Nine / Democracy and the Welfare State: The Political and Theoretical Connections between Staatsräson *and* Wohlfahrtsstaatsräson

In this chapter I sketch a theory of state power. I try to show how the power of the state has drawn from two sources, each of which claims a democratic genealogy. One is Reason of State (*Staatsräson*), the other is "welfare." Although I make several references to the history of European states and to recent socialist debates about the welfare state, the chapter is directed mainly at the American context.

Misreadings

Although it is doubtless true, if uninteresting, to say that there are many different ways of understanding the problems that the welfare state presents to democracy, it is also true, and more interesting, to suggest that there are also some ways of misunderstanding it. One such misreading interprets the welfare state as the teleological completion of liberalism. By administering programs that provide for the basic needs of individuals and families, the state allegedly helps to establish the material foundations for the exercise of citizenship, which liberalism, in its zeal for procedural and political rights, has historically neglected.

Another, more misleading reading treats the welfare activities of the state independently of other state interests. Thus, much of the contemporary controversy about the welfare state, particularly in the United States, proceeds as though the intense preoccupation with military power, which has dominated American politics and claimed a substantial percentage of social resources for more than two decades, is not related to the same state that administers social services. As Thucydides reminds us, the imperial state and its needs for legitimation raise questions about an "elective" affinity between democracy and empire that were raised by the first democracy to found an empire and, at the same time, to support its citizens by a comparatively elaborate system of public allowances and subsidies. In our own century, Max Weber insisted that social welfare did not represent a special category of state functions but was shaped by the fundamental purpose of promoting state power: "In the final analysis, in spite of all 'social welfare policies,' the whole course of the state's inner political functions of justice and administration is repeatedly and unavoidably regulated by the objective pragmatism of reasons of state. The state's absolute end is to safeguard (or to change) the external and internal distribution of power."[1] In the matter of the relationship between state power and welfare, Ronald Reagan's secretary of defense, Caspar Weinberger, was being a better guide than many of his critics when he remarked that "strong defense is the best social welfare program."

Finally, there is the misunderstanding produced by modern socialist theories. There is no question, of course, about the sincerity of the democratic convictions of most Western socialists. The difficulty is, in part, that many socialists have come to identify socialism with the welfare state, thus incorporating socialism into the problem posed for democracy by the welfare state. The development that saw socialism evolve toward a statist mentality was facilitated by the theoretical failure of socialist theorists to decide whether socialism is, so to speak, a subcategory of democracy or democracy a subcategory of socialism. The difference would be crucial, for it would involve either the conditioning of socialism so as to realize the possibilities of democracy or the reverse: democracy would be subordinated to the requirements of socialism, specifically those of a socialist economy.

But there is another part to the difficulty. It has to do with the historical inadequacy both of the socialist understanding of the political and of the socialist political imagination. Historically, socialist theory arose as a critical response to capitalism understood primarily as a system of economic power rather than as an economic formation that evolved into a system of power that penetrated and conditioned the political institutions emerging from the English civil wars of the sev-

enteenth century and the American and French revolutions of the eighteenth century. The political transformation of capitalism was captured in Marx's notation that "civil society is political economy." Unfortunately, as is well known, Marx sketched but never developed a systematic theory of the state, and hence the idea of a political economy remained overdetermined economically and underdescribed politically. Accordingly, the socialist critique remained importantly mired in a historical moment in the first half of the twentieth century when the systemic character of capitalism qua economy was first becoming apparent and when it seemed as though the basic wrong of capitalism was an incapacity to distribute fairly from the cornucopia it was developing.

Twentieth-century socialist theorists then compounded the difficulty created by Marx. In setting about to supply socialism with a theory of the state, they assumed that the state was the equivalent of the political; if the role of the state in assuring the conditions for the reproduction of capitalism were correctly described, then the meaning of the political, for all practical purposes, was exhausted. With a theory of the capitalist state as the essence of their political theory, yet reluctant to face the implications of the increasingly antidemocratic character of the capitalist state and of the political practices that legitimated it, socialists of the post-World War II years nonetheless assumed it to be axiomatic that socialism was the natural twentieth-century heir of democracy. In their view, there was no democracy other than "social democracy" or "democratic socialism." However, after four decades of socialist theorizing and socialist governments it is not easy to identify what is uniquely socialist in the socialist idea of *social* democracy or what is democratic in its idea of democratic socialism. One can say that socialism has helped to affix welfare policies as a strong feature of the capitalist state, and that when socialists have served as the parties of government in West Germany, France, Italy, and Spain, among their main achievements have been the modernization and increased efficiency of their respective state apparatuses.[2] With its economic and statist vision, socialism has established itself as a variant rather than an alternative to the political formation, to be described shortly, created by twentieth-century capitalism. Unfortunately, by identifying itself as the residuary legatee of democracy, socialism helps to postpone a confrontation between democracy and the welfare state.

The claim that welfare should be considered in the context of state power forms the premise of my inquiry. My contention is that a principal task of democratic theory in America today is to establish a democratic critique of the welfare state. For that purpose I shall have to be content to postulate an abbreviated conception of democracy. Democ-

racy involves more than participation in political processes: it is a way of constituting power. Democracy is committed to the claim that experience with, and access to, power is essential to the development of the capacities of ordinary persons because power is crucial to human dignity and realization. Power is not merely something to be shared, but something to be used collaboratively in order to initiate, to invent, to bring about. A democratic critique of the welfare state is a critique of a political arrangement that denies this conception of democracy as political action in the most fundamental sense of using power to constitute a collaborative world. A democratic critique means thinking about welfare in essentially political terms. It asks, what are the political implications of humanitarianism, of classifying citizens as needy and of making them needful objects of state power? A political analysis of welfare requires that we revise our conception of the state to take account of certain historical developments of capitalism of which welfare policies are the expression.

What is the appropriate name for this formation? The name should not be chosen because it serves some system of typologies such as the ancients were fond of. The ancient classifications of political constitutions, Aristotle excepted, resembled a Procrustean bed that tolerated little evolution or change in the archetypal forms of kingship, aristocracy, and democracy, save for a radical transformation of each into its alleged opposites of tyranny, oligarchy, and ochlocracy or anarchy. Postmodern polities have their theoretical origins in Hobbes, who demolished the theoretical basis of the ancient typology while formulating the motor principle of postmodern politics, "a perpetual and restless desire of Power after power that ceaseth only in Death." Postmodern polities are continuously changing so that a name can only hope to capture temporarily certain predominant features and to intimate a general political direction.

New Name, New Polity

Following Marx, we might call the new formation "the political economy of capitalism," a formulation that asserts the primacy of a specific type of economic organization and strongly implies that the "political" comprehends the public institutions and legal system whose function is to promote and protect the interests of the social groups that own and control the means of production. A formulation of this sort immediately encounters the criticism, both of revisionist Marxists and of anti-Marxists, that it gives insufficient emphasis to the positive role of the state. I want to suggest, however, that in naming the new power formation it is important to retain Marx's emphasis upon the primacy

of economic organization and its class character, but at the same time to recognize that "the economy" represents the ontological principle of modernizing ideologies, not a neutral construct for describing the organization of production and distribution of material goods. The ideology of "the economy" and the positive role of the state in advanced capitalist societies share a common tendency toward the depoliticalization of society; or, stated more sharply, both are not only opposed to the redemocratization of society, they are committed to reshaping the attenuated remains of democratic practices to accord with the needs of a corporate vision of politics.

