Models of Political Analysis

A Contemporary Re-appraisal of F. G. Bailey and the Manchester 'School'

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CAS WORKING PAPER SERIES
Centre for the Study of Social Systems
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

May 2014
CAS/WP/14-6

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Abstract

This paper looks back at an influential tradition of the ethnographic analysis of politics, through the figure of one of its pioneers, F. G. Bailey, with a view to underline the ways in which he anticipated later developments in the anthropological study of societies and polities. Through a re-appraisal of a rich and varied body of work that F. G. Bailey has produced over the last six decades, I show how through a processual political analysis, Bailey arrived at an understanding of what is specific and what is general in political practices across comparative spatial and temporal contexts; the contingent and complementary nature of explanation of political phenomena; the practical logic of the functioning of institutional politics; and the play of morality and expediency in politics. Further, I locate his work in the contemporary discursive context of the analysis of politics in India, highlighting both his methodological and theoretical repertoire as a legacy providing important insights for current disciplinary concerns of political sociology in India.

Introduction

The sociological analysis of politics in India is charting novel territories in recent times. Ideas of everyday state, the study of organizational and interpersonal strategies that inform everyday political interactions in varied settings, the relative autonomy of the sphere of the political as an arena of social action, the interface of patronage and clientelism with class and renewed interest in the anthropologies of democracy and performative aspects of the political mark the contemporary scholarly discourse on analyzing the political. These emerging interests are consciously or unconsciously, at the crossroads of canons of sociological practice and contemporary realities. To that extent, it becomes imperative for sociological analysis to be sensitive to the discursive traditions of the discipline, not only to consolidate the legacy of a tradition of enquiry but also to situate contemporary realities within a discursive context. This paper is an attempt to revisit an influential and pioneering tradition of anthropological analysis of politics in India, through the figure of F. G. Bailey, who inaugurated several of these contemporary concerns and forged concepts, themes and theories that have a discernible presence in the contemporary discourse. The purpose here is to appraise that legacy and underline the ways in which Bailey anticipated later developments in the anthropological study of societies and polities.

Frederick George Bailey (b. 1924) is one of the central figures of the Manchester school of British social anthropology,[1] who had carried out ethnographic studies of politics in early post-colonial India and went on to deploy the insights of these studies to advance several theoretical and methodological formulations and produce a vocabulary for the comparative analyses of politics, represented, most importantly in his Stratagems and Spoils: A Social Anthropology of Politics (1969).

The paper is divided in three thematic parts: the first outlines the vocabulary of political analysis generated by Bailey's ethnographic studies of Orissa villages in the 1950s and the comparative significance of that vocabulary in understanding politics both generally and in specific times and geographical contexts; the second, as is wont in a sociology of knowledge perspective, traces the particular methodological paradigm through which Bailey approached his ethnographic context to highlight how methodologies and conceptual paradigms are generated in conjunction with each other; and the third places Bailey's model of political analysis in a discursive context to appraise what is lost and what is extant in that paradigm.

A Vocabulary of Political Analysis: Process, Action, Rules

Bailey undertook his ethnographic works in Orissa of early 1950s, in the historical context of a fledgling democracy and within the reigning intellectual current of modernization theory. To that extent, his studies were part of a tradition of understanding newly independent states in a comparative perspective, and the political transitions and transformations that each of these were undergoing. The task was to understand "through the comparative analysis of new nations, principles that underlie their social and political development", with the assumption that "the new nations are engaged in a form of social change that makes nation building and material development simultaneous political problems" (Geertz 1963: v). Bailey's Orissa ethnographies were part of this defined moment in the emergence of political sociology of post-colonial societies. Thus the substantive concern of these studies was to analyze the changes brought about by colonial political and administrative apparatuses in a "traditional" social organization. However, the theoretical and methodological import of his work went much beyond this avowed empirical concern. One of his objectives in these studies had also been to identify how political action- accounts of ideas, beliefs and arguments from particular situations- when translated into conceptualizations and abstractions, generate a vocabulary of political analysis with specific ideas about 'human nature' and 'political man'.

Beginning in early fifties Bailey produced three ethnographies of politics based on his field work in the eastern Indian state of Orissa. Here he generated concepts and models of enduring significance for analyzing newly emerging post-colonial societies. Be it the relationship between village as a category of "traditional" social organization and the modern world of mercantile economy (in *Caste and the Economic Frontier*, 1958) or the relationship between primordial identities and the norms of the national polity (in *Tribe, Caste and Nation*, 1960) or the relationship between "parliamentary democracy and the older traditional forms of social and political organization" (in *Politics and Social Change*, 1963, p. vii).This theme of the articulation between the 'given' and 'emerging' is the guiding thread of these studies. Analyses in the three monographs proposes a schema to understand how colonial institutions have been transforming the extant social and political organization of Indian society, through an investigation of the relationship between institutional politics of political parties, parliamentary processes like periodic elections and the rich context of everyday politics.

For Bailey, politics constitutes an orderly competition within discrete encapsulated boundaries among teams bound by rules of politicking. This concept of politics and attendant notions of act, rules, and arenas are part of the tool-kit for *processual political analysis* that he advocated. His notion of politics as "orderly competition" guided by a set of rules of competition led him to distinguish between situations which are political by the logic of orderly competition and situations where action ceases to be political and becomes merely administrative in the absence of competition, and actions where "competitors do not agree upon rules and institutions…and resort to violence" (Bailey 1963: 223). It is the rules of political engagement that define *"arenas"* of political competition. The rules include legal rules and statutes as well as customs and conventions. Analytically a political structure is "a set of rules for regulating competition". (Bailey 1969: 1).These rules are of two distinctive kinds- normative and pragmatic-the former "are very general guides to conduct, they are used to judge particular actions ethically right or wrong; and within a particular political structure they can be used to justify *publicly* a course of conduct" (ibid: 5).The latter consist of "tactics and manoeuvres as likely to be the most efficient"; and therefore they are "normatively neutral" (ibid). The normative rules are the "public face" of politics; the pragmatic rules are its "private wisdom"- ranging from "rules of 'gamesmanship' (how to win without actually cheating) to rules which advise on how to win by cheating without being disqualified" (ibid: 5–6). These are rules internal to a political structure.

