

Tom R. Burns/Peter M. Hall (eds.)

The Meta-Power Paradigm

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The Meta-Power Paradigm

Impacts and Transformations of Agents,
Institutions, and Social Systems

Capitalism, State, and Democracy
in a Global Context



PETER LANG

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This work presents, elaborates, and illustrates what is arguably the most important concept in the social sciences: power. It focuses particularly on a major class of power phenomena, meta-power, that is, power over power, transformative and structuring power. This encompasses powers to establish, reform, and transform social systems (institutions, power hierarchies, cultural formations, and socio-technical and infrastructural systems). Understanding meta-power is essential to the effective analysis of the formation of societal structures, their dynamics and evolution. This collection presents numerous illustrations and case studies at local, meso, and macro levels, showing how meta-powering is mobilized and operates in different contexts. The book should be of particular interest to business and management researchers, anthropologists, historians, legal scholars, political scientists, and, of course, sociologists.

"The book provides an innovative perspective in the study of power, a central concept not adequately conceptualized in the social sciences... Theoretically robust and empirically grounded, the volume is rewarding reading for all those who are interested in the governance and change of contemporary global society."

Alberto Martinelli, University of Milan, Italy,
Former President of the International Sociological Association

"In this book that all micro-theorists should welcome, Tom Burns and Peter Hall, along with other leading scholars, develop models that permit the connection of... interaction and meaning with a deep recognition of how institutions and social systems operate. It... belongs on the shelves of all sociologists who wish to understand the linkage between action and structure."

Gary Alan Fine, Northwestern University, USA

"*Meta-Power* offers a superb and all too rare combination of theoretical framing and empirical studies. Grasping power as action rather than property or attribute, Burns and Hall forge fresh sociological lenses that dissolve tired agency/structure dualisms. They detail many and diverse forms of *powering* and a spectrum of *powering mechanisms*, demonstrating how these transect human, natural, material and techno-scientific phenomena, all of which are themselves active. They do not flinch at the complexities of life on earth but engage them. Bravo indeed!"

Adele Clark, University of California, San Francisco, USA

Tom R. Burns is Professor Emeritus at Uppsala University (Sweden), Visiting Scholar, Woods Institute, Stanford University, and Senior Research Associate at ISCTE, Lisbon. He is a widely recognized social theorist and researcher and one of the founding members of the Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere (MAHB).

Peter M. Hall is Affiliate Professor of Sociology at Colorado State University and Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Missouri. His areas of interest include political sociology, radical movements, organizations and work, policy processes, social theory, science, and the environment. He has served as editor of the journal *Symbolic Interaction* and president of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction. He received the Society's George Herbert Mead Award for career contributions in 1994.



THE META-POWER PARADIGM:

Impacts and Transformations of Agents, Institutions, and Social Systems –
– Capitalism, State, and Democracy in a Global Context

Tom R. Burns and Peter M. Hall (editors)

in collaboration with

Thomas Baumgartner, Ulrich Beck, Walter Buckley (deceased), Philippe DeVillie,
Anne Marie Kalliokoski, Stephen D. Krasner, Kevin McElmurry, Nora Machado,
Patrick W. McGinty, Hannes Peltonen, Ewa Roszkowska, Dusko Sekulic, & J. P. Singh

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