

8-1-1962

An Analysis of the Influence of Charles Horton Cooley's Concept of the Primary Group Upon American Sociology

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF CHARLES HORTON COOLEY'S
CONCEPT OF THE PRIMARY GROUP UPON AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

by

William L. Ewens

A Thesis

Presented to

the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Sociology

University of Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

August 1962

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM, DEFINITIONS, AND METHOD OF STUDY

In the history of civilization, few men have, as the result of their own thoughts, raised themselves head and shoulders above their fellows. Most have had to be content merely to adopt their ideas and beliefs from others. Few are they, indeed, who have penetrated the depths of the unknown and then have successfully returned with new ideas expressed in conventional language so that we of lesser ability might also understand. Charles Horton Cooley was one of these. He did not invent a new silver cleaner or make an improvement on a mousetrap. He merely "contemplated his own soul and saw the world reflected there."¹ Aided by the power of introspection and inspired primarily by the great masters of literature, he took many of the vague tendencies and impressions of his age and returned them through his writings as clear, definite, and workable ideas.

An investigation into the influence which Cooley's concept of the primary group has had upon American sociology is important, perhaps, for two reasons. First, no matter how sophisticated we as students of sociology may become, we can

¹ Edward C. Jandy, Charles Horton Cooley, His Life and His Social Theory (New York: Dryden Press, 1942), p. 1.

never free ourselves entirely from an atavistic concern for the sources of our intellectual being. †Only when concepts are rooted within the time and space framework of their creation are they really useful to the social scientist. An unattached concept, like a book out of place in a library, is of only limited value. Secondly, the task is important because this concept still today occupies the attention of a large number of professional sociologists. It thus possesses an immediacy which transcends the fifty-year period that separates it from us.

I. THE PROBLEM

† The purpose of this study is to determine the influence which the ^{Concepts of Charles Horton Cooley,} concept of the primary group, first enunciated by Charles Horton Cooley (1894-1929), has had upon the growth and development of American sociology. Research will be confined to statements or other acknowledgments by American sociologists as to the influence which ^{these concepts have} this concept has had upon their thought. The problem thus conceived is one of library research and will be dealt with in that manner.²

² Cooley's writings consist of three basic works, which, because they contain most of his system of thought, have become popularly known as his trilogy. These three books are Human Nature and the Social Order (1902), Social

II. DEFINITIONS

In a philosophical sense at least, Charles Horton Cooley has either directly, through personal acquaintance, or indirectly, through his writings, influenced everyone with whom he has ever come into contact. Moreover, this influence may have been negative or positive--in reality always some mixture of both--and may or may not have affected any tangible change of behavior on the part of the person or persons being influenced. For this study, however, the broad philosophical definition of influence is hardly meaningful and certainly not measurable. Influence will be used here to refer to acknowledgments by American sociologists concerning Cooley's original discussion of the concept of the primary group. These acknowledgments will usually be in the form of: (1) statements about, (2) footnoted references to, or (3) quotations from the sections of Cooley's Social Organization in which this concept is outlined.

It is felt that a more operational or quantitative definition of this term would unduly restrict its meaning.

Organization (1909), and Social Process (1918). Other writings by Cooley include Life and the Student (1927), a collection of notes and reflections from Cooley's Journals; Sociological Theory and Social Research, a number of articles which were published posthumously; and Introductory Sociology (1933), an introductory textbook edited and partially written by Robert Angell and Lowell Carr. Cooley also published a number of other articles which are listed, along with a brief outline of his life history, in Appendix A.

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Influence, after all, in every instance, has many qualitative as well as quantitative aspects. The task of this study is not so much to define rigidly or to measure precisely Cooley's influence as it is to understand it thoroughly. The attempt here will be to discern and to interpret the flow of ideas which has come down to us from this section of Cooley's writings.

III. METHOD OF STUDY

At the outset of this investigation, the literature relating to this topic was divided into ^{three} five general areas. These ^{three} five areas, although not mutually exclusive, were selected on the assumption that they were ^{representative} fairly exhaustive of the material which was available. The areas were: (1) the writings of Charles Horton Cooley, (2) literature about social theory and the history of social thought which attempted to place Cooley in the general stream of sociological thought, (3) theoretical restatements or reiterations of Cooley's concept of the primary group, (4) research in which there was acknowledgment of Cooley's primary group concept, and (5) textbooks which employed this concept.