The name "Economic Polity" best captures the ontological and ideological assumption of an underlying reality to which ideally the life of society should be attuned and of a conception of power that is shared by two sectors, the public and the private, which ideally ought to coexist in a nonadversarial relationship. The Economic Polity, unlike the ideal polities of Plato and Aristotle, is positively committed to a conception of an unlimited expansion of power. It is the creature of late modern forms of power made available by the practical application of scientific knowledge. Late modern power is unique. In principle it is endlessly reproducible and is increasingly independent of civic virtue. Given a few oil wells, a few investors, a few technicians, it is possible to construct a nuclear device or finance revolution. The ideology of the Economic Polity, like its sources of power, envisions endless expansion but its imperialism tends to be nonterritorial, degrounded, projecting its influence throughout the world, while militarizing the emptiness of space.

The ideology of the Economic Polity was expounded by Ronald Reagan in a statement of 14 March 1986, in which he set out the American commitment to "a global foreign policy." According to the president, the aim of the policy was to create "a free, open, and expanding market-oriented global economy." Democracy, which ordinarily is an object of derision among the Economic Politicians because of its association with a politics of modest scale, was also to be promoted, although it, too, would be ex/distended to fit the imperial design of a "global foreign policy" and a "global economy." The world, the president alleged, was in the throes of a "democratic revolution," and American resources should be sent to the democratic forces struggling in Afghanistan, Cambodia, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. The ultimate enemy was "Soviet adventurism," which seeks "to destabilize and overthrow vulnerable governments on nearly every continent." The president summarized the essence of the Economic Polity when he declared that the United States had two main tools in its struggles against the USSR, "military strength and the vitality of our economy."

There was also a depoliticalizing message in the president's vision. American support for "resistant forces fighting against Communist tyranny" could succeed only if accompanied by a suspension of democratic politics in the United States. "American interests," he explained, "will be served best if we can keep the details of our help—in particular, how it is provided—out of view." As president he needed to be able to grant support "without publicity." "To hobble ourselves" by ordinary procedures "makes it harder to shape events while problems are still manageable." Presumably the reference to "manageable" meant a situation where the actual fighting could still be left to indigenous forces. For, as the president warned, if clandestine politics were not permitted at home, "it means we are certain to face starker choices down the road." Thus, the global policy and the global market seem to mean exporting democratic revolution abroad and importing counterrevolution at home.

The president's appeal to forgo the normal public scrutiny of executive actions belongs squarely in the time-honored, if constitutionally suspect, tradition of Reason of State. The contemporary formulation contains elements that were unknown or alien when Guicciardini first used the term in the early sixteenth century: capitalism, free market, global economy, and democracy. What changes did the doctrine of Reason of State undergo that made this accommodation possible? In particular, how did it come about theoretically that "democratic" and "welfare" elements were incorporated into a notion closely identified with absolutism?

The Modernity of the Modern State: The Political Uses of Marginality

During the last half of the nineteenth century, the structure of capitalism changed from an economy of small-scale producers to one dominated by oligopolies of large corporations. This was paralleled by the establishment of governmental bureaucracies, especially of agencies specializing in the regulation and encouragement of business activities, thus signaling the consociation of the political and the economic. It is as an element in this complicated state formation that welfarism emerges.

Welfare is a graft upon the modern state; it is not constitutive of it. Rather, the modern state is constitutive of welfare, setting its terms and assimilating it to certain traditional needs of state action. Accordingly, to think about the welfare state we must first think about the political nature of the modern state.

The modern state, according to Weber, cannot be characterized by

its ends, for these are inconstant; it can only be distinguished by its means, which are "physical force." Welfare, then, has to be considered as a function within a state structure that is, in Weber's words, "a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate, i.e. considered to be legitimate, violence."[3] Weber's formulation may seem excessively stark, but starkness is not, I think, inappropriate when we recall that the evolution of the modern state is a story of an internal form of imperialism that we call centralization of power and of the steady destruction of local power and traditional authorities that we call modernization.[4] The striking connection that Weber posited between the systematic practice of violence, internal and external, and the continuing need for legitimation accurately reflected the peculiar exaggeration of power, which is what is modern about the modern state.

The exaggeration of power is a function both of centralization and of the facileness imparted to power by late modern technologies. Under these conditions, however, the populations deposited by rapid and unceasing social change can only achieve tentative integration. Centralized power, perfected technologies of coercion, disintegrated populations that express their incoherence in a search for lost roots of identity, and the consociation of economy and polity—these are the essential conditions for understanding the meaning of the welfare state and for understanding it politically rather than socially.

A social, or conventional interpretation sees the welfare state as conditioned by the question of human needs or, more precisely, by the needs of the working classes, the poor, the unemployed, the disabled, the handicapped, and, increasingly, women.[5] It does not ask about the political meaning of the choice of these particular categories, which is largely the result of administrative determinations and is importantly arbitrary in nature. For there are no objective criteria by which to settle questions such as, what shall be the period during which unemployed workers or unmarried mothers are eligible for assistance? To be sure, the social interpretation of the welfare state has sensed that there are undesirable consequences of welfare, but the general temptation has been to consider these as side effects. Typically it has meant calling attention to the dependency that welfare programs allegedly create. Dependency is conventionally understood in apolitical terms, as analogous, for example, to drug addiction: welfare recipients become hooked and, like addicts, are unable to function autonomously. But it may be that to describe the recipients as dependent on programs is simply an alternative description of an exploitable relationship to state power.

That relationship is rich in possibilities for state power and its sym-

bolization. Some members of a marginal population (e.g., blacks) may be recruited into the police or military forces, where they are not only disciplined into becoming reliable instruments of social control but their presence is publicized so that they appear as representatives of pluralist democracy whose service validates state power. The economic exploitation of marginalized populations is familiar from Marx's classic account of the role of an industrial reserve army in depressing wages and weakening working-class solidarity. With the emergence of the Economic Polity, however, exploitation is as much political as economic in its objectives. If marginal populations are to be available when the rapidly changing demands of a high-tech economy require them to enter into the commodity relationships of the market, they must first be neutralized politically.[6] Upon beginning his second term, President Reagan most revealingly referred to "the spider's web of dependency," which he claimed had been created by past welfare policies.[7] In fact, the poor are sustained by more than welfare programs. They have frequently developed a defensive culture that is real and political. It includes ties of kinship, neighborhood gangs, underground economies, the political organizations developed by minority politicians, and myriad other relationships from which the poor derive protection and support. Consequently, when the president called for a program to "break the welfare culture," the objective was not simply to free the welfare dependent from the web of governmental power, so that he or she could then be inserted into the disciplinary web of the market, but to break the political culture, and hence the power, of the poor.

The way this works is illustrated by the decision of the Reagan administration to reduce public spending for the revitalization of the older industrial cities and, instead, to initiate a system of voucher payments designed to encourage inner-city inhabitants to search for jobs elsewhere. The vouchers could be used to pay rent anywhere in the United States, thus attracting the poor away from the larger cities, where welfare benefits tend to be higher. At the same time, the Reagan administration sought to reduce "incentives," which of course operate more powerfully upon the powerless, for the poor to remain in their ghettos. Federal housing construction for the inner-city poor has ceased, funds for job programs in the cities have been reduced, and public housing is being sold to private buyers. The importance of place to the political culture of the poor was negatively acknowledged by one of the academic promoters of the urban policy of designed neglect when he noted that previous welfare policies had "encouraged the neediest groups . . . to remain isolated in racially segregated areas."

