



## SUMMARIES

---

### **On Explanation, Understanding, and the Goals of Political Science**

By Hannu Nurmi

The goals of political science research are elucidated by analyzing them from a wider perspective of the general methodology of the social sciences. First the problems of explanation and understanding and their interdependence are discussed. It is indicated that the logic of explanation recommended by »logical empiricism» cannot properly treat the problems of understanding and is also consequently deficient in defining »relevance» in the selection of research topics and in taking into account the limits of research this selection determines. Similarly the feed-back of the research results on the basic premises of research cannot be understood.

The bifurcation of the social science research into naturalistic and hermeneutic tradition is next discussed. This bifurcation and the complementary relation between these two traditions are elucidated with a brief excursion into the philosophical anthropology of Jürgen *Habermas*. The question whether political science research is guided by technical or practical interest is asked, and it is suggested that the political scientists should consider also the latter alternative and focus on the analysis of goals of political action instead of obtaining information only about the means of achieving the goals. Furthermore the conception of rationality inherent in the »logical empiricist» tradition and the Habermasian idea of a critical social science are juxtaposed and analyzed. Finally it is concluded that although neither logical empiricist nor the hermeneutic tradition is satisfactory alone, the discussion of their relative merits has a very specific function: it leads us to ask what interests really guide the social science research and is the research actually »theoretical or practical».

### **On the Emancipatory Interest of Knowledge and its Relevance for Political Science**

By Erkki Berndtson

The need for a social scientist to elucidate his ethical view-points in the modern world is first indicated. This elucidation presupposes extensive methodological knowledge and sophistication that the social scientists should acquire.

The limits of the prevailing modern behavioral study of politics which leans heavily on logical empiricism is indicated and as an alternative the

philosophical perspective of Jürgen *Habermas* is introduced. After discussing Habermas's three interests of knowledge — technical, practical and emancipatory — the author accepts the idea of Habermas and the other critical social scientists that the social science research should be guided by the emancipatory interest, i.e. it should aim at freeing men from so-called quasi- structures of society and history to purposeful action.

The basic logic of Habermas's ideas is, however, criticized. His three media — work, language and authority — are re-examined and categories of production, language, social authority and political authority are substituted for them. Especially the contrast between the concepts of *the social* and *the political* is considered crucial.

Using the concept of *the social*, the author analyzes the difference between the natural and social sciences and pleads for the different kind of methodology for the social than for the natural sciences. The crucial point in formulating the methodology of the social sciences should be the idea of man's ability to change voluntarily his behavior on the basis of knowledge he obtains.

In the second part of an article a link from these methodological viewpoints to the subject matter of political science is established. In order to do that, two traditions, logical empiricism and the so-called hermeneutic-dialectic school of thought, are analyzed along three dimensions- the concept of man, the concept of politics and the concept of freedom. It is concluded that logical empiricism perceives man non- rational and power-oriented and consequently considers politics as a struggle for power. Thus the task of the political institutions is to guard the weak against the powerful. This idea then leads to the so-called negative concept of freedom suggested by Sir Isaiah *Berlin*.

The author, however, disagrees with this tradition and concludes that man (if he is freed from quasi- structure of society) is rational and also able in politics for organized group activity for common goals. Thus he also can adhere to positive concept of freedom. This all is consistent with methodology of social sciences suggested earlier, because it presupposes moving from society of social authority to society of political authority.

Problems arising from quasi- structures of organized groups or societies are also analyzed. These are discussed within the framework of the »machia-vellian» tradition of Mosca, Michels and Pareto. A permanent contradiction is seen between the decision-makers (elite) and other citizens (mass) of society. Thus the task of a social scientist should be to act as a critic of society in favor of underdogs. The discussion is closed by a critique of both the liberal doctrine of »objective» social science and the leninist doctrine of »partiinost» social science, which both are seen as extreme elitist positions.

### **On the »New» Methodological Discussion in the Social Sciences and its Implications for Political Science**

By Ilkka Heiskanen

The need for analysis of the trends of development and periodical fluctuation in the methodological discussion of the social sciences is first discussed. It is then asked, to what extent the latest »boom» in this discussion offers

solution to old methodological problems or provides practical rules for substantive research. Two »new» functions of the social science research suggested by the new discussion are selected for a closer analysis. The functions are those of complementary communication (the social sciences should increase the mutual understanding of individuals and social groups) and of therapeutic corrective communication (the social sciences should analyze the impact of the asymmetric communication on formation of false ideologies and by pointing its causes emancipate people from them). When these functions are analyzed in detail, they break down into a host of practical problems of hierarchical position of societal subsystems, control of the cybernetic mechanisms of societal supersystem and the ability and willingness of the scientific community to serve the supersystem or any of its subsystems. The impact of the commitment to either of the two »new» functions of the social sciences upon the informative value of research results is also discussed.

From the point of view of the political science it is indicated that the awareness of the potentials of the social science research as complementary social communication may make the political scientists pay attention to the communication problem between themselves, the political decision makers and the subgroups of the rest of the society. The idea of the social science research as therapeutic corrective communication in turn makes the political scientists aware of their role as the persistent critics of the power holders and their »communicative» superiority that leads to problems of false ideologies. It is also indicated how the acceptance of this critical orientation necessarily involves the political scientists in battle for right to collect information and communicate critical research results.

Finally the functions of a »semi-empirical»-methodological discussion is elucidated from the point of view of scientists, scientific community and society. The author concludes by the observation that the »new» methodological discussion has contributed to the social sciences in two ways: first, although it has not solved any old methodological problems, it has at least unified them and indicated their mutual interconnections. Secondly, the discussion has on the concrete level elucidated the alternative roles of the social scientist vis- a- vis the formal controllers of society (decision makers) and the hierarchically ordered societal groups.