Processes, contradictions, choices, above all *the purposive goal-oriented action* was the staple of the realist analysis of politics undertaken by Bailey. Such analysis called attention to "practical politicking" that sought to uncover not only how ideologies are perceived in actual political contestations but how political power is ultimately achieved *by strategies, tactics and manipulations*. In the context of Bisipara, Bailey showed how the morality of political positions are seen as vested in individual politicians and judgments of political choices manifested in votes is determined by such considerations as contiguity of caste, village, or kin identities. Thus, "…the story of Bisipara brings out most clearly that what the villager sees most directly in politics is the nearest politician and that his acceptance of the new institutions as legitimate does not rest only on the efficiency with which they work, but also on moral judgments about the persons associated with the new institutions" (ibid : 68).

The processual element in Bailey's political ethnography is brought out in his discussion of several themes – the nature of traditional leadership and continuities within a new mode of administration and new rules of the game; the transformation of caste understood as a category with common attributes (jati) into its modern form of caste associations (a group defined by interaction) leading to much wider forms of social stratification; and the organizational bases of political parties in terms of "movement" elements and "machine" elements. These transformations, in Bailey's argument, show the interrelationship between political change and social change. For instance, one of the ways in which the institutional structures of representative government sought to influence traditional social units was by innovations such as creating new groups and new ways of communicating with those groups. Bailey persuasively argues that the old structure of allegiances have only remained as sentiment and were reactivated in the new form of democratic action, such as processions and hunger strikes, and new men have emerged in politics alongside traditional chiefs, such as schoolmasters, caste leaders, petty businessmen.

Similarly, the formation of caste associations as horizontal groupings also facilitated politicians with an effective means of getting votes, as caste provides the politician "with a ready-made moral element on which he can draw to form associations, without the members of those associations calculating at every step what they are going to get out of it" (ibid: 135). Bailey's observation that caste associations "may become, for a time, a main organizing factor and a main cleavage in the new political system" (ibid: 134) would seem rather commonplace in contemporary India, but in highlighting the moral element of caste, he had signaled the enduring significance that caste would have in the Indian political landscape. Besides the utilization of caste associations during elections, parliamentary politics with periodic elections also necessitated that, "small, parochial, and elusive" groups within traditional society are politically persuaded.

Bailey contends that the politician's task was to create a new group in the form of the political party, thus making a distinction between the "movement" and "machine" elements of political parties. The fact that parties essentially exhibited both movement and machine elements, Bailey argues, demonstrates that politics is not sustained essentially and at all times by moral fervor alone, and party as a political machine, gives rise to intermediaries such as brokers, touters, bosses, and agitators- "a network of key individuals, hierarchically organized, but undisciplined and unstable" (ibid: 152). Bailey's theoretical paradigm thus contributed in delineating forms of competitive political organization in complex societies. This theoretical legacy is equally adept at illuminating the political processes of transitional societies and fully realized modern political orders.

The larger methodological implications of a processual approach – a political anthropology of action or agency – lay in locating the "interstitial spaces" of the social structure, i.e. the interpersonal relations between the human beings who make up the society and the everyday interactions and communications through which institutions, associations and the like operate. The relation between structure and process had always been contentious in political anthropology, but Manchester school's emphasis firmly lay with the latter. While it did engage with the structures of social relations, ideas, and values, they were delineated strictly in relation to processes of which they were both the products and regulators.

Action theory in anthropology began by locating the individual within the framework of both formal and interstitial social organization and then proceeded to the analysis of political action and interaction. The theory, backed by fine-grained ethnographic practice generated a set of related concepts- on *political forms* generated out of the coalescence of individual actors, such as clique, gang, faction, coalition, interest group and the political party; on *modes of political behavior*, such as decision-making, strategizing, transacting, manipulating, maneuvering, competing, persuading; and the *context of political action* (both spatial and temporal), such as event, situation, arena, field, environment, power structure.

Although choosing the individual as the starting point of enquiry, the paradigm placed sufficient emphasis on the spatial and temporal dimensions within which actions of individuals take place. Thus Bailey observed in a later work, "At one level we will be discussing specific communities (even specific people in them) at a specific period. But to do this and nothing else is to fail. We want to raise questions (and answer some of them) which far transcend villages in Europe in the middle of the twentieth century, because they are questions which can be asked about change and development in many parts of the world, at all periods in history, and about human assemblages of other kinds besides the peasant village" (Bailey 1971: 27). This line of enquiry clearly shows that the criticisms leveled against action theory in general and Bailey in particular for overemphasizing individuals' actions was somewhat misplaced, as the attempt was more to arrive at generalizable statements across cross-cultural and trans-historical contexts. In fact, the most enduring aspect of Bailey's contribution to the anthropological analysis of politics is the conceptual tool-kit that he had generated, which facilitated comparison across spatial and temporal contexts.