However, the new policies would "disperse racial concentration by increasing the choices available to racial minorities," yet they "would not focus on the needs of particular cities at all."[8]

In this context, antiwelfare rhetoric actually promotes the goals of state power while appearing to be antistatist. It pounces on incidents of welfare fraud and demagogically incites the taxpayer to indignation at the misuse of his or her taxes. It does this by evoking the contemporary form of folk memory. It appeals to the cinematic myth of the frontier town where, according to the well-worn scenario, the virtuous citizenry is being robbed by the few who prefer a parasitic life to one of hard work. By staging welfare as a confrontation between parasitism and the work ethic, the state is allowed to recede momentarily into the background, thus spotlighting a symbolic moment when the virtuous confront the shiftless, when simple justice demands vigilante action by the resentful citizens. Because in a democracy the state is supposed to be the agent of the citizens, the state intervenes and enforces the law, but it is additionally empowered because it inherits the aura of legitimated arbitrariness created by the frontier scenario. The state is, therefore, allowed to deal arbitrarily with all welfare recipients, not by lynching them but by redefining the conditions and categories of their existence.

A case in point is the periodic review of the 2.6 million people on social security disability rolls. The strategy, which was introduced by the Reagan administration, is intended to determine whether recipients are eligible for benefits. Under procedures that the chief administrator admitted had been "very insensitive" to the rights of recipients, 12 million cases were reviewed, nearly one-half million were told that they would lose benefits, and of these 291,000 were restored upon appeal. The element crucial to the cause of state power is the protracted uncertainty disguised as procedural fairness. Under the changed rules, persons selected for review are instructed to contact a local social security office; they are then required to supply the names and addresses of doctors and hospitals that treated them in the previous year. If the government agent decides that the evidence is not adequate, he or she can ask for additional evidence or another medical examination. If it is determined that the person is sufficiently improved to be stricken from the rolls, the case is reviewed again. Most persons, according to administrators of the program, can expect to be reviewed every three years.[9]

Although the state may sometimes appear vengeful toward welfare recipients, the very same state can also present itself as solicitous: it will ensure that a "safety net" is extended at the right moment to catch

the unfortunates who, "through no fault of their own," fall through the spaces created by an economy that is continuously adjusting to new technologies (take-offs) and reorganizations (takeovers).

The thread of contingency that runs through the previous description—arbitrary classifications, a volatile economy, a safety net that is treated as a generous decision by state authorities rather than a right or a claim against the state by a citizen, and the image of recipients either as victims of social forces beyond their control or as criminals whom society should treat harshly—points to the fundamental political characteristic of welfare: its variability.

The Variability of Welfare and State Power

The notion of variability is meant to capture the crucial historical and political characteristics of these programs in America: they are neither consistently cumulative nor stable; nor, when judged by the welfare standards of most advanced industrial societies, are they notably magnanimous—a point of strategic importance, as we shall see shortly. In brief, the variability of welfare programs means that at any political moment they can be expanded, sharply modified, reversed, even revoked altogether. Variability is the condition that makes possible two complementary phenomena: a certain kind of flexible power and a certain kind of pliable citizen. It should be remembered that power depends not simply on the ability to bring about a desired state of affairs; it also depends upon the receptivity of the object, its willingness to support, obey, or, at least, to acquiesce.

The variability of welfare programs produces a paradox about state power: irrespective of whether a programmatic change produces an increase or a reduction in the welfare functions of the state, state power is increased, not necessarily in a sense measurable by budgets or programs but in terms of shaping a reliable citizenry whose responses can be managed in accordance with the needs of the state as perceived by governing elites. State needs reduce to the political neutralization of those whose marginality is essential to the reproduction of state power. Marginal populations are not extraneous to state power but essential. This is because their status of pariah, as defined by the actions and rhetoric of public officials and politicians and disseminated by the media, represents the legitimation of an extension of state power. Marginality is the symbol of political helplessness, of having fewer substantive rights and protections than those enjoyed by the generality of citizens. It signifies the existence of objects that can be handled in a less restrained way by the agents of the state. Thus, marginality is a means of expanding a particular kind of state power, one

less hedged by ordinary rules (due process), one freer to respond in accordance with the "objective situation." The "guest worker" and the "wetback," foreigners who cannot find work in their native country, are the symbol of marginality on the plane of the international political economy, the ideal citizens of the Economic Polity: mobile and vulnerable.

A recent reminder of the way in which marginal groups become the occasion for the expansion of state power was the bombing by Philadelphia authorities of a fortified household occupied by a small group of radicals known as MOVE. The incident was particularly striking because it showed how tenuous is the power of social groups struggling to escape marginality. The complaints against the members of MOVE, all of whom were black, were brought by citizens of a predominantly black neighborhood proud of their homes. The operation—which saw police drop a bomb down the chimney of a house containing women and children while firemen allowed both the bombed home and the adjoining ones to burn out of control—was supervised by a black mayor. The net effect was to edge those segments back toward the marginal status they thought they had escaped and to post a sign that marked an expanded boundary of state power.

Marginality is directly related to the incoherence of populations in the face of a rapidly changing society: incoherence means a lack of cultural and social place and of social support systems that enable individuals to resist or to cushion marginalization. The state has capitalized its power by exploiting what its own evolution has importantly helped to create.[10] The Reagan administration, by its antiwelfare rhetoric and its opposition to social spending, succeeded in marginalizing the recipients of welfare and surrounding them with an atmosphere of uncertainty and danger, alternating between threats of new reduction and promises to preserve the "safety net" of a social minimum. The welfare population and the temporarily unemployed, as well as those who are precariously employed, are kept suspended between hope and despair but not plunged into desperation. Marginalization is, in brief, a way of introducing variability: the marginalized groups become the stuff of a form of state power that, as we shall see, finds itself increasingly deprived of flexibility by its own structure.

The power that accrues to the state because of the helplessness of marginal populations has gone unperceived by Reagan's (and now Bush's) right-wing supporters. They continue to charge that the administration lacks the will to implement its threats. Their lament unintentionally exposes the presence of an instrument of power whose utility depends upon there being no solution to the "welfare problem." This is not to suggest that state officials connive at perpetuating wel-

fare in order to increase their power. Rather, the problem presents itself to them as one in which there is no choice. A radical reduction (or increase) in social programs would eliminate the power that accrues to the state by virtue of the uncertainty of a situation in which the question of cuts always appears to hang in the balance, as in the periodic review of welfare rosters. In reality, the Reagan and Bush administrations have had precisely the kind of Damoclean atmosphere surrounding benefits that favors state power.

That the power generated by uncertainty exists is borne out by the fact that when there have been high levels of unemployment, plant closures, and reductions in unemployment benefits, the workers and the poor have remained passive, even docile. "For benefits oblige," Hobbes remarked, "and obligation is thraldome; and unrequited obligation, perpetual thraldome." Such thralldom, Hobbes concluded, was hateful if it concerned equals, but benefits from an acknowledged superior "enclines to love" because the recipient cannot be "depressed" any further.[11]

The governability of the de/oppressed provides a clue as to the proper starting point for a democratic critique of the welfare state. What is at stake in the shrinkage or increase in welfare programs is not ultimately a dispute over spending or conservative stinginess versus liberal compassion but over the necessary conditions for the employment of instruments of statecraft. Those conditions refer to the particular kind of human *materia* of state power. Welfare recipients signify a distinct category, the virtueless citizen. The virtueless citizen has no a priori claim not to be shaped in accordance with the rational requirements of state power. This lack of a claim is registered in the fact that he or she has no control over the conditions of personal empowerment. Or, more strongly, because these conditions may be taken away or even increased, they are not forms of power at all.