From this first crude classification evolved the present outline. In this final form, Chapter II serves as an introduction to the man Cooley, his home background, and some of the influences upon his thought. The relationship

between the concept of the primary group and Cooley's general system of social thought is explored in Chapter III. The next three chapters are devoted to an analysis of three phases of the influence which this concept has had on American sociology. In Chapter IV theoretical reiteration and elaboration of the concept of the primary group by American sociologists will be considered. Research and empirical investigations in which American sociologists have employed Cooley's concept will be analyzed in Chapter V. Chapter VI, then, will be devoted to an understanding of the ways in which the concept of the primary group has been used in introductory textbooks in American sociology; and the summary and conclusions presented in Chapter VII consist of an attempt to trace the influence of this concept to the present day.

CHAPTER II

THE MAN COOLEY

In attempting to understand the influence which Cooley's concept of the primary group has had upon American sociology, perhaps the initial place to begin is with the man himself. Robert Angell has written, "The conceptions of thinkers are always in some measure their own life written large, but never more so than in Cooley's case."¹ The purpose of this chapter is to indicate some of the life experiences and other influences which have helped to shape and to mold Cooley's social thought. Emphasis will not be so much upon the things which Cooley did as with the sort of man he was.²

I. LIFE EXPERIENCES WHICH INFLUENCED COOLEY'S THOUGHT

Cooley's life experiences seem to fall into three rather natural periods. Each of these periods of his life--his youth, his early manhood, and his adult life--will be analyzed with reference as to how they contributed to his social thought.

¹Charles Horton Cooley, Social Organization and Human Nature and the Social Order (revised edition; Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1956), pp. vii-viii.

²Also see Appendix A.

Boyhood, the Dreamer (1874-1880)

Charles Horton was the fourth of six children born into the home of Thomas McIntyre and Mary Horton Cooley. His father was to become, during the first twenty-seven years of his life, one of the most illustrious and successful midwesterners of his period. He had a distinguished career as Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, Dean of the University of Michigan Law School, first Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission, and author of a number of famous legal treatises. The family residence faced the Michigan University campus in the then typical small midwestern town of Ann Arbor. This settled small town atmosphere, with its reinforced suggestions of academic life, was to be reflected in the ethno-regionism of young Cooley's later writings.

These crucial years of childhood development were, in general, miserable ones for Cooley. They were characterized by bodily ills and many personal misgivings. Cooley suffered from a small and weak physique, obstipative elimination, and a bad speech defect. Within this general framework of ill health, a number of trends can be distinguished which were to color his later attitude toward society.

First there was the general attitude of reflection and introspection which was early manifested in young Cooley's life. The creative mind of this young genius, which found itself clearly inadequate in the physical world of men

and things, turned inward to shield itself from the harsh realities of the outward world. Cooley stated in this regard:

→³ One of the earliest things I remember is a habit of sitting by myself and thinking. . . . My real life went on within, somewhat vague in its thoughts and aspirations but intense and penetrating. I was passionately eager for applause and a great part of my mental life was spent in imagining situations in which I was the glorious hero. I confronted lions escaped from their cages, while the terrified crowd wondered; or I dauntlessly entered burning buildings or jumped into the river and saved the drowning.³

→³ This early dependence upon mental life can be clearly noted in Cooley's later works. He regarded society as social and the self as mental. His highest aim for himself, and his injunction to others, was to make one's mental life a work of art. "Our democracy," he asserted, "might be a work of art, a joyous whole, rich in form and color, free but chastened, tumultuously harmonious, unfolding strange beauty year by year."⁴ The general connection between Cooley's early experiences and his later emphasis upon the mind in his writings has been stated by Angell:

The thoughtfulness of Cooley's youth is the key to his later theory. His mind was the most important thing

³ Charles Horton Cooley, Sociological Theory and Social Research (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930), p. vii.

⁴ Charles Horton Cooley, Social Process (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 124.

in the world to him, and it was only natural that it should be the beginning point of his analysis of society. One could say that the focus of his whole scheme of life was the dignity of the mind.⁵

Perhaps it can best be stated in retrospect, that even if this over emphasis on the mind was somewhat unpleasant to the neo-positivist or extreme behaviorist, it nevertheless allowed Cooley to investigate that portion of society which was most congenial to his nature and talents.

