A PARADIGM RECONSIDERED:
F.G. BAILEY AND THE STUDY
OF POLITICS IN INDIA

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All intellectual practice is, consciously or unconsciously, at the crossroads of traditions of thought and contemporary realities; in other words, our intellectual practices are discursively ordered. The present paper is a part of an endeavour to elucidate the discursive space of political sociology in India. Discourses are constituted through a totality of language and combine themes, times, places, and persons. I have chosen to address the discourse on the study of politics in India with a person. I believe, read with a sociological perspective, a person could represent times, places and themes. Frederick George Bailey, whose works I have chosen to appraise, is one of the central figures of the Manchester school of British social anthropology,[1] who had carried out pioneering 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.

In this paper, I have undertaken a reading of the ethnographic works of Bailey to identify how political action—accounts of ideas, beliefs and arguments from particular situations — were translated into conceptualizations and abstractions, to generate a vocabulary of political analysis with specific ideas about human nature and political man.[2] Beginning in the early 1950s, Bailey undertook ethnographic studies in the eastern Indian state of Orissa, producing three monographs[3], and generating concepts and models for analyzing newly emerging post-colonial societies. Although his main concern was to analyze the changes brought about by colonial political and administrative apparatuses in a "traditional" social organization, the theoretical and methodological import of his work went much beyond his chosen objective. As is the nature of an appraisal, the following exposition weaves together the continuing

significance, various critiques and possible drawbacks of his paradigm.

PROCESS AND CHANGE: 'POLITICS' IN THE ORISSA ETHNOGRAPHIES

Bailey's Orissa studies were an attempt to understand changing patterns of relationships between older and newer forms of social and political institutions. 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" (p.vii, in *Politics and Social Change, 1963*), 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.

In these monographs, Bailey works with a very specific understanding of 'politics', as "*orderly competition*" for power as a scarce political resource. He defines the "political as that aspect of *any act* which concerns the *distribution of power*, provided that there is competition for this power, and provided secondly, that the competition takes place under a set of rules which the competitors observe and which ensure that the competition is orderly" (1963: 223; emphasis added). He further distinguishes between a situation which is 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" (ibid.). It is the rules of political engagement that define *"arenas"* of political competition, characterized by legal rules and statutes as well as customs and conventions.

Thus defined, the notion of "arenas" assumes great significance in Bailey's characterization of politics as orderly competition as "they regulate political conflict by laying down who is eligible to compete, what are the prizes for the winner, and what the competitors may do and what they must not do in their efforts to gain the prizes"

(ibid.). Thus, Bailey "expressed a personal preference for compromise rather than passionate politics and so to repugnance for disorder" (Vincent, 1990: 346). Within political arenas are *"teams"* defined as coalitions having transactional linkages based on asymmetrical social relationships; a patron with his clients is an example of such a team. Given this emphasis on the linkages and network of social relationships, this approach is often termed *network analysis.*[4] Orderly competition within discrete encapsulated boundaries and teams bound by rules of politicking are integral to Bailey's version of what constitutes politics. 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. Clearly, Bailey's tool-kit is better suited for a study of "middle-class, gentlemanly politics", "in which the rules of the game did indeed, *on the surface at least,* set boundaries for political action; it was less useful for other purposes" (ibid.: 350, emphasis added).

The substantive problematic that animates Bailey's ethnographies of politics is to arrive at an understanding through empirical enquiries, how the representative institutions of a nascent political democracy were spreading their influence and thereby changing the ways in which politics was practised in earlier times. In order to understand the relationship between specialized political roles fostered by representative politics and the "undifferentiated roles of traditional society" (ibid.: 221), Bailey argued for an "interactional approach" which would view "the several fields of political activity as if they were joined systematically to one another" through social interaction (ibid.: 222-223). The attempt here was to establish how the different arenas, such as the State, the political constituencies and the villages are connected through interaction without essentializing a particular style or idiom of Indian politics. Thus, what was often criticized within this paradigm, viz. the 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.

This also led him to distinguish three levels of explanations of political activity–*cultural,* defined as the actor's own model of his political actions; *structural,* characterized by the interrelationships between groups within structures of power, such as castes and villages; and *external,* comprising the interaction between local levels of power and their encapsulating structures. In Bailey's analysis, these three levels of explanations of political action are

complementary, as political conflicts at the three levels are comprehensible only when they are translated into the respective idioms in conformity with rules applicable to the specific arenas. As Bailey demonstrates in his ethnographic study of the 1957 general elections in Bisipara and Mohanpur villages in Orissa, "the issues which are at stake in State politics have to be translated into something else at constituency level and have to be translated yet again at village level. For example, the Ganatantra-Congress conflict at State level appears in the guise of rival policies (or, in another form, of regional rivalries–Hill against Coast); in the constituencies of Kalahandi district, it appeared as a dynastic dispute; in Bisipara, it was translated into caste conflict" (1963: 232). 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 they 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 gives the lie to the burgeoning genre of election studies, which tend to treat elections as episodic events devoid of the rich and enduring social context in which they are embedded. To that extent, lessons from Bailey's Orissa studies provide pioneering and path-breaking insights for a currently ascendant genre of anthropology of democracy. Again, in *Tribe, Caste and Nation*, Bailey advances a similar analysis and 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.