Determinations of medical disability, for example, may disqualify citizens from some of the civic obligations that, according to classic theories of republicanism, were essential to nurturing civic virtue. A citizen who is declared disabled may be exempted from military service, jury duty, or standing trial. There may be rational grounds for such exclusions, but the power to determine them belongs to state officials. According to a recent study, the guiding consideration in setting policies has been "flexibility." What begins as a concern for flexible policies usually ends, however, in proliferation of detailed rules governing eligibility requirements that creates a new instrument at the disposal of the discretionary power of the state.[12]

The perfect contemporary expression of the thralldom of the virtueless citizen is the policy of "workfare" now being actively pursued

by several state governments, notably California and New York. These programs make aid conditional upon the recipient's accepting some suitable form of work or entering a job program. The effect is usefully ambiguous from the viewpoint of state power: the citizen is neither completely free of the stigma of welfare nor fully sanctified by work but somewhere in between, without the autonomy that work is supposed to make possible yet without the security of an assured minimum that welfare is supposed to afford. The virtueless citizen is the dangling man.

Welfare and Reason of State

The welfare state, I want to suggest, is *Staatsräson,* or Reason of State, in the age of the Economic Polity. To assert that welfare programs are instrumentalities of statecraft is to locate them in this stylized and distinctive mode of political discourse.[13]

Reason of State is a notion that, historically, has provided the justification for a particular type of extraordinary state action. It claims that whenever the vital interests of the state are threatened, rulers should be allowed great latitude in exercising power, even when they violate the legal and moral restraints that ordinarily limit their actions. A maxim of Machiavelli's is usually cited as illustrative of *ragione dello stato:* "To maintain a state, the prince is often forced to do what is not good."[14]

Despite its Machiavellian associations, Reason of State seems a straightforward notion based upon certain identifiable assumptions. One assumption was that Reason of State was virtually inseparable from war and diplomacy because these were matters characterized by contingency, surprise, secrecy, and extreme danger. A second assumption was that Reason of State was only a problem for *Rechtsstaaten,* for states whose rulers were supposed to be constrained by law, tradition, morality, or religion. For tyrannies and despotisms, the dilemmas of Reason of State were less problematic. A third and closely related assumption was that the vital interests of the state were not necessarily identical with the interests of those who happened to be ruling and that, consequently, *Staatsräson* could not be invoked simply because rulers believed that it was in their interest to exercise exceptional powers or ignore recognized norms.

What seems less self-evident is why reason should have been invoked in matters that seem so contingent and variable. In point of fact, Machiavelli did not use the phrase *ragione dello stato.* Giovanni Botero (1544–1617), whose popular *Ragion di Stato* helped to popularize the phrase, employed it to mean the principles, political and moral, that

ought to guide the actions of rulers; not only did Botero make no reference to extraordinary state powers, but he insisted upon the observance of religious and moral norms.[15] Although Botero implied that an exalted plane of politics existed where state actors practiced a higher form of rational action,[16] rationality is not a helpful category for understanding Machiavelli's justification for exceptional actions. This is best shown by analyzing a famous passage from Machiavelli's *Discourses* that is widely regarded as the canonical definition of Reason of State: "When the safety of one's country wholly depends on the decision to be taken, no attention should be paid either to justice or injustice, kindness or cruelty, or to its being praiseworthy or ignominious."[17]

The passage was not intended as a license for princes to violate the law or disregard moral conventions. In fact, it was not even addressed to princes but to the "citizen," who in his role as *consigliere* "has to give advice to his country."[18] The advice is offered for a carefully delimited situation, the most extreme of all possible political moments, when the safety of society turns on a single decision. That the bearer of the advice should be a citizen rather than a prince was a crucial piece of republican symbolism. The citizen represents precisely the various social autonomies (e.g., guilds, social ranks, municipal liberties, family, and property) and value formations (custom, common moral and religious beliefs, and legal protections) that would be threatened and breached by the unimpeded application of power required by Reason of State. And precisely because the ruler occupies a more exalted political plane, he is far more likely to be insensitive to the destructive effects of Reason of State.

Machiavelli was most concerned to isolate Reason of State. Thus, he considers the possibility of a constitutional provision that would regularize such extraordinary decisions, only to reject the idea. A republic that relies on "extraordinary measures," he argued, establishes a bad precedent that "sanctions the usage of dispensing with constitutional methods for a good purpose, and thereby makes it possible, on some plausible pretext, to dispense with them for a bad purpose."[19]

The solicitude for institutional practices that is evident throughout the *Discourses* is also present in *The Prince*. In the latter work, his constant advice to the new prince is to found stable practices so as to assure the perpetuation of his power. It is not too much to say that in Machiavelli's political world of rapacious princes, aggressive republics, and class conflicts there is a paucity of regularized processes or institutions as well as a surplus of variability in politics as princes, popes, and condottieri all exchanged places in bewildering "succession." For Machiavelli, Reason of State belongs to a realm of natural

forces represented by conquest and domination. Conquest and domination are considered natural phenomena in a double sense: they are inherent in the structure of the world, and they signify life and death, the two most elemental and inescapable human experiences. It is in this naturalistic context that *Fortunà* is located. *Fortunà* represents a form of power that is variable and changing. She symbolizes a threat to the state that is embedded in the order of the world, not merely an exceptional contingency that calls for discretionary power. Machiavelli likened her power to that of a great natural force, a raging stream, or a natural catastrophe such as a flood, earthquake, or plague.[20] The irruptions of *Fortunà* are difficult to anticipate because she seems to have obscure ends that men cannot fully fathom.

The variability of *Fortunà* dictates the distinctively Machiavellian style of action: artifice, cunning, and a strong element of improvisation. This is because the actor is responding to *necessità,* which operates as a natural force in the political world and leaves the actor with no choice if he wishes to survive. He may make preparations that will diminish the impact when *Fortunà* strikes, but Machiavelli does not attempt, as Hobbes would later, to control nature (*physis*) by conventions (*nomoi*). Only skill invested with an element of cunning, *technē* with *virtù,* can avail the actor. The natural dimension of politics requires naturalistic actors, part lion, part fox.[21]

It turns out, then, that *Reason of State* is a revealing term because it is so maladroit when applied to Machiavelli. The variability of natural powers, whether of *Fortunà* or of warfare, is to be countered not by reason (in a strict sense) but by experience, example, and cunning—qualities that lie close to nature and are typically discounted or subordinated by exponents of (philosophical) reason. What Machiavelli taught was not Reason of State, but statecraft. The term *statecraft* does not appear in English usage until the middle of the seventeenth century, when it was associated with the political consolidation of the nation-state begun by the Tudors in the previous century.[22] Machiavelli's statecraft was one part Machiavellism in the popular sense: a sinister, "crafty" quality needed by state-actors if they were to survive the predatory politics commonly practiced by almost all states. But statecraftiness had to be supplemented by another element, statecraftsmanship, or the notion of a skill based largely upon experience combined with applied technical knowledge (e.g., of warfare). Statecraftsmanship was related to what the ancients had called *technē,* or skilled art. The third element of statecraft was implied in the notion of "craft," which by the sixteenth century meant "force" or "power," a meaning still preserved in the German *Kraft,* or strength. This is the element that finds the actor pitting not only skill and cunning against the natu-

ral forces of *Fortunà* and of political enemies but also mobilizing the full force of the state to protect its existence or to expand its power.