Further, the apprehension that face-to-face political interaction might be ineffective in reflecting the wider structural features of society was allayed by studies which moved from examining manipulative strategies of a narrow range of political actors to a greater clarification of the particular settings and circumstances in which they operated. For instance, Bailey's own synoptic statement of his vision of political sociology, *Stratagems and Spoils,* set the task of political sociology as, unearthing structural regularities underlying political behavior, beneath contextual variations and cultural differences. Thus, in Bailey's understanding social structure and social organization are complementary, standing respectively for form and process in social life. While structure involved role-playing, organization involved both roles and more spontaneous, decisive activity that did not follow simply from role-playing. Moreover, Bailey's conceptualization of structure takes into account sub-structures, which are simply defined as one portion of a structure, made up of groups and institutions classified by their activity content. Thus, in *Tribe, Caste and Nation*, Bailey shows that society among the Konds of the Kondhmal region of Orissa comprise of a number of separate structures of relationships- the tribal structure, the caste structure and the administrative structure. Individuals play roles in all these structures, choosing (not always correctly), one or the other role system through which to gain their personal ends. This also highlights that norms of one structure might be only partially imbibed or incorrectly realized, thus pointing to the contingent nature of interactions through which individuals continuously negotiate with structures, and in that process come to realize their agential capacities.

What comes through in Bailey's perspective on the structure-agency debate, mainly in his studies of political processes, is the contingent nature of both structural constraints and agential possibilities. His argument that individuals inhabit more than one structure may sound obvious, but Bailey's analysis goes beyond that to show that while individuals may be constrained in one structure, say the caste structure in the case of the untouchable caste in Bisipara, they may be enabled in another structure, say the institutional structures of the modern state. Changes within structures thus come about by the possibilities of individual actions, thereby creating newer structures of constraints and possibilities. Bailey writes, "Structures control agency but also are themselves open to being changed by agents. The goal of an agent is to define the situation, to say what structures will organize political interaction" (Bailey 2001:30).

The dialectic between structure and agency has been variously conceptualized and refined in later ethnographies by other anthropologists, some from the stable of Manchester school and others from alternative sociological traditions. For instance, Jeremy Boissevain in his classic study, *Friends of Friends: Network Manipulations and Coalitions* (1974), uses the idea of network and argues that the individual was structured not by role playing but by the structural and interactional character of his network. Similarly, Victor Turner in his *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* (1974) deploys the idea of political field defined as "the totality of relationships between actors oriented to the same prizes or values" made up of "purposive goal-directed group action" (Turner 1974: 127–128). Elucidating his idea of practice, Pierre Bourdieu in his classic, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), calls for seeking an alternative to a pattern of rules, which drew attention to the fact that what defines practices is the "uncertainty and 'fuzziness' resulting not from a set of conscious, constant rules, but practical schemes, opaque to their possessors, varying according to the logic of the situation…" (Bourdieu 1990:12). These later conceptual innovations have much in common with Bailey's processual analysis, especially his notion of strategies, which captures "the complex interplay among designed order, individual initiatives and a natural order" (Bailey 2001: xiii).

Practice of Ethnography: Situational Analysis and the Extended-Case Method

The conceptual framework for the analyses of politics outlined in the previous section is closely related to the methodological innovations of the intellectual tradition to which Bailey firmly belonged.[2] In this section, I revisit the work of a generation of scholars with whom Bailey shared a paradigm which I argue is important for any appreciation of the continuing significance of the paradigm that had almost been obliterated from anthropological discourse.[3] Here a clarification is in order. Although the attempt here is to look for the workings of a methodology in Bailey's anthropological analysis of politics, reflections on the method in the Manchester school in its mature form developed much later by writers on the Manchester tradition of ethnography. When Bailey had conducted his studies, the method was only in its nascent form.[4]

The two central methodological innovations that were distinctive in the Manchester tradition of ethnography, namely, the extended-case method and situational analysis, radically refashioned the way that society was imagined in the theoretical formulations of structural-functionalism, the reigning paradigm of both British and American anthropology and sociology in the 1950s and '60s. The constitutive difficulty of structural-functionalism was its inability to explain not only those phenomena which failed to contribute to the status quo but also those that contravened or disrupted it. The extended-case method was developed to address this constitutional incapacity of structural-functionalism to mark and understand social processes, by ethnographically isolating and identifying the social mechanisms that constituted process as such. By placing emphasis on empirically ascertaining the actual mechanisms of social process, Max Gluckman envisaged the extended case method as "shifting the ethnographic focus from the normative to actual practice. Instead of trying to understand social life as a function of its ideal principles and formal rules, and so its theoretical self-presentation, Gluckman moved to understand social life in terms of its lived, concrete reality" (Evens & Handelman 2005: 3). Gluckman thus anticipated what later came to be known as practice theory in sociology and social anthropology, associated most notably, with the French philosopher and anthropologist, Pierre Bourdieu.

The extended-case method was more than an ethnographic tool, it was also a theory for bringing "the social structure analytically to life" (Evens 2005: 47). By emphasizing the practice of social actors (although the term 'practice' was not used in anthropological discourse in its current meaning during the 1950s and '60s), Gluckman was open to whatever happened in the social situation, open to surprise, and this effected his understanding of how a social situation refracted the social structure. This, as one of the contemporary adherents of the method attests, was one of the hallmarks of the Manchester school of social anthropology. Thus, "instead of collecting data from informants about what 'natives' ought to do, they began to fill their diaries with accounts of what 'natives' actually were doing, with accounts of real events, struggles and dramas that took place over space and time" (Burawoy 1998: 5).

Along with the innovative method of the extended case, Bailey and his Manchester cohort also based their ethnographic studies on what is known as situational analysis. As has been generally defined in social anthropology, a social situation is a temporally and spatially bounded series of events abstracted by the ethnographer from the on-going flow of social life. The social situation as a unit of analysis, therefore, is defined by the observer, and circumscribed or delimited according to the problem to be analysed. This fundamental methodological principle has been outlined by Max Gluckman and Ely Devons as a dictum: "to carry out his analysis the investigator must close his system, but he must at the same time keep his mind open to the possibility that in doing so he has excluded significant events and relations between events…But, since this is only an analytical device,…when circumscribing, the anthropologist must be sure that he has demarcated a field of events which are *significantly interconnected*" (Gluckman 1964: 185; emphasis added).This in effect means that situational analysis of a social field can be applied not only to the analysis of processes which have traditionally concerned anthropologists but also to the analysis of processes occurring within rapidly changing fields. Bailey, writing about two village disputes in Orissa in 1958, argued as much: "…our techniques, even as they exist now, do not rule us out of the more complex field" (Bailey, in Gluckman 1964: 82).