Another factor in Cooley's early life which seems to have had some effect on his later thought was his incessant tendency to avoid conflict. Perhaps because of his lack of strength and aggressiveness, he almost always shunned controversy. He seemed to have been very sensitive to criticism and, in his writings, always looked for the new synthesis that emerges from struggle. In fact, one of the most frequent criticisms of Cooley's thought is that he did not sufficiently emphasize the conflict aspect of life.⁶

Cooley's speech handicap also seems to have affected his later development. He stated:

During a great part of my youth my voice and articulation were so feeble that I could hardly make myself

⁵Cooley, Social Organization and Human Nature and the Social Order, rev. ed., 1956, p. ix.

⁶For examples of this type of criticism see: Emory S. Bogardus, A History of Social Thought (Los Angeles: Jesse Ray Miller Press, 1925, p. 496; and Nicholas S. Timasheff, Sociological Theory, Its Nature and Growth (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), p. 243.

heard in conversation without special effort. I endured a torpidity of mind and body that must have seemed weakness and intolerance. . . . For these reasons I was, for a bright boy, remarkably deficient in command of language. I could frame sentences, either spoken or written, only with a great effort. Later I made tremendous efforts to overcome this. At one time I used to write all my letters at least twice.⁷

The compensatory efforts of Cooley in this area were well rewarded. His writings, although few in number, have been universally applauded for their clarity and lucidness of literary style.

One last factor pertaining to Cooley's early years, which perhaps deserves mention, was his industriousness and ability to organize his life. Cooley reported that he had great ambitions as a child. Most of these ambitions were quite unobtainable as far as his abilities were concerned. Although his illness made his voice weak, he thought he could be either a great singer or public speaker. He stated in his journals, "For a long time I cherished the belief that I could do literally anything that I chose to attempt."⁸ Angell concluded that "perhaps it was the gap between aspiration and reality that drove him to systematic, though rather seclusive, industry."⁹

⁷Cooley, Sociological Theory and Social Research, p. ix.

⁸Cooley, Social Organization and Human Nature and the Social Order rev. ed., 1956, p. viii.

⁹Ibid., p. ix.

This idea is given added weight by another of Cooley's statements in his journals: "All through my early life the discrepancy between my ambitions and my actual state was great and often painful."¹⁰

The four traits which were treated in this section--thoughtfulness, avoidance of conflict, clarity of literary style, and industriousness--are, perhaps, exemplary of the major dimensions of Cooley's personality during this period. In the tradition of the "expressionistic" painter who leaves most of the details to be filled in by those who view his work, these four traits are presented as illustrative of the "organic whole" which was Cooley's boyhood life.

As we gaze at Cooley's youth in retrospect, we see many of the traits which were to become cornerstones in his later life. As yet, however, they were, as in all youth, without definite form or direction. It was not until the second era of his life, the age of decision or exploratory period, that we see his mature self, in somewhat of a trial and error manner, begin to take definite shape. In the third period, we view the mature Cooley, the harvest of the fruits of the other periods, whose countenance has, at least to some extent, come to us through his writings.

¹⁰Jandy, op. cit., p. 16.

Early Manhood, Age of Decision (1880-1894)

The transition from "dreamer" to "scholar" was not an easy one for Cooley. When in 1880, at age sixteen, he enrolled at the University of Michigan, he was completely undecided as to what should be his life's work. During this period he seemed to have a constant fear of failure and consequently wrote much about success. Some reflections which appeared in his journals at about this time were:

Success is not attained by following out a theory, but the theory is rather drawn from the observation of success.

A tendency to imitate great men in little things is a mark of a small mind.

.....

A strong imagination, or the ability to realize the different lights in which a subject may be viewed, is an essential attribute of sound judgment.¹¹

Cooley had many ambitions and aspirations during these early college years. One which was recurrent from his younger days was that of orator. He spent much time imitating the great orators, from Demosthenes to Burke and Webster. He actually committed to memory much of "De Corona" for its disciplinary value and practiced even more the training of his weak, disobedient voice.

Cooley's health during this period was also at its worst. He fell victim to malaria at age fifteen, and this

¹¹Jandy, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

disease severely curtailed his activities for several years. In an attempt to escape the symptoms of this disease, he traveled a great deal: Colorado in 1882, Carolinas in 1883, and Europe in 1884.

After his graduation from the University of Michigan in 1887, Cooley returned for an additional year of training in mechanical engineering. The summer of 1888 found him practicing draftsmanship at Bay City, Michigan. Although he felt that this type of experience was profitable, he pleaded in his journals for deliverance "from a lifetime of it."