The Democratization of Staatsräson

The later development of the modern state brought profound changes in each of these elements and prepared the way for the transition from *Staatsräson* to *Wohlfahrtsstaatsräson,* from Reason of State to Welfare-State Reason. An intimation of these changes can be found in a comment by Henry Parker, a spokesman for parliamentary power during the early years of the English civil war. It locates Reason of State in the commonplace distinction between the preservation of the state and its prosperity: "Law secures one subject from another . . . but reason of state goes beyond all particular forms and pacts, and looks rather to the being than well-being of a state."

Parker then adds a further comment that truly exalts Reason of State by transforming it from a naturalistic to a rationalistic subject: "Reason of state is something more sublime and imperial than law . . . when war has silenced law . . . policy is . . . the only true law."[23]

By elevating Reason of State to a "sublime" status above the law and then treating it not as a violation of law but as its substitute, Parker made it possible not only to link Reason of State with rationality but to internalize it, that is, to cease treating Reason of State as preoccupied with external affairs. The crucial word in Parker's formulation was *policy,* a notion that already enjoyed wide usage in the seventeenth century. For my purposes, the only element in its complex etymology that we need to note is that policy is originally derived from the Greek *polis* and that the *polis* signified the exact opposite of bestial and violent nature: it was the locus of reason and culture. Parker's suggestion that "policy" be extended to the anti-polis, antipolitical phenomena of war, invasion, and insurrection signaled an expansion of political reason. Although domination and survival represent themes that are as old as recorded politics, the ideas of rational domination and survival do not. In Thucydides' Melian dialogue, for example, the Athenians do not appeal to reason to persuade the Melians to submit to Athenian might. Instead, they describe their domination as a natural fact, and they try to persuade the Melians to accept it as such and to respond naturally by saving themselves. Rational domination is primarily a seventeenth-century notion stimulated by the Baconian-Cartesian dream of the domination of nature by scientific reasoning.

In the person of Hobbes, the Bacon-Descartes vision was translated into a theory of rational domination of political nature through a science of politics based on the idea of man as matter-in-motion and

hence subject to physical laws. Hobbes's famous "state of nature" is simply the idea of *Staatsräson* universalized. In that condition, every person is justified according to the "right of nature" in taking whatever actions he thinks are needed to preserve himself unrestrained by positive laws or moral norms.[24] But contrary to most later interpreters, Hobbes did not eliminate the state of nature by means of a covenant. The state of nature is repressed, not transcended. It exists as a permanent feature of international politics. Domestically it threatens to return every time a law is broken or a promise evaded.[25] Only the fear aroused by the power of an absolute sovereign can preserve peace, but the establishment of absolutism obliterates the traditional distinction underlying Reason of State between exceptional, unbounded power and ordinary, constrained power. *Staatsräson* is normal politics in the Hobbesian commonwealth. Moreover, because each individual is a party to the original covenant, and, as a result, is implicated in all of the sovereign's actions, *Staatsräson* has acquired a "democratic" element previously lacking.

The individualized version of consent, which was consistent with Hobbes's nominalism, was both a reflection and an evisceration of the radical turn taken by Reason of State during the revolutionary upheavals of the era. Among the pamphlets and treatises that justified rebellion against the king, it was commonplace to appeal to the Roman maxim *Salus populi suprema lex est* (the safety of the people is the supreme law).[26] The parliamentary forces, it was argued, were justified in breaking the law, ignoring the religious teachings of the established church, and mobilizing military power without observing the usual constitutional proprieties because the "people," who constituted the realm, were being threatened by the arbitrary actions of the king and his agents. Thus, the survival of society or the people was substituted for the preservation of the state, and revolutionary action for the reason of state authorities. Revolution was, in other words, Reason of State popularized.

These new and "democratic" elements being drawn into Reason of State could not be exploited within the antidemotic framework of Hobbes's theory. In addition and equally important, there was no connection made by Hobbes between reason and state action. Rationality for Hobbes was concerned with the logical structure of consent, obligation, law, and authority; it was silent about action. In fact, when Hobbes turned to the question of policy advice or counsel for the sovereign, he retreated from his usual high doctrine of reason modeled upon geometry and conceded that the best counselors were those with the greatest political experience.[27]

The pivotal figure in the expansion of Reason of State proved to be

Locke rather than Hobbes. Hobbes drew together and exploited the several strands of naturalism, reason, revolution, and the justification for extraordinary state power and its absolution from the ordinary limitations prescribed by law. Locke went even farther. He connected Reason of State to a new idea, modernization, and to a conception of "the people" as a sovereign who were entitled to rebel but not to rule. And he erased Parker's distinction between invoking extralegal powers to defend the state and using them to promote well-being, thus transforming Reason of State from an inherent threat to a constitutional polity, as it had been for Machiavelli, to being its artifact.

Locke's reconstruction of Reason of State in *Two Treatises of Government* begins from a traditional distinction between internal affairs ("the Society within itself") and external affairs ("the security and interest of the publick without") (2.147). The former is designated as the province of the "Executive" power, the latter as that of the "Federative" power. The two powers, Locke notes in a tortured passage, "are always almost united" (2.14), a remark whose casual, unargued quality helps to conceal an important move. Instead of providing a basis for contrasting the broad latitude that must be allowed the federative power with the close containment of the executive power, the internal/external distinction serves to create a domestic domain for *Staatsräson* while lodging it in the same constitutional hands as power over foreign affairs. The federative power, "which," as Locke puts it, "one may call natural" (2.145), follows in the naturalistic tradition of Machiavelli and Hobbes. That power is said by Locke to correspond to "the Power every Man naturally had before he entered Society" (2.145). This means that, literally, the federative power represents alienated power, for it, along with executive power, embodies the precise power that men had to surrender as a condition for civil government to be established. In the state of nature, each man had the rightful power to defend himself and to enforce the law of nature; his natural power was limited by the law of nature. The federative power was defined by Locke so as to preserve the appearance of continuity with man's power in the state of nature: it "contains the Power of War and Peace, Leagues and Alliances, and all the Transactions with all Persons and Communities without the Commonwealth" (2.146). The federative power, he notes, is "much less capable" of being circumscribed by law and "so must necessarily be left to the Prudence and Wisdom of those whose hands [it is] in." This was because the exercise of that power would have to depend upon "the variation of designs and interests" of foreigners (2.47).

In the course of describing the federative power, Locke connects it with the notion of a unified or solidary community that serves not

only to strengthen the federative power but to prepare the way for enlarging executive power along the path marked out by the *Staatsräson* element in the federative power. When Locke first introduced the notion of a state of nature, and especially when he discussed the origins of private property, he made frequent reference to all mankind forming "one Community of Nature" (2.6, 128). But when men contract to institute a particular society, they "make one Body . . . in reference to the rest of Mankind" so that in controversies with "those that are out of it . . . an injury done to a Member of their Body engages the whole in the reparation of it" (2.145). The cohesive character of the community implied by Locke's language is not accidental, but crucial to the scope of the executive as well as federative power. A solidary community serves as a moral entity that is properly a subject of a common good. Just as the existence of a genuine community justifies the protective function of the federative power, so that community justifies a general guardian power in the domestic domain "within" that allows the executive to do good.