Situational analysis prioritized the individual actor in describing the institutional, organizational, and structural processes of which the actor is a part.

Actor-oriented approach was seen to be useful to understand the flux and change of day-to-day life, as against grand social changes, and the central importance given to the individual as manipulator and innovator was a means to show how the actor "creates, in varying degrees, the social world around him" (Garbett 1970: 215).[5] Bailey addressed this issue in his analysis of caste dispute in an Orissa village between the clean castes and the untouchable caste, the Pans, by arguing that the 'case' was a "...tea-cup affair. *As history, it is nothing*: but it has its value as a microcosm in which can be seen some of the political processes which occur in arenas from the tea-cup to the ocean" (Bailey 1969: 166, emphasis added). Situational analysis thus had implications for the presentation of data since it required that a series of connected situations be set out extensively with the same set of actors appearing from one situation to another. This in turn meant that ethnography had to lead to abstractions where the behavior and associated meanings in one situation had to be interpreted to differentiate the separate normative contents or strands of multiplex relationships.[6]

The extended-case method and situational analysis have been consistently utilized in Bailey's diverse body of work, beginning with the Orissa ethnographies, and later in his mature methodological writings on the anthropological enterprise, the nature of truth in the social sciences, and in comparative analyses of political behavior.[7] The first task of a sociological analysis of politics which deploys the extended case method is to circumscribe both empirically and analytically events that can be called political. Circumscription is determined by the problems each anthropologist sets for himself, and "in practice this is a decision for which no rules can be established. Only experience and judgment can help the research worker in specific circumstances" (Devons & Gluckman, in Gluckman 1964: 188). In his ethnographic field in Orissa, Bailey circumscribed his field so that he could locate individuals within contexts which involve several different kinds of interests- domestic, political, economic, ritual etc. To do this, he studied the social hinterland of each village, the relation between politics and descent in the "small region, the dispersal of castes through the region and the institution of caste councils, and possibly even the system of extinct, small Orissa kingdoms" (Bailey in Gluckman 1964).

Political analyses involved delineating a political structure and the encapsulating structure, where it was the latter which acted as the independent variable in deciding outcomes in a political competition. In his study of two village disputes in Orissa in 1958, where the outcomes of the disputes varied even though the circumstances of the dispute were identical, Bailey's analysis shows that it was in the differential relationships of the villages with its environment or encapsulating structures that the solution to the puzzle laid. The two disputes were identical as both were between the clean caste and the Pans (or Panos) in the two villages of Bisipara and Baderi respectively, the internal social structures being almost identical in the two cases.[8] However, the Bisipara Pans wanted a revolution and the Baderi Pans did not. In order to explain this, Bailey took into account the relationships the villagers had with persons and groups outside the village, and which are not part of the village structure; as well as the institutions which do not belong within the village system, such as the police, political parties and the district administration, in short, the encapsulating structures.

Situational analysis as demonstrated in Bailey's ethnographies of politics abstracts specific situations from reality to understand the contingency of rules and practices within political communities.[9] This can be understood through the ways in which two political structures interact in varying circumstances in terms of political resources and political roles that each of the structures have at their command. Political resources, Bailey's term is ***prizes***, are determined by the internal rules of a political structure as well as the external environment. In a village political structure, normative rules of who can compete for which prize is determined by village criteria of honour and purity (see endnote 10). However, because political structure of the village was not an isolated entity, the Pans in turn employed what is a normative rule in the encapsulating structure to subvert the village normative rule. "All that [the Pans] could see was a resource in the environment, available to them but not the clean castes" (ibid: 162) at the beginning of the dispute, without intending to withdraw from participating in the village political structure. Thus, what was seen as a pragmatic rule within the village political structure- breaking a quite explicit rule of not making use of political resources outside the village- was a perfectly justifiable normative rule outside it, and by resorting to resources in the environment, the Pans succeeded in effecting a breach.

There are not only new prizes, but new ways of winning them, and it is only through a processual analysis of cases extended through time that the relations of encapsulation and the changes within political structures are visible. It also brings into relief that through time encapsulated structures may disappear and merge with the encapsulating structures but this can happen "if one watches long enough [then] out of the many different ways in which the players are changing their tactics or resisting change a few general patterns emerge: patterns of resistance; patterns of change that come about from seized opportunities; and over all a slow drift towards uniformity, as the minor arenas lose their distinctiveness and become the same as, or one with the main arena" (ibid: 154). It is significant to note here that uniformity also signals that the relations of encapsulation demand that the rules of politics flow both ways, and one is not morally superior to the other. Thus Bailey's enterprise is to find out the rules which regulate political combats, both in particular cultures and cross-culturally; but he is categorical about imputing moral judgments to individual action, arguing instead that "our business is not to sort out the good men from the bad men but to distinguish between effective and ineffective tactics and to say why they are so" (ibid: xii).