My ambition flaps its wings and finds no element to fly upon. I cannot distinctly conceive what it is that would satisfy me. It must be a full cup of the highest life--whatever that may be.

How is a man to find where he belongs in life? The more original he is, the less likely is he to find his place prepared for him. He must not expect to see from the beginning what mould his life will take. The power to work on faith is what distinguishes great men.¹²

Later in 1888 Cooley sought the advice of James Burrill Angell, then president of the University of Michigan, concerning the advisability of an academic career. Angell enthusiastically advised him in favor of such a choice; however, Cooley still remained undecided.

At the advice of his father, in 1889, Cooley went to Washington D. C. where he worked for the Interstate Commerce

¹²Ibid., p. 28.

Commission and the Census Bureau for two years. It was here that Cooley's first scientific contribution came into being. He investigated ways of cutting down the number of railway accidents and published, in 1890, his first written work: "The Social Significance of Street Railways."

Also, in 1890, Cooley married Miss Elsie Jones of Ann Arbor, whom he had known since childhood. Robert Angell said of her:

Mrs. Cooley, well read, capable of fine expression both in prose and poetry, was a great service as a sympathetic critic of his writings, both in regard to clarity and form. Furthermore, realizing that his genius needed to be unfettered, she so ordered her life as to free him from worry on her account and kept others from encroaching upon his quiet mode of living.¹³

Social science began to interest Cooley at about this time. In 1868, he reported that he had discovered the works of Spencer and Schaffle. He met Giddings in 1890 who encouraged him to go into sociology. With Ward, Cooley carried on correspondence during these years, particularly over Galton's views of genius. Perhaps because of these influences and others, he finally, in 1892, decided on teaching as a career. That same year he accepted a half-time instructorship at the University of Michigan in the department of political economy. He also began work on a Ph. D. in Economics with minors in sociology and statistics. In 1894,

¹³Cooley, Social Organization and Human Nature and the Social Order, rev. ed., 1956, pp. xii-xlii.

after receiving his degree, Cooley began his academic career in sociology. He taught "principles" during the first semester and "problems" during the second semester.

In this second period of Cooley's life, the age of decision, emphasis has been upon events, for these are the outward manifestations of the wandering organism attempting to unfold itself. Cooley's endeavors were, perhaps, analogous to a child who sees a red ball outside his playpen. He beats, kicks, pushes, and pulls the gate until he discovers the latch which allows him access to his goal. Whereas in the first period we observed the embryonic personality taking form, in this period we see it in a quest of a means of expressing itself. With the teaching of sociology decided upon as this means, this period comes to a close, making way for an analysis of the mature Cooley--the scholar.

Mature Years, the Scholar (1894-1929)

Most of the thirty-five years of Cooley's academic life was spent within the shadow of the University of Michigan campus. Here he lived the simple uncluttered life of the classical scholar. He consciously felt that his own life afforded for him "materials enough for all the science I want," for it was his opinion that "true sociology is only a systematic autobiography."¹⁴

¹⁴Jandy, op. cit., p. 233.

He wrote concerning his life in his journals:

The life that one lives before the world ought to be, as it frequently is, a work of art. It is a man's select and perfected expression achieved by suppressing what is weak and irrelevant and bringing his worthier self to full and consistent working.¹⁵

And again he stated:

To make it total, to make it human, are the prime aims in my treatment of sociology:¹⁶ all must be seen as parts of a living whole--our life.

There are several observations which can be made regarding the relation between Cooley's life and his social thought during this period.

The first has to do with his point of view toward society. If in his childhood Cooley was a dreamer, in his adult life he tended as much as possible to isolate himself from society. A colleague at the University of Michigan, Arthur Evans Wood, stated, "To many he seemed a remote and silent figure; and such he was."¹⁷ Cooley himself declared, "This age is too clever, too strenuous; I would live in some older fashion. (Damn the age: I write for antiquity.)"¹⁸ The net effect of this voluntary isolation upon Cooley's writings was stated by Richard Dewey:

¹⁵Ibid., p. 9. ¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Arthur Evans Wood, "Charles Horton Cooley: An Appreciation," American Journal of Sociology, 35:714, September, 1930.

¹⁸Jandy, op. cit., p. 42.