The enlargement of the executive was accomplished by amalgamating the natural power of individuals to enforce the law of nature with the historical power identified with the royal prerogative claimed by English monarchs, thus uniting a restricted power under the law of nature with a notoriously ill-defined power whose limits had been bitterly but inconclusively contested for a century.[28] Prerogative is, according to Locke's definition, the "power to act according to discretion, for the publick good, without the prescription of the Law, and sometimes even against it" (2.160).

Locke's reasoning in justification of such an anomalous power is astonishing because it amounts to a criticism of the political system of his own creation, to a deconstruction of his own theory. He justified exceptional executive power on the grounds that there were inherent shortcomings in the rule of law and parliamentary-based politics, the two main protections against arbitrary power. Legislatures, Locke points out, are not in continuous session, and hence they are "too slow for the dispatch requisite to Execution." But when the legislature does act it acts through the law, and the law cannot foresee "all Accidents and Necessities"; the law is inflexible if applied rigorously under all circumstances (2.160). Thus, the variability of affairs and the need for flexible, prompt action—which had been the hallmarks of *Staatsräson* and the distinctive character of war and invasion, of situations defined by the emphatic presence of force, domination, and survival—are now affixed to domestic concerns, to concerns that, by definition, are farthest removed from the state of nature (which international politics is not) and from the naturalistic grounds of power. Locke accomplishes

the change by using the norm of the good (*bonum*) of the community to justify a latitude of power that hitherto had been restricted to its survival (*salus*). To determine whether an exercise of prerogative is justifiable, Locke writes, we need only inquire whether it is for "the good of the Community." A "good Prince," he reassures his reader, "cannot have too much Prerogative, that is Power to do good" (2.164). A ruler pursuing the good in violation of the law will be acting rationally because he will be applying the fundamental principle incorporated into the original contract that "a Society of Rational Creatures entered into a Community for their mutual good" (2.163).

An enlarged *Staatsräson* stands for a broad power to extirpate the irrationalities preserved by "Customs and Priviledges when the reasons of them are ceased." State rationality now has to deal with a new and changing world where "Things . . . are in so constant a Flux that nothing remains long in the same State. Thus People, Riches, Trade, Power change their Stations" (2.157). Change replaces nature as the ground for broad discretionary powers. The new threat that the reason of the state is to combat are the "gross absurdities" that "the following of Custom, when reason has left it, may lead" (2.157). The example Locke uses is the distortion in the system of electoral representation produced by the rotten boroughs. It stands for those "unforeseen and uncertain Occurrences" that could not be anticipated by "certain and unalterable Laws" (2.158). The inability of the legislature to act and the rigidity of the law suddenly reveal that the two main guarantors of men's natural rights are seriously deficient, perhaps because they are so deeply indebted to the element of custom that is now seen to be at odds with the emerging nature of modernity. Because the law is helpless to overcome "the disorders, which succession of time had insensibly, as well as inevitably introduced," the state, in the person of the executive, would be relied upon to overcome "old custom" by "true reason" (2.158).

The Lockean contract thus signifies man's movement from the realm of nature to the realm of history, to that order marked by "succession of time" and "constant Flux." Reason, which Locke declared to be synonymous with the law of nature (1.101, 2.6), now has the task of effecting the values of the law of nature—liberty, protection, preservation, property, and equality—in the realm of history. Reason is no longer directed mainly against nature and the dangers presented in the form of natural powers; this means that unlike Machiavelli and Hobbes, Locke did not conceive of the power that reason must call upon as being defined by the *Kraft* or sheerly physical power associated by his predecessors with nature. Reason is concerned to dominate history, and it takes the form of modernizing "old custom."

Its powers are now directed against the artifacts of man himself: the changes produced not only by the "busy mind of man" but by the decay that time brings to all things so that "the reasons of them are ceased." Reason has to reintroduce reason continually to repair society's "insensible" lapses into irrationality and "gross absurdities" (2.157). The standard according to which reason works is as generous as that formerly available to Reason of State, the good of society. The good of society, as noted previously, has been substituted for security as the *suprema lex*. Lockean rulers inherit the same rights of Reason of State to summon the full power of society, but now it is not for simple defense or domination but for the good of all.

The new Reason of State can call upon a more awesome reservoir of power than anything available to premodern rulers: whereas the latter had to negotiate with partially autonomous centers of power (nobility, church, local estates), the new rulers can apply a power that is awesome because it is constituted indiscriminately. "Men give up all their Natural Power to the Society which they enter into" (2.136). A ruler who "sincerely" takes as his "Rule" the principle of *"Salus Populi Suprema Lex"* (2.158) and makes the domestic well-being of society the basic object of policy need not fear that this will reduce his effectiveness abroad: "The increase of lands and the right imploying of them is the great art of government. And what Prince who shall be so wise and godlike as by established laws of liberty to secure protection and encouragement to the honest industry of Mankind against the oppression of power and narrowness of Party will quickly be too hard for his neighbors" (2.42).

Thus, statecraftiness has disappeared to be replaced by sincerity in pursuit of the well-being of society, while the *technē* of statescraftsmanship, "the great art of government," will concentrate not on aggrandizement but on the extension and expansion, at home and abroad, of rational productivity or "the right imploying" of resources. The later development of the modern state would bring further changes in the meaning of each of the three elements of statecraftiness, statecraftsmanship, and the *Kraft* of the state. Briefly put, the modern state experienced a crisis expressed in its own increasing rigidification and a consequent deficit in variability. This crisis can be sketched by means of two familiar notions.

Toward Totality

The first is Weber's conception of rationalization. It refers to the spread of instrumental modes of thinking—what Ellul called *"la technique"*—that reduce the world to terms of achieving a given end most effec-

tively and efficiently. Bureaucratic institutions are the formal embodiment of instrumentalism or, more precisely, they embody rationality as modern man has come to understand reason. Rationality has only a tenuous existence independent of the conventions enforced by institutions. By means of bureaucratic institutions, rationality proceeds to set the categories for defining what is officially in the world.[29] Bureaucratic rationality is not confined to governmental arrangements; it has deeply penetrated all modes of social life so that distinctions between "public" and "private" and "state" and "civil society" have lost their salience. The universality of bureaucracy, which exists more as an ideal than as an actuality, signifies nonetheless the determination to reduce the play of contingency and variability. By reducing the world to procedures, bureaucracy hopes to render it calculable.

Science served as the model for the so-called policy sciences that correspond to the second element of "craft," the skilled application of knowledge to the management of affairs of state. Today this means the applied social sciences, primarily the sciences of economics and management. But technical knowledge has a problem: insofar as it acknowledges the need for flexibility, it is closer to being a higher common sense than a body of scientific knowledge; insofar as it is technical or objective, it is less flexible and hence works to build pressures for forms of variable power. Technical knowledge is mainly applied within the rigidified structures that reason has built, and it owes its development to the conditions that administered structures make available. Technical knowledge aims at the reduction of contingency by substituting scientific knowledge. It trades flexibility and uncertainty for predictability.