Every political structure has rules for recruiting personnel, based on compatibility between political roles and roles which exist in other structures, or between two sets of political roles (women were excluded from public affairs in many cultures because of their domestic role which was seen to be incompatible with a political role). Here, the notion of arenas and political fields become important analytical tools to understand the diverse groups involved in political activity in a series of interactions. Political arena is where competition takes place within generally agreed upon "rules of the game"; political field, where conflict takes place over what the rules should be.[10] In Orissa, when the Pans aspired for political roles outside the village political structure, they were in effect entering another arena where political goods were defined in quite a different way from the honour-purity symbols of the village structure. Subsequently in the process, the access to new kinds of resource- getting elected to office- was seen to be advantageous by the clean caste men too, and they turned their ambitions outward and found allies in the Pans who in the village were their enemies. Thus a pragmatic move by the Pans acquires a normative status where seeking political office outside the village arena changes the rules of the game. A pragmatic bargaining posture is achieved which entails some recognition "that what is usually done…[is] the normal thing to do, and in time the normal thing becomes the right thing. Continued pragmatic interactions […], begin to achieve normative status" (Bailey 1969: 174).

The question of political morality and the constitution of political selves also figure prominently in Bailey's ouvre of political anthropology. In tune with his processual analysis of politics, Bailey understood political morality and political selves not as normative judgements of action and personhood, but constituted by social location and the contingencies of political purpose. Questions of morality and political selfhood thus became questions of practice and situated creativity, best envisioned as aspects of the societal processes rather than as essences of societies and cultures. For Bailey, morality is at the cusp of public morality and private wisdom. Further, different political groups constitute morality in tandem with the nature of group that they are. As 'ideal types', a leader-follower group is moral insofar as the group serves the same moral cause and there is some equivalence between them- "if the leader lives extravagantly, he must also be seen to be extravagantly generous" (ibid: 43); if the followers are merely "hirelings", the group is unlikely to possess a moral core, it is merely a transactional group. In actual relationships, however, the relationship between leaders and followers is likely to have both the moral and the transactional element, and a processual analysis of politics is more interested in charting "the rise and fall of these two elements, balanced against one another: and there have been several anthropological studies which show how rituals which symbolize and re-inforce common religious values are performed when men are beginning to show too much concern for their own personal interests and to quarrel with one another over the distribution of material benefits" (ibid: 44).

Moral leadership in political groups is a matter of manipulating symbols. A successful leader is one who can monopolize symbols, either by denying their "use to subordinates and rivals", or by pronouncing "the symbol worthless" (ibid: 83). Bailey draws his instance from the Indian caste system, where there are elaborate ways of ritual disqualification, thereby marking "more and more degraded positions in the hierarchy"; on the other hand, when a lower caste person makes a claim to a higher caste symbol, the latter itself is pronounced as inauthentic and therefore unworthy of bestowing a higher status. Morality is therefore not a matter of reason, and a political leader who appeals to morality is merely taking recourse to rhetoric. Bailey argues, rhetoric is "deliberately constructed to persuade and often to mislead. The prime purpose is [...] to create attitudes… The politician who claims to speak for the people and to have their interests at heart, and who talks of his humble home and his honest and industrious parents, is using rhetoric" (Bailey 1993: 58–59). In Bailey's pragmatic view of politics with a clear emphasis on practice, "the ultimate truths of morality cannot be defended by reason; the appropriate weapons are persuasion, assertion, or force. In short, the 'truth' of moral questions is not discovered but negotiated or enforced" (Bailey 2003: 196).

The obverse of morality is expediency- utility or self-interest, as against what is right and just. In *The Civility of Indifference* (1996), Bailey analyzes the contradiction between expediency and morality, among other things, through the idea of *Swaraj* and the Harijan movement. Swaraj was upto and beyond 1947 an idea marked with moral fervor symbolizing freedom, and conjuring an "imagined world, a one-dimensional world with everything clearly marked as good or evil" (Bailey 1996: 132); post 1947, and in the 1950s during his fieldwork, Bailey found a transformed world where swaraj had lost its earlier moral meaning because "once freedom had been attained, people had to unwrap the bundle labeled 'freedom' and decide what, of the many things it contained, they really wanted…, because members of what once had been a united team fighting against the imperialists now found themselves in an arena where former comrades fought against each other" (ibid: 133). What was once a matter of morality, then, had transformed itself into practical concerns of political competition and political expediency, signaling the contingent and indeterminate nature of moral truths.

In a similar fashion, the Harijan movement demonstrated the contradictions between the force of a moral nomenclature (as the 'Children of God') and a pragmatic piece of legislation used for political ends. The Harijan inspector in Bisipara was "concerned at best with due process", and Gandhi's vision of how the world ought to work had to rely on "external force… pushed by politicians and government" (ibid: 128–134). Thus, Bailey's argument shows while individual moral visions have their own place, often morality is differentially interpreted, and in most cases, there "is the mingling of a moral self with a tactical self" (Bailey 1983: 223). The heart of the matter, as he argues, is to understand the relationship between the two. At the level of their basic meaning, an action cannot be characterized as both tactical and moral; but, as Bailey argues, the two selves might co-exist as "'percentages', so to speak, of a relationship between people, as in the case of ambivalence" (ibid). What a person chooses to project is what a person gets identified with-a tactical self could only be effective under the cover of a moral self, and because the latter is a cover, those who are persuaded to accept the cover also accept "*apparently* only one single uncomplicated self" (ibid). This is, once again, a remarkable display of Bailey's ability to processually understand not only how morality is manifested in individual action, but also how moralities change and that the effectiveness of morality is a function of strategizing and manipulating.

What we have outlined above highlights how a particular form of political ethnography, with specific concepts and methods, generated a model of political analysis with a firm empirical focus and a realist and pragmatic orientation to political actions and processes. In the final section, I attempt to appraise how Bailey's paradigm has fared in the contemporary ethnographic analyses of politics in India. In doing so, I also foreground which aspects of the current discourse on political analyses could be seen to be drawing from his "conceptual tool-kit" and what is eclipsed from scholarly practice.