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[5]. 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, p.304). This method of studying political behaviour 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 behaviour proved compelling as it challenged the formalism of structuralist paradigms and infused realism and processual components into political analysis.

Processes, contradictions, choices, and above all, *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 morality of political positions is seen 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" (1963: 68). Bailey's paradigm is thus most useful in unraveling *routine politics*, and not 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.[6]

The processual element in Bailey's political ethnography is brought out in his discussion of several themes–the nature of traditional leadership and its 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 has only remained as sentiment and was 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 signalled 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 fervour alone, and party as a political machine gives rise to intermediaries such as brokers, touts, 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, which subsequently led to studies of modern, industrial capitalist and socialist states.

The theoretical and methodological implications of Bailey's paradigm have 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 behaviour, outlined a comprehensive systems analysis of political action within the nation-state and elaborated principles of competitive political behaviour 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). This takes us to the second prominent theme in Bailey's work, i.e. the relationship between structure and agency as constituted through Bailey's articulation of political structure.

STRUCTURE AND AGENCY: THE CONTINGENT
NATURE OF POLITICAL PRACTICE

The focus on individuals, agency and process was the hallmark of
the action paradigm of which Bailey was one of the early adherents.
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 the Manchester school's emphasis firmly lay with
the latter, where the structures of social relations, ideas, and values
were delineated, but 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 behaviour, such as decision-making, strategizing,
transacting, manipulating, manoeuvring, competing, persuading;
and the context of political action (both spatial and temporal), such
as event, situation, arena, field, environment, power structure.
Although the individual was 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[7], "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
Bailey placed a lot of emphasis on contexts and cross-cultural and
trans-historical comparisons.

Further, the apprehension that face-to-face political interaction might be powerless to reflect 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 behaviour, 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 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. In his later work, *The Kingdom of Individuals*, Bailey puts forth his viewpoint on the structure-agency debate in more mature and sophisticated terms. He observes, "...in practice (as well as in logic), the paired concepts [structure-agency] require each other. A theory of institutions leaves much unexplained if it is not matched with a theory of agency; and vice versa. Without attention to agency, there is no way to explain how social formations ever change as conditions external to them change; without the concept of structure or institution, there is no way of describing what is changing" (Bailey, 1993, p.ix).

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).

This endless 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 different 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: 127-28). 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 from the fact that they have as their principle not 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).

Process, agency and action also inform how Bailey perceived the values of individualism and collectivism/holism, materialism and spiritualism, and questions of morality and expediency. These grand debates of Indian sociology were nascent when Bailey was carrying out his researches in the 1950s. But, there are some indications of where his sympathies lay in his Orissa studies. In the following section, I outline some of these concerns and show the implications of his stance for countering certain dominant assumptions about the nature of Indian society and polity.

A REALIST ANALYSIS OF POLITICS OR STUDYING 'POLITICS AS USUAL'

Bailey's emphasis on the individual as an acting agent placed him in a contrarian position vis-à-vis culturological conceptions of Indian society, engendered by holism and characterized by civilizational essence. Bailey understands holism as a philosophy that 'places the collectivity, logically and morally, before the individual' and 'asserts that the properties of a whole cannot be deduced from the properties of its parts'. He firmly discounts this ideological over-determination of individual action and emphasizes the primacy of observed behaviour 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 demonstrably close connection with *observed behaviour*, 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*'" (Bailey, 1991: 221; emphasis in original). True to this emphasis on observed behaviour over stated values, in *Politics and Social Change* (1963), Bailey sets out his problem and the techniques of enquiry in categories that are observable in terms of their political behaviour: "One examines the behaviour of politicians or of ordinary people acting within the framework of representative institutions and asks how far this behaviour seems comprehensible in the light of indigenous customs, levels of cultural attainment, and ...so forth" (Bailey, 1963: 2), and selects the Orissa state, the constituencies and the villages as the units of observation.

According to Bailey, holism as an ideology which directs action is at odds with notions of human action, creativity and individuality and precludes the possibility of observing all pervasive innovation and improvisation in human actions. Moreover, methodological holism as an ideology has the tendency to become an orthodoxy. Bailey contends that this tendency could be countered by observed behaviour within any social group. Forms of political behaviour such as manipulating, strategizing, persuading, manoeuvring can only be explained if individual action is viewed not as encompassed by an ideology commonly prevalent throughout a society, but having an autonomous social or ideological existence. This is, however, not

to postulate, as Bailey makes it clear, that an individual "exists apart from the social person" as "society shapes the moral individual and therefore, logically comes first" (Bailey, 1993: 6).