The second broad development involved what might be called the systematization of the state. This refers to the expansion of the state to include much that had previously been viewed as private, from education to sexual reproduction. It is not merely that the state has "intervened" in numerous domains; it has sought to coordinate the domains themselves.

The state system includes the traditional instruments of governance: first and foremost, military and police power, executive and bureaucracy, courts, legislature, political parties, and those interest groups that adapt their activities to conform with the "rules of the game." To these elements of the state, a new one was added in the twentieth century. Before this century, the relationship of government and economy took the form primarily of clusters of legislation (e.g., railroad legislation), subsidies, and regulations, which, although adding up to a considerable network with a noticeable tilt in favor of business interests, could

not be said to have achieved an integrative or organic character. During the present century, however, the state system has evolved from having relationships with large business corporations to becoming interrelated so as to form a system.

This system is huge, for it not only includes the economy and large sectors of civil society (e.g., education) but sees itself as deeply involved in the competition for hegemony in the international economy. Stated differently, the hugeness of the system is not identical with the hugeness of the state. *System,* a term that is widely used and revealingly combines a technical bioengineering meaning with a technocratic/bureaucratic one, signifies the transmutation of the state into the Economic Polity. One small sign of the change is the archaic status of the epithets and images once thought to be expressive of the state. *"Majestas," "grandeur," "imperium,"* and "sovereignty" once signified a social totality dominated by a definite, guiding center of volition and ultimate authority, monocratic and monotheistic. Now there is a system striving to become a totality in which the center is being transformed into a mechanism of management and control. Unlike the monocratic structure, in which dominance was the basic political and social fact, the basic fact about power under the regime of the technologically advanced Economic Polity is its pervasiveness.

One of the most significant developments in the pervasiveness of power and its totalization is the private colonization of the public sector. For nearly a decade the private sector has steadily acquired functions that used to belong to the public sector. These include the expansion of private education, private hospitals, the assumption of various welfare programs, corporate subsidies of the arts and of public radio and television, the operation of prisons, and the recruitment of large security forces. Thus, there are now over one million private security guards, but only thirty-six thousand work for a government agency. Or to take another example of what appears on its face to be the privatization of the public domain: in 1962 the Social Security Act was amended to prohibit the use of federal funds to purchase services in the private sector. But beginning with the amendments of 1967 to the same act, these restrictions were loosened, and since then there has been "an enormous expansion of public funds" into the private sector. Then, in 1974, the last major restriction was removed from Title XX of the Social Security Act when private agency donations, such as those represented by the United Fund, could qualify as part of a state's 25 percent local matching share of federal monies, even when the funds were being used to purchase services from the donating agency.[30]

The Political Functions of Civil Society

These developments that find the state slightly decentered but not significantly decentralized have been heralded as marking a new awareness of the limitations of the public sector as well as a new attitude of social responsibility on the part of large corporations. The context in which these developments have been discussed is typically economic: the private sector can "deliver" the social services more efficiently. But this way of presenting the problem helps to obscure the power that will be exercised by agents who appear to be responding to profit motives and market forces but who in reality will be fulfilling the disciplinary needs of the Economic Polity. Those needs are importantly secured, as I have suggested, by uncertainty. The reassignment of social needs to the private sector reintroduces precisely the elements of uncertainty that public guarantees of assistance were supposed to ease. In this setting, the very language of "sectors" is a revealing slip: it reflects the parity of parts in a polity/economy, the suppressed yearning for totality, and the evolution of state-centered power into system power. In that evolution, the power-enhancing role of marginalization is not lost. The courts have ruled, for example, that security guards in the employ of private companies are not subject to the same constitutional constraints that formally inhibit public law enforcement.

The connection between the role of uncertainty and variability in the production of power, on the one hand, and the symbiotic relationship between the polity and the economy and civil society, on the other, are underscored by two recent developments. The first is the extension of the use of lie detectors from the public sector to the private, from the state to civil society and the economy. Businesses now regularly employ the devices as part of their hiring practices as well as for maintaining continuing surveillance over the lives of their employees. The second development is illustrated by the recent recommendations of a presidential commission that called for a sweeping nationwide program of drug testing of private as well as public employees. This step toward the *Gleichschaltung* of state and society was likened to a weapon in the "war against drugs," but the more immediate aim is a method for disciplining a work force that is frequently criticized as being inferior to the Japanese. Thus, the real battleground is the international economy. The disciplinary aims embodied in these proposals, which are already part of the standard practices of some government agencies and business firms, are clearly linked to the uncertainty principle. The tests can be administered at the discretion of employers. The uncertainty becomes nearly exquisite because of the well-known falli-

bility of drug tests, a political virtue also possessed by lie detectors. The choice confronting the worker is rendered all the more stark by the commission's recommendations of a large increase in the number of prisons and an expanded role of the armed forces in combating the "hostile threat" posed by the drug economy, which, as Washington has frequently insisted, is linked to international terrorism and communism.[31] Clearly, the disciplinary requirements of the Economic Polity are blurring the traditional distinction between prison and society.

Wohlfahrtsstaatsräson

"The essence of the welfare state," according to a standard definition, "is government-protected minimum-standards of income, nutrition, health, housing, and education, assured to every citizen as a political right, not as charity."[32] Or, to cite another formulation, the welfare state is "the predictable delivery of public-funded benefits to people in need without imposing systematic degradations and restrictions upon them."[33]

These statements convey the ambivalence that is to be found among those writers who are broadly sympathetic to the extension of services associated with the welfare state but who are also apprehensive about the expansion of state power implicit in welfare functions. One student of the welfare state has formalized the ambivalence by proposing a distinction between the "repressive" functions of the state and its "welfare" functions. He has then shown that these are simultaneously present in the contemporary state, not only in the simple sense of, say, the co-presence of the Department of Justice operating alongside the Department of Health and Human Services, but of the intermingling of both functions in the same department. Thus, the "repressive" agency may have responsibility to protect the legal rights of dependent children, while the "welfare" agency polices welfare rolls in order to ferret out those whom President Reagan once labeled "welfare chiselers."

Many social democrats have chosen to ignore the repressive nature of state power, its Weberian nature, even though socialist theory was once renowned for its view of the state as the instrument of class rule and the guarantor of the system of private ownership of the means of production as well as of the unequal power relationships that that form of ownership presumes and reproduces.[34] Today there is a marked tendency among social democrats to modify their former conception of the state as the mere extension of capitalist power in favor of some version of state "autonomy," that is, the state seems at times able to

pursue policies that, on their face, are opposed to the "logic" of capitalist power—for example, to enact legislation recognizing and protecting the rights of trade unions.[35]

Clearly, if socialists are to favor the extension of welfare programs, they must assume that the state can be used; or, stated differently, that the state is not encapsulated in the Economic Polity. Without that assumption, social democracy has no *raison d'être*. Further, social democracy assumes the perpetuation rather than the abolition of capitalist forms of ownership. In focusing upon benefits, the origin of the benefits in a particular form of ownership of the means of production comes to matter less than their abundance. Some Swedish social democrats have argued straightforwardly for a policy of helping to fatten the capitalist calf rather than slaughtering it. Social democracy is thus ironically the means of resolving the so-called motivation crisis of mature capitalism.[36]