In reading Cooley's works one can scarcely escape from the conclusion that his generalizations, keen and scholarly as they are, were derived chiefly from books perused thoughtfully in the comfortable setting of the library.¹⁹

Dewey's statement showed some insight for, in fact, Cooley obtained much of his empirical information about society from autobiographies of his students and novels about the contemporary scene. The best of these he selected and read carefully. Although this information was second-hand, he seemed to have felt that it was adequate for his purposes.

We see then that Cooley viewed society reflectively from a rather high level of generality--although his illustrations made parts of his works very personal and intimate. By this reserved and idealistic attitude, he seems to have gained in breadth and sanity of view, escaping from the passionate but unscientific enthusiasm of the advocate of social reform, on the one hand, and from the all too frequent narrowness and technicality of the laboratory psychologist, on the other.²⁰ Angell explained further that "he [Cooley] believed his isolation necessary to his self-expression, which otherwise would flow in sociable rather than

¹⁹Richard Dewey, "Charles Horton Cooley: Pioneer in Psychosociology," Harry Elmer Barnes, An Introduction to the History of Sociology (New York: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 835.

²⁰Ibid., p. 837.

scholarly channels."²¹

Many scholars who have emphasized reflection in their lives at the expense of participation have, as Cooley has, come to the conclusion that society is a unified organic whole. Why is this so? Basically, perhaps, because these persons--be they philosophers, artists, or scientists--view society at long range. To the researcher who deals directly with his data, love and hate responses on a questionnaire, for example, may be considered the direct antithesis of each other. Whereas to the "armchair" scholar, calmly contemplating the mysteries of the world, these are both mutually dependent, closely analogous attitudes toward objects. In the higher levels of generality all conflicts seem to resolve themselves. The view from the mountain top is always more calm and wholistic than from the center of the marketplace.

Another of Cooley's personal attributes was his complete lack of dogmatism. Although he treated society from the social psychological frame of reference, he fully recognized other modes of approach. Wood stated:

One of his finest qualities was his utter lack of combative dogmatism. His thinking processes were open minded, fair and tentative; and, hence, scientific. Whenever he found presumable scientific men behaving otherwise, and acting like sectarians, he took a mild delight in pointing out their shortcomings. Nevertheless

²¹Cooley, Social Organization and the Social Order, rev. ed., 1956, p. viii. Human Nature and the Social Order, rev. ed., 1956, p. viii.

with all his hospitality toward other types of mind, he had profound confidence in his own method and contribution, and stood adamant upon it.²²

A related quality in Cooley was his love of democracy. He was known to be sympathetic with the struggles of the working classes for greater economic freedom and voted for LaFollett in 1924. He liked plain people and praised the rugged honesty of the "hand workers" which he found, too often, to be lacking in other classes. Dewey explained that "his faith in democracy rested upon his conviction that, by and large, the masses possess the ability to discern, respect, and follow the best leaders, though not infallibly so."²³ This invincible faith in democracy was perhaps another example of Cooley's midwestern small town ethno-regionism.

For Cooley, however, democracy was seen in a very broad sense. He saw it as an extension of the ideals developed in the primary group. It was perhaps more of an intellectual disposition than a way of life.

In this adult period of his life, Cooley was the perfect illustration of the traditional scholar; unpretentious, quiet, sincere, with a breadth of vision which could but attract quick admiration from minds seeking enlargement. Like Erasmus who brooded over the disordered social landscape of his day, yet would not become involved in the

²²Wood, op. cit., p. 711.

²³Dewey, op. cit., p. 841.

strife, Cooley withdrew from much of the disturbance of his time. This makes the analysis of the influence of others particularly important since it was from literature that he received most of his stimulation during this later period.

II. INFLUENCE OF OTHERS ON HIS THOUGHT

According to Edward Jandy, who studied Cooley's journals and personal notes over a period of several years, the first master of Cooley's thought was Emerson.²⁴ He seemed to be the natural bridge between Cooley's childhood favorites, such as Macaulay and Swift, and the more reflective and composed authors of Cooley's mature years. Even in his later life, as Mead affirms, "He never completely lost the moral ardor inspired by Emerson during his young manhood."²⁵ In his Life and the Student, Cooley wrote:

Emerson should be read in youth. His boundless hope and his call to self-trust are congenial then. Later, when you have become disillusioned, skeptical and lazy, you may find his exhortations a little tiresome, his thinking inexact, and his optimism not wholly verified. I wore out a set of his books when I was young and even now I carry about a thin book of extracts to which I resort when I need to find a little more glamour in life.²⁶

²⁴Jandy, op. cit., p. 53.