Bailey, in his more recent methodological treatise, *The Saving Lie* (2003), submits that "this apparently straightforward contrast between" methodological holism and methodological individualism "is a source of confusion and a prompter of pointless altercation, because people uphold one or other side of the contrast as a concrete reality, as the unique truth about how the world works" (Bailey, 2003: xi). Instead, he offers, the two positions should be treated as "methods (...) and as weapons", or as he calls them "saving lies" that enable us to make sense of human society and not as contraries and therefore incompatible. Thus, unlike Dumont, Bailey treats holism and individualism as methodological tools rather than giving them an ontological status, thereby doing away with essentializations about people, cultures and societies. Instead, Bailey sought to ask and answer, "how and why, in a particular situation, one ideology...comes to prevail over the rest; and about the consequences of that prevalence" (Bailey, 1991: 222).

Connected to holism is yet another dominant characterization of Indian society in terms of religiosity and spiritualism. Bailey's detailed ethnography of Orissa sought to belie this claim. Thus, in contrast to those who regard religion as constitutive of society, i.e., providing a "seamless moral sensibility", Bailey's Orissa studies present a world inhabited by "an underlying, shared, mostly tacit, and uncontested conception of reality, a notion of how things really did (and should) work" (ibid.: 170). He terms it as "quiet pragmatism" that lies just beneath the skin of so-called Indian religiosity. For Bailey, the religiously ordained moral righteousness was never an absolute. Thus, in a conflict situation, the contending parties usually tend to do "the smart thing to do" (ibid.: 164) and avoid the excess. He attributes the behaviour of the two rival groups to "expediency" and not higher morals of "unexamined righteousness" (ibid.: 165; x).

To sum up, Bailey's India material amply demonstrates that in outlining the political landscape of early post-colonial India, Bailey 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. 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.

There is little doubt that some of the positions he held were open to very legitimate criticisms as alluded to at various points in the paper. But his steadfast refusal to mystify the everyday conduct of communities, his hardnosed adherence to observed realities of a society, a fairly comprehensive and precisely defined tool-kit that he developed are a useful legacy that one has to appropriate in order to analyze many of the current concerns that animate Indian social and political reality.

Some of the concerns that he attended to in these 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's vocabulary of political analysis was shared by a 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, yet 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 momentous 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[8]. Thus, the paradigm that Bailey fashioned in political anthropology remains significant for a realist analysis of politics, which not only restores the balance in favour of thinking, acting individuals, but also infuses political analysis with a possibility of actually locating what 'doing

politics' really means.

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 one of the earliest members of the "school", focusing on India, and as Joan Vincent has argued, 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. The task of appraisal of a body of work necessarily entails locating that work within its intellectual and philosophical context. This I have undertaken in a second paper written during my Associateship at the IIAS, Shimla in October 2013. However, that discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.

3. *Caste and the Economic Frontier, Oxford University Press: Bombay, 1958; Tribe, Caste and Nation, Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1960; and Politics and Social Change: Orissa in 1959, University of California Press: California, 1963*

4. The idea of networks and their interaction was used in anthropological analysis beginning in the 1950s to go beyond the structural-functional framework used by anthropologists to understand the processual aspects of change and transformation in "rapidly changing complex societies" in both the western and the third worlds. Along with such pioneers of the network analysis such as J.A. Barnes, Anton Blok, V. Turner, M. Swartz, J. Boissevain, Clyde Mitchell and others, Bailey used this framework to underline the dissatisfaction with the structural-functional paradigm of studying simple societies, exemplified in the seminal volume, *African*

Political Systems by M. Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard. The significant departure from Fortes' and Evans-Pritchards' analysis was to show that rules of politics are not consistent at all levels of a political system, which is the basic assumption of any structural-functional argument. Thus, Bailey argues in the context of Orissa, that in the three levels of political activity, i.e. the State, the constituencies and the villages, "there is an evident conflict of rules between the village arenas and arenas at higher levels... the rules of representative democracy, as applied at State and constituency levels, are trying to put the village rules out of business and to 'digest' and transform the village arenas" (Bailey, 1963: 225-26).

5. Representative works in this genre are those of Myron Weiner, Clifford Geertz, Lloyd and Suzanne Rudolph, Edward Shils, among many others.

6. See, for instance, Fuller, C.J. & V. Benei (eds.), *The Everyday State and Society in India*, New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2000

7. *Gifts and Poison: The Politics of Reputation,* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971

8. 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 (Khrushchev) 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, p.16; emphasis added).

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