Briefly stated, the "motivation crisis" refers to the claim of socialist critics that the liberal capitalist state is threatened because, first, the work ethic has deteriorated, with a consequent decline in productivity and capital accumulation; and, second, due to structural changes in the economy, there has been a marked shrinkage in the sector from which welfare benefits were financed. The resulting shrinkage of welfare programs, it is claimed, leads to a withdrawal of political loyalty and support by ordinary citizens. Although this theory was intended to demonstrate that capitalism was approaching an impasse, its actual and unintended effect has been to expose the way in which new social democratic strategies are helping to avert the crisis of capitalism. For if capitalism is to be exploited by socialist pressures, then socialists have a direct interest in increasing the productivity and efficiency of capitalism. Accordingly, socialists should concentrate upon restoring worker motivation. They should educate workers to see that their self-interest lies in making capitalism more efficient and productive. If they succeed, then the capitalist economy will take its place alongside the capitalist state: both will then be sufficiently autonomous to be exploited. Then all that is needed politically is a strong trade union movement and a mass political party organized around the cause of social Keynesianism.[37] Unfortunately, the likely effect of the strategy will be to resolve the legitimation crisis at the expense of democratic possibilities. Democracy will have been reduced essentially to a means for mobilizing electoral pressures to extract welfare. It will have been sacrificed to the "higher" synthesis of socialism and capitalism symbolized by the welfare state.

The consequence of the socialist discovery of state autonomy is to produce a convergence between social democracy and what might be

called neo-Bismarckism. The latter is represented in American political science by Huntington, Krasner, and Nordlinger.[38] They have argued for state autonomy, both as an actual fact and as a normative desideratum. The Bismarckian element in their writings is their concern for a strong state, one sufficiently removed from domestic political pressures to be able to respond vigorously, promptly, and effectively to the Soviet threat and to the changing tactical map of international *Realpolitik*. In this context, the idea of state autonomy is in large part contemporary jargon for *Staatsräson*. Bismarck was also among the first nineteenth-century statesmen to enact social legislation not as a remedy for social injustice but as a way of scotching discontent and increasing state power. The neo-Bismarckians have also perceived this connection between social discontent and state power.[39] But they face, as Bismarck was not required to, the full tide of rising expectations of the lower classes that capitalism unavoidably arouses in the course of shaping consumer consciousness. Huntington, in particular, is alarmed by the way that "modernization" has stirred the political consciousness of the poorer strata of society, made them susceptible to the appeals of politicians in search of votes, and produced an "overload" of social demands upon limited national resources at a critical moment when the national interest requires that defense spending be given priority.[40] Expectations have to be lowered without, however, creating pessimism among the general citizenry of consumers; this requires that state officials be allowed considerable flexibility. This situation is viewed as endemic to any highly integrated and complex economy, and, therefore, it is urgent that governments have the necessary authority to act quickly and even to flaunt orthodoxy, as in the recent crisis involving Continental Bank or, before that, the Chrysler bailout. In other words, the discretionary power that the state is able to legitimate vis-à-vis welfare functions is symptomatic of a need for unconstrained state power in virtually all social and economic sectors.

Thus, we are in the presence of a new form of *Staatsräson*. It is the fate of our times that the German language, rather than ancient Greek, allows me to coin an appropriate word for this new power: *Wohlfahrtsstaatsräson*. As I have contended, the new *Staatsräson*, like the old, is a response to unpredictability, but the forms of unpredictability are not symbolic of a naturalistic politics or of the incomplete politicization of the world, as they were in Machiavelli's image of a raging stream that sweeps all before it. Instead, they are represented in the interplay between a volatile international political economy and a rigidified bureaucratic structure of decision making. As that international economy has become more interdependent, it has also become more intensely competitive. Innovations then become a condition of sur-

vival, but they also produce consequences that no one nation can control. As a result, Machiavellism, or statecraftiness, reappears in different forms: over the control of scientific discoveries and their publicization; over export quotas, tariffs, currency exchange, and interest rates. In short, the international political economy is as much an order that demands *Realpolitik* as was the older order of nation-state rivalries. The new order demands ad hoc solutions as much as the old, and those demands are reflected back into the domestic political economy. Thus, if the governing elites find that current definitions of employment result in payment systems that ultimately place U.S. firms at a competitive disadvantage, then the Bureau of Labor Statistics simply redefines what it means to be employed or unemployed. Or the meaning of the term *class* can be redefined: the relation of class to the organization of production can be ignored in favor of a conception of class defined by welfare standards for demarcating a "poverty line."

Indeed, the substitution of bureaucratic for sociological conceptions of class reveals the essence of *Wohlfahrtsstaatsräson*. A bureaucratic class is a classification, a category defined by the application of abstract criteria that are designed to accentuate attributes deemed systematically useful rather than to accommodate the differences created by historical practices, institutions, and values. Contrary to Weber's myth, in which growing bureaucratization meant the spread of rationality, order, rule-bound decisions, and predictability, bureaucracy introduces arbitrariness into the constitution of its classifications and then disguises that initial move with an overlay of procedural rules.[41] Bureaucracy signifies, not as Weber thought, the antithesis of *Staatsräson*, but its ritualization.

The impulse that guides the *Räson* of the *Wohlfahrtsstaat* is the yearning for totality that has been such a prominent element in the ideologies and politics of this century. All economic, military, political, and revolutionary thinking and practice have been shaped by the urge for complete coordination and systematization. What remains of pluralism, which had flourished early in this century, is mostly the eccentricities and rage of separatism. The distance traversed by political development from the early modern beginnings of *Staatsräson* to the postmodern *Wohlfahrtsstaatsräson* can be measured by recalling that earlier, when the state first appealed to reasons of high policy as a justification for extraordinary powers, it was not simply a matter of lawbreaking that was involved but an incursion into private spheres that possessed their own sources of power, structures of authority, and systems of norms. *Staatsräson* had to confront ecclesiastical authorities of sacred origin, private property protected by custom and sanctioned by natural law, family and kinship structures whose ultimate origins were

believed to be biblical, and elaborate charters of communal and municipal liberties. These autonomies were crippled in the course of the complex history of political and legal centralization, the growth of urbanization, and the dislocations caused by industrial and technological changes. The most extreme suppression of pluralism was accomplished by twentieth-century totalitarianism. The extinction of political difference is also implicit, however, in the yearning for totality of which systems-talk is the ideological expression. System thinking extinguishes difference not by suppression but by a combination of translation and abandonment: social phenomena are renamed "inputs" or treated as "costs" and "benefits" and absorbed into these categories. What cannot be accommodated or co-opted doesn't "count" and can be ignored.

The nonsuppressive extinction of difference is powerfully illustrated in the completely inverted picture of reality created by the Reagan regime. On the one hand, presidential rhetoric extolled the values of localism, voluntarism, and decentralization and strenuously attacked the idea of state power and state intervention. However, the reality is that the power of the national state has demonstrably increased, not only in military and diplomatic interventionism abroad, but in control, surveillance, and the promotion of moral and religious orthodoxy. State power is now so assured that it can be attacked with impunity by those who preside over its use. The state is now so unchallenged internally, either by a vigorous system of opposition parties and movements or by independent local authorities, that it can appear to reverse nearly two hundred years of aggrandizement at the expense of local self-government. Instead of encroaching on lesser autonomies, it proclaims its surplus of power and "returns" functions and monies to state and local officials, thereby propping up a system that it needs both to obscure its own increasing power and to render it more efficient by converting local government into essentially administrative units in a national system of management. Localism is that state-sponsored Potemkin Village in the age of *Wohlfahrtsstaatsräson*.