²⁵George Mead, "Cooley's Contribution to American Social Thought," American Journal of Sociology, 35:695, March, 1930.

²⁶Charles Horton Cooley, Life and the Student (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927), p. 66.

In the late 1890's, Jandy reported that Cooley's journals were full of quotations from Goethe, whom Jandy claimed was the second great master of Cooley's thought. Goethe was one who had truly made his life a work of art. From him, Cooley undoubtedly obtained much of his artistic outlook toward life, for he visualized Goethe as the perfect sociologist. Goethe had a certain universality of spirit and sympathy which Cooley admired. Angell pointed out that Cooley also appreciated "the revelation of inner struggle that went on in Goethe, as in all great artists."²⁷ Cooley himself declared that Goethe was the person to whom he turned for guidance in his efforts to understand the world of men during his later life.²⁸

Cooley's admiration for Thoreau, whom he quoted more frequently than any other writer in his books, may have "rested upon a degree of psychic affinity with that interesting figure in American literary and philosophic history."²⁹ Thoreau, like Cooley, was a withdrawn and shy soul who in his later life felt it necessary to isolate himself in order that he might communicate more effectively. Cooley reported

²⁷Cooley, Social Organization and Human Nature and the Social Order, rev. ed., 1958, p. vii.

²⁸Cooley, Sociological Theory and Social Research, p. 5.

²⁹Dewey, op. cit., p. 835.

that he "found no reading more salutary to a weary mind than Thoreau's journal--in fourteen volumes."³⁰ At another point, he respectfully stated, "A book like his *Walden* has something infinite about it."³¹

Closer to the literature of professional sociology, but still outside it, was Darwin. Cooley declared, "From Darwin I got, in the long run, the most satisfactory idea of the general process of nature and the way to study it."³² Angell added:

Cooley's admiration in this case seems to have sprung from the fact that the two men were sufficiently similar for intellectual congeniality but sufficiently different for Darwin to excite respect. Both men saw life steadily and saw it whole, with awe at the wonderful complexity of the world. But Cooley appreciated that Darwin was more willing than he to plod tirelessly through careful empirical investigation before reaching conclusions. He understood that his own more artistic approach was subject to the danger of selective perception.³³

It seems certain that non-sociological writers had more importance in shaping Cooley's thought than did sociologists. In his works, references to Emerson, Thoreau, Goethe, and Darwin far outnumber his citations of sociologists. He stated, "I can hardly say that any writer commonly

³⁰Cooley, Life and the Student, p. 101.

³¹Ibid., p. 105.

³²Cooley, Sociological Theory and Social Research, p. 4.

³³Cooley, Social Organization and Human Nature and the Social Order, rev. ed., 1956, p. ix.

reckoned a sociologist was of the very first importance in my mental growth."³⁴ Nevertheless there are several social scientists whose influences are worth mentioning.

From Spencer he seems to have inherited some of his early notions for his outline of the general scheme of evolutionary knowledge.³⁵ As time passed, however, Cooley became more critical of him for he felt that Spencer was too inclined to let his system ride roughshod over the field of facts. Cooley also felt that society was not primarily a biological organism but a psychological one.

From this point of view, he liked the work of Schaffle who, though relying on the biological analogy, gave it psychological content. Ward and Giddings also seem to have had some influence on Cooley. He was acquainted with, and had read, the writings of both before deciding to make sociology his career.³⁶ In his later life, he read a number of the works of Comte, but there is no indication that Cooley incorporated any of his ideas into his own writings.

The social psychologists James, Dewey, and Baldwin

³⁴Cooley, Sociological Theory and Social Research, p. 4.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Cooley, Social Organization and the Human Nature and the Social Order, rev. ed., 1956, pp. xi-xii.

were probably more important in influencing Cooley's thought than any of the above sociologists, excepting perhaps Schaffle. From them he seems to have obtained a clearer view of the relation of the person to the group. James' social self, Dewey's activism, and Baldwin's dialectic of personal growth each contributed something to Cooley's view that both persons and groups were organic wholes that moved ahead by a tentative process.³⁷

Two other writers, Tocqueville and Bryce, also seemed to have appealed to Cooley. These two analysts of American society were the two most cited authors in his Social Organization. Although they were not formally sociologists, Cooley believed that they possessed the sort of insight that a sociologist needed.³⁸

When we look over the influences listed above we see that there is more than a coincidental likeness among them. Jandy viewed this similarity from the philosophical standpoint:

The philosophical Zeitgeist of Cooley's day was predominantly idealistic. Transcendental idealism of the nineteenth century aimed to see nature as an integrated organic whole, or unity, with man as a phase of it. To this school belonged those thinkers for whom Cooley cared most: Goethe, Emerson, Thoreau. In science he found the organic view implicit in the works of Darwin, Schaffle, and others.³⁹

Whether or not Cooley himself could be considered an

³⁷ Ibid., p. x. ³⁸ Ibid. ³⁹ Jandy, op. cit., p. 46.

idealist is a moot question: On the one hand, Jandy used idealism as a basis for explaining much of Cooley's thought, while Waller,⁴⁰ Angell,⁴¹ and Sellers⁴² believed that Cooley in no sense of the word could be considered an idealist. This problem is perhaps not of central importance here; however, it seems probable that Cooley, being somewhat of an eclectic thinker, and a scientist instead of a philosopher, perhaps, sank his roots in a number of places.

When we view Cooley's life and environment from a distance, we see a certain convergence of trends and harmony of elements which is more complete than with most persons. Perhaps this is because he truly made his life a work of art, casting aside irrelevant and contrary traits. In the background there is always present the small town midwestern setting. Of this Cooley never completely transcended. A little closer to the foreground stands the framework of idealism which in the form of the literary masters gave Cooley motivation and a general orientation. A part of the covering of this framework was provided by the sociological

⁴⁰Ibid., p. vi.

⁴¹Cooley, Social Organization and Human Nature and the Social Order, rev. ed., 1956, p. iv.

⁴²Roy Wood Sellers, Review of "Charles Horton Cooley, His Life and Social Theory," American Journal of Sociology, 49:82, July, 1943.

systems of Spencer and Schaffle; the social psychology of James, Dewey, and Baldwin; and the observations of Bryce and Tocqueville. In the foreground is the man, Cooley, reflecting all of the background factors, and yet transforming them with his reflective temperament and distinguished literary style. It is with this view in mind that we proceed to the next chapter which deals with the relation of the concept of the primary group to Cooley's system of social thought.

CHAPTER III

RELATION OF THE CONCEPT OF THE PRIMARY GROUP TO COOLEY'S SYSTEM OF THOUGHT

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the concept of the primary group as it relates to the general structure of Cooley's social thought. Thus, the first section will be devoted to an overall outline of the major dimensions of Cooley's thought and the second to an analysis of the concept of the primary group and its relation to this system of thought.

I. COOLEY'S SYSTEM OF SOCIAL THOUGHT

The task to which Cooley dedicated himself in his writings, in the words of Jandy, was finding out the interactive process by which "society makes the man, and man makes society." To comprehend this thoroughly would lead him, he thought, to an understanding of the nature of social reality itself.¹ Sociology was considered by him to be a means of interpreting life situations. At one point he defined sociology as "the science of man in the group," and further stated that the facts of social science were the

¹Edward Jandy, Charles Horton Cooley, His Life and His Social Theory (New York: Dryden Press, 1942), p. 96.

"attitudes, beliefs, and habits as socially determined by the group" and "represented by folkways, institutions and by the primary and secondary forms of human association."²

On another occasion, Cooley delineated the subject matter of sociology as either "personal intercourse considered in its primary aspects--the development of human nature--or in its secondary aspects such as groups, institutions, and processes." To this statement, as if to emphasize further that sociology should only serve social life, he added the following sentence: "Sociology, I suppose, is the science of these things."³ Cooley felt that the relation of society and sociology was spontaneous. To be able systematically to understand the former, automatically put yourself in the category of the latter. As his role in sociology, Cooley selected that of systematizer and interpreter rather than fact-gatherer. He was primarily interested not so much in discovering new truths as in interpreting the old.⁴

Basic Assumptions.

Cooley, accepting the evolutionary view of his time,

² Arthur Evans Wood, "Charles Horton Cooley: An Appreciation," American Journal of Sociology, 35:709, September, 1930.

³ Robert Gutman, "Cooley: A Perspective," American Sociological Review, 23:251-52, June, 1958.

