the importance of a comparative and classificatory approach *from without* and, fundamentally, the need of an over-arching, *general theory* and a general or neutrally distanced *analytical scheme*.

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(Part II follows in *Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift* 2018: 3.)

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163 On the distinction between theory and model, see Bunge 1998, Vol. One: 380-89
164 See the mini-analysis of Women's Equality Party (WE) in Britain, in Lindberg 2017.

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