A Forgotten Legacy or A Renascent Paradigm?

In a review of political anthropology in 1978, Joan Vincent wrote, "at such a point this review [of action theory] in political anthropology… most honestly rests in the lap of Marx, Bailey, and the dialectic" (Vincent 1978: 190). This is a curious statement as Bailey's paradigm has been usually associated with "gentlemanly politics", where competition, rather than the game (which connotes only orderliness), or the fight (where no holds are barred) is seen to be the quintessential political domain. In what follows, I intend to weave together the continuing significance, various critiques and possible drawbacks of his paradigm.

Bailey was clearly a part of the thriving moment of modernization theory with its implicit and not so implicit value biases and teleological schema. His interest in the interaction of traditional and modern political institutions is part of the scholarly agenda pursued in several studies undertaken in newly independent nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America in the '50s and '60s, to assess the suitability and sustainability of democratic and parliamentary institutions in these societies, by social scientists of various hues, like political scientists, economists, sociologists and social anthropologists.[11] Though these studies share several features that are justly critiqued for their ethnocentrism and imperialist politics, Bailey strikes a distinct note that makes aspects of his work more enduring.

For instance, he clearly states and tries to adhere to the research objective that, it is not his concern to adjudge the "merits and failings of parliamentary democracy" but to comprehend how "ordinary people acting within the framework of representative institutions" were adjusting themselves vis-à-vis "indigenous customs, levels of cultural attainment, and membership of such traditional groups as villages or castes, or in the light of traditional roles like landlord, tenant, prince, priest, and so forth" (1963: 4). For achieving this, Bailey resorted to hard-nosed, empirical, descriptive analysis, a procedure which entailed "building up the structure and functioning of the community through intensive examination of some of its parts in action,…relating the parts together through observing events between groups and between group leaders and members of the larger institutional structures,…seeking to build a sociology upon observed interpersonal events" (Whyte, 1943, cited in Vincent 1990: 304). This method of studying political behavior distinguished a generation of Harvard and Manchester political ethnographers and as Vincent has noted, "revealed the methodological distinctiveness of political anthropology vis-à-vis the science of politics- a contrast that stands to this day" (ibid: 305). This way of analyzing political behavior proved compelling as it challenged the formalism of structuralist paradigms and infused realism and processual components into political analysis.

Bailey's paradigm is thus most useful in unraveling *routine politics*, and not such grand political events such as wars or revolutions, as he himself avers in his 1969 book, *Stratagems and Spoils*. He writes, "Coups and revolutions are certainly more violent and more dramatic than the Westminster routine. But surely it is impossible to assert, in any absolute sense, that they are more important. Importance is relative to the values of whoever is making the judgment: it is not an attribute of events themselves" (Bailey 1969: 2). By this statement, Bailey also clearly sets out what a political anthropologist's task should be – to understand politics as quotidian and mundane, and systematically resist the grand statist visions of politics, an understanding that "has a wider reference than merely to the activities of those who are ordinarily considered politicians" (ibid: 223). This kind of analysis has the added merit of understanding the state through the everyday, routinized practices through which individuals and groups in society make sense of the state and its institutions, a concern that has been renewed in recent ethnographies.[12] Thus what was often criticized within his paradigm, viz, his lack of attention to the so-called 'real seat of power' and sovereignty, the state, is perhaps his most innovative contribution to understand political action as embedded within both local levels of power and larger encapsulating state structures. Some of the concerns that he attended to in his ethnographies of Orissa such as the interface of patronage and clientelism with class, organizational and interpersonal strategies that inform everyday political interactions in varied settings, coalescence of various types of groupings in the arena of representative politics, are finding renewed resonance in contemporary studies of Indian politics. In outlining these concerns, it became apparent that the singular contribution of Bailey's analysis is to understand "small politics" or "politics as usual" in the interstitial spaces of societies.

Bailey could thus be seen as giving flesh and blood to the *practical logic* of democratic institutions by examining how elections signify much more than formal issues on which elections are purportedly contested, as political interactions in the final analysis are framed by the social interactions of the protagonists. Thus, it might be argued, that Bailey's analytical apparatus not only gives the lie to the burgeoning genre of election studies largely founded on statistical data generated through survey method , which tend to treat elections as episodic events devoid of the rich and dynamic social context in which they are embedded at the local level. To that extent, lessons from Bailey's Orissa studies provide pioneering and path-breaking insights for a currently ascendant genre of anthropology of democracy. For instance, in *Tribe, Caste and*

Nation (1960), Bailey's analysis demonstrates that different norms constituting the different systems- a tribe, caste, or nation- are intertwined in actual social situations, and disputes arising in one system may be waged in terms of another. Individuals and groups, in seeking to maximize their political gains, utilize the norms of that system which affords them greater advantage in a given situation. Consistent preference for one system over another, Bailey argues, is likely to lead to the superseding of one system over the others, thus leading to normative change.

The theoretical and methodological implications of Bailey's paradigm have also come under disrepute on account of its putative conservative bias in his definition of politics as orderly competition and his eschewing of violence as disorderly. However, his emphasis on routine politics, on the rules of politics, on pragmatic and realist politics, on extra-systemic features of politics, and on political behavior, outlined a comprehensive systems analysis of political action within the larger framework of nation-state and well-articulated principles of competitive political behavior in discrete arenas. The main concern of this tradition of political analysis was to address the substantive conditions of societal change, where the face-to-face encounters of particular individuals within encapsulated settings was prioritized. Although critics have pointed that this tradition of sociological analysis suffered from an overdependence on individual actors and "rational" man, by focusing on purposive action, Bailey noted, "social organization…is best perceived by considering the actors not to be so many faceless automata, moving to and fro at the behest of structural rules, but as manipulators choosing within a range of possible tactics and asking themselves not only what they ought to do, but also what they can do" (Bailey 1968, cited in Vincent).

Thus, Bailey's India material amply demonstrates that in outlining the political landscape of early post-colonial India, he firmly anchored himself in a clear-cut pragmatic view of politics based on the understanding of purposive action and refused to succumb to any culturological explanations that sought to mobilize civilizational essences. He firmly discounts the ideological overdetermination of individual action and emphasizes the primacy of observed behavior over any statement of values. He submits that no society can be understood only as an internally coherent set of ideas, for it is people who hold ideas and the anthropologists' job is to ask who holds what ideas and why. He notes that even Louis Dumont in his *Homo Hierarchicus: Caste System and Its Implications* (1970), the locus classicus on holism acknowledges that, "it is necessary to maintain a close connection to observed behavior, for we are too much exposed in that case to gross misunderstanding, if we do not give full weight to the control through 'what actually happens'". For Bailey, the people of Orissa whom he studied "were calculators, pragmatists, quotidian thinkers, in the habit of working out consequences when they made decisions" (ibid: xii). In this sense, it may be argued that to characterize a whole society in terms of overarching ideologies does violence to an understanding of individual intentions and purposes, decisions and choices and individual's capability for self-development.[13]

Clearly Bailey's analytical model is best suited to understand politics as quotidian where political power is given a theoretical and empirical legitimacy, sans the idea of resistance. This has been a significant lacuna in his paradigm which decries "passionate politics" or ideological and revolutionary politics as beyond the purview of the quintessentially political. Bailey, in his later writings has addressed this criticism, continuing to be faithful to a pragmatic view of politics. In contrasting pragmatic politics with true belief or ideology, Bailey settles the conundrum by arguing that every true belief also has a pragmatic element: "when people compromise over matters of principle they have re-examined a true belief (an ideology) and factored it into a set of preferences. Once that is done, the guiding light is no longer *only* the true belief (socialism, Indian independence, Oriya nationalism, nonviolence, social and economic justice, and so forth) but also pragmatism itself, the principle that requires one to monitor an ideal to see how far (or in what alternative forms) it can be realized, and to find out what will be the costs of doing so" (Bailey 1998: 205; emphasis in original). Thus, pragmatism itself contains the kernel of a true belief- being reasonable, when "pragmatism can become itself a moral absolute, a design for living that is intrinsically valued" (ibid: 206).

The pragmatic notion of politics also forms the basis of Bailey's idea of the 'political' and consequently of human nature. The pragmatist is seen as an opportunist, an unprincipled person, an amoral, self-concerned man, who by compromising and strategizing lacks the "need for enemies", the basis of any true belief or ideology. In Orissa, the Pans and the clean castes avoided prolonged conflict "long enough to let it interfere with the serious business of getting the fields cultivated" (Bailey 1969: 162). For Bailey, "the human habit (what we call second nature) lies somewhere between indifference ("not my business") and moderation…" (Bailey 1998: 211), and here we see Bailey engaging with the Hobbesian question: how is society possible, in a context of uncertainty and a struggle for power. Bailey's answer would be by manipulating, by strategizing, by compromising, in other words, through practice. As an anthropologist who believes in being true to the discipline, Bailey as one of the oldest surviving members of the first generation Manchester cohort, sums up what was originally intended by Gluckman, the master, to develop not only how ethnography has to be done but also a practice of ethnographic practice; in other words, how do we arrive at the truth? "Truth is whatever is the case, whatever is reality" (Bailey 2003: 199), to which must be added the question of power, both in understanding politics just as in understanding the truth claims of a science: the question of "who benefits"?

Bailey's vocabulary of political analysis was shared by like-minded group of anthropologists writing about new nations in the 1950s and 1960s. Although those contexts have greatly altered now, Bailey has been consistent in outlining a theoretical and methodological paradigm in his subsequent work which engaged various developments in sociology for the next five decades. He kept on revising and fine-tuning his positions as he moved along, remaining loyal to the authenticity of his original Orissa ethnographies, but asking newer methodological and empirical questions to understand why people behaved in the way they did when he studied them and their society.

However, more importantly, we live in a world that seems to have temporarily lost its taste for epic battles and revolutionary transformations. Even the most coercive of the oppressions of this world seems to be routine and mundane, as are the resistances and everyday defiances. In all situations, manipulation, tactics, treasons, strategies have acquired an unprecedented salience.[14] Perhaps it is worthwhile to look back at his paradigm not only for unearthing the mundaneness of grand political narratives, but also to seek how resistance to power can be achieved by fashioning new rules of the game, a "steady, incremental change" (Joas: 1993, 7), seemingly revolutionary for manufacturing the mystique of politics.

Notes

1. The eponymous Manchester "school" of British social anthropology arose in the 1950s, with a close-knit group of anthropologists and sociologists who worked around Max Gluckman. In contrast to the reigning theoretical paradigm of that period, structural-functionalism, they emphasized on the precariousness of the notion of stability, and instead focused attention on the processual and situational dimensions of societies. Micro-processes in small localities were given more significance in their analyses and equilibrium was treated as unstable and transitory. F. G. Bailey was among the first generation of anthropologists of the Manchester 'school' or Manchester 'circle' in social anthropology that had evolved around the Department of Social Anthropology and Sociology of the Victoria University of Manchester. Bailey, one of the earliest members of the "school", focusing on India, heralded the Machiavellian moment in political anthropological analysis, taking up "the *routine* of political strategizing, manipulation, and the advancement of interests" (Vincent 1990: 338, emphasis in original).

2. As mentioned earlier, Bailey was among the first generation of anthropologists of what has come to be known as the Manchester 'school' or Manchester 'circle' in social anthropology, under the stewardship of Max Gluckman, that had evolved around the Department of Social Anthropology and Sociology of the Victoria University of Manchester. Many of the prominent members of the 'School' hold divergent opinions regarding the appellation, but few dispute the pivotal role that Gluckman had in fashioning a distinct identity for Manchester ethnography. Clyde Mitchell, one of "the most prominent members of the school" had declared thus: "seen from the outside, the Manchester School *was* a school. But seen from the inside, it was a seething contradiction. And perhaps the only thing we had in common was that Max [Gluckman] was our teacher, and that we wrote ethnography rich in actual cases" (Kempny 2005: 145; emphasis in original). Along with Bailey, amongst the first generation Manchester anthropologists were T. Scarlett Epstein (also doing her research in India), Abner Cohen, Emrys L. Peters and Ronald Frankenberg.
3. Evens and Handelman argue that while "the Manchester school had profound influence on British social anthropology and elsewhere, yet by the 1970s the approach had lost ground to vulgar claims that it was merely a remnant of structural-functionalism and its colonial roots. By the 1980s, the impact on anthropology of approaches keyed to representation and reliance on text and media served to erode and blunt the significance of intensive and lengthy fieldwork in open social fields, helping further to eclipse Manchester school anthropology" (Evens & Handelman 2006).
4. See, for example, Sally Falk Moore & Barbara G. Myerhoff (eds), Symbol and Politics in Communal Ideology, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975.
5. Recent commentators on the history of the Manchester school have argued that while Gluckman was influenced by Durkheim and Evans-Pritchard in fashioning the extended case method, the orientation was essentially Marxist in character devised for "empirically ascertaining the actual mechanisms of social process…[Gluckman] was shifting the ethnographic focus from the normative to actual practice…The very idea of situation, considered existentially, presumes not only a predicament but also an agential capacity on the part of the situated (with their different subjectivities) to negotiate the predicament by praxis (Evens & Handelman 2006: 3–5).
6. Bailey is categorical in his understanding of multiplex relationships as the subject matter of social anthropology. Unlike disciplines such as political science and economics, for which specialized, "single interest" relationships such as economic man and political man are the norm, "…we are interested in social systems in so far as actual relations between persons tend to carry more than one interest- in so far as they are multiplex" (Bailey, in Gluckman 1964: 73), that is the ways in which different relationships-economic, political, ritual- are linked to one another.
7. See*, The Saving Lie (*Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); *Debate and Compromise: The Politics of Innovation (*Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973)
8. In Bisipara, the dispute arose when the Pans demanded to enter the village temple as their legal right. Upon being prevented by the clean castes, the Pans called the police to ensure that their legal right be enforced. In Baderi, "half an hour's walk from Bisipara" (Bailey in Gluckman 1964: 55), the dispute between the pans and the Konds (who held

an analogous position to that of the clean castes in Bisipara) broke out when the pans were humiliated during a wedding feast by a Kond. This resulted in the Konds' resolving to impose an "economic 'lock-out' of the Pans where their services were sought to be boycotted, but in actuality, the resolution had come to nothing and the Pans never went out of job. (See, Bailey, 'Two Villages in Orissa', in Gluckman (ed), Closed Systems and Open Minds, London: Oliver & Boyd, 1964)

9. For Bailey, a political community is the widest group in which competition for valued ends is controlled. Beyond this point the rules do not apply and politics is not so much a competition as a fight, in which the objective is not to defeat the opposition in an orderly contest (where there is agreement about how to play and what to play for), "but to destroy one 'game' and establish a different set of rules" (Bailey 1969: 1)
10. Here, it may be noticed that there are considerable overlaps in Bailey's terminological and thereby conceptual framework- political structure, political community, and political field are cases in point. However, in later developments of the paradigm of action theory, the empirical contexts associated with the different analytical categories helped clarify levels of analysis. Victor Turner has noted that when characterizing a political field, "relations of likeness such as classes, categories, similar roles, and structural positions" are of prior sociological importance. When successive arenas are to be characterized, systematic inter-dependencies in local systems of social relations, going from demography, to residential distribution, religious affiliation and genealogical and class structure become significant" (quoted in Vincent 1978: 183).
11. Representative works in this genre are those of Myron Weiner, Clifford Geertz, Lloyd and Suzanne Rudolph, Edward Shils, among many others.
12. See, for instance, Fuller, C.J. & V. Benei (eds.), The Everyday State and Society in India, New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2000; P. Price & A. E. Ruud (eds.), Power and Influence in India, New Delhi: Routledge, 2010.
13. The core of a pragmatist social theory is the notion that human "creative action" is "always embedded in a situation, i.e. on the human being's 'situated freedom', argues Hans Joas. Although critics view this notion as a mere adaptation to circumstances, Joas argues that "this accusation fails to perceive the anti deterministic thrust of the pragmatists", which also draws attention to the constituted nature of society where actors bring "something objectively new into the world" through creatively confronting situations (Joas 1993: 4).
14. Whether in coups, revolutions, or diplomacy, stratagems, tactics and manipulations play a central role, and even the grand ideological battles are covertly fought on the strength of these mundane, routine idioms of doing politics. In a recent article Slavoj Zizek narrates incidents from Western political history to show how discretion, compromise and tact were often used to strike deals where the real motives of the protagonists remained hidden from public discourse. Zizek argues: "Insofar as one can reconstruct the events today, it appears that the happy outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis, too, was managed through tact, *the polite rituals of pretended ignorance*. Kennedy's stroke of genius was to pretend that a letter had not arrived, a stratagem that worked only because the sender (Khruschev) went along with it". For the fascinating account of the whole story of intrigue and manipulation, see, Slavoj Zizek, '*Tact in the Age of Wikileaks*', Harper's Magazine (New York, 2011: 16; emphasis added).

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