⁴ Jandy, op. cit., p. 232.

considered life as an organic growth adapting itself to meet changing conditions. He insisted that "our life is all one human whole" and must be studied as such.⁵ In an eternal on-going process, human life was unified by many currents of interaction which were at the same time differentiated into two subprocesses, the social and the biological. Social life was transmitted through language, interaction, and education while biological life flowed through the germ plasm. Social forms interacted and grew according to the "tentative process," a process of "experiment which is not necessarily conscious."⁶ Within this forward moving process there seemed to be "a vital impulse of unknown origin" working ahead in all directions adapting itself to all the other phases in the movement.⁷ Cooley studied society from the mental rather than the material side although he recognized that the material side existed. He felt, however, more competent in dealing with the mental, and also regarded it as being more important.

⁵Charles Horton Cooley, Social Organization (revised edition; Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1956), p. 12.

⁶Charles Horton Cooley, Social Process (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 8.

⁷Samuel M. Levin, "Charles Horton Cooley and the Concept of Creativeness," Journal of Social Philosophy, 18:2.6, April, 1930.

The central conception of any real sociology was the idea of a "continuing social life, having an organization and history of its own, in which sentiments are developed, and from which they are derived by the individual."⁸ Distinctly social facts were mental and inward. Cooley's two most basic assumptions were: life as an organic process, and life as adaptation, survival, and evolution.⁹ He used the term "organic" not in the biological sense of Spencer, but rather to imply the functional unity of the individual and society in the social process and its historical continuity embracing the past, present, and future. Facts were to be studied in their complex relationship or in the social situation, for the "organism" was a living whole made up of differentiated members, each with special functions. Thus he rejected geographic, economic, cultural, and biological determinisms as "particularisms." Jandy classified Cooley philosophically as an idealist and scientifically as a social functionalist.¹⁰

⁸ Charles Horton Cooley, "Reflections Upon the Sociology of Herbert Spencer," Sociological Theory and Social Research (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930), p. 272.

⁹ Cooley, "Case Study of Small Institutions as a Method of Research," Sociological Theory and Social Research, p. 313.

¹⁰ Jandy, op. cit., p. 102.

Society.

[Cooley preferred to consider society as an "organism" rather than an "organization" because "the latter is usually understood to imply conscious purpose" and neglected the unconscious elements.¹¹] Society was to be considered as including all of human life, and as organic in the sense that all its parts were interdependent and affected each other through mutual interaction.

We are all one life, and its various phases--Asia, Europe, and America; democracy, militarism, and socialism; state, church, and commerce; cities, villages, and families; and so on to the particular persons, Tom, Dick, and Harry. . . . The total life being unified by interaction, each phase of it must be and is in some degree, an expression of the whole system.¹²

This whole might also be viewed as a complex of systems of interactions, "more or less distinct, more or less enduring, more or less conscious and intelligent." Examples of these were: "nations, institutions, doctrines, parties, and persons."¹³ Exchanging glances with a person on the street would set up a process of interaction which might become more or less permanent in thought. Because of this overlapping and interpenetration, each part of the whole belonged to more than one organic system. For "one's own personality is one organic system; the persons he knows

¹¹Cooley, Social Process, p. 26. ¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 28.

are others." From one point of view, "human life is made up of such personal systems," which "interpenetrate one another," for "each personality includes ideas and feelings reflected from others."¹⁴ From another point of view, this complex could be broken up into groups rather than persons-- into families, communities, parties, races, and states. Each of these had its own history and growth and overlapped the others. Looking at it from a third viewpoint, the whole could be considered "a complex of thought or thought-systems, whose locus, certainly, is the human mind, but which have a life and growth of their own."¹⁵ Each of these were equally real, and all were aspects of the common whole which Cooley referred to as society.

Summarizing the idea of society as an organism, Cooley stated that:

. . . it is a complex of forms or processes each of which is living and growing by interaction with the others. . . . It is a vast tissue of reciprocal activity differentiated into innumerable systems. . . . and all interwoven to such a degree that you see different systems according to the point of view you take.¹⁶

Cooley frequently reiterated the unity and differentiation of human life and society. In Social Process, he treated society as a complex of reciprocally interacting systems. In Human Nature and the Social Order, society was

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁶ Ibid.

considered as a "phase of life" rather than "a thing by itself," i.e., it was "life regarded from the point of view of personal intercourse."¹⁷ Cooley classified human intercourse in its primary aspects as human nature, and in its secondary aspects as groups, institutions, or processes. In this sense society was defined as "simply the collective aspect of personal thought."¹⁸

Society was considered an external structure and process of a living reality whose interrelationships made possible the social mind in the individual. Cooley's insistence that the facts of sociology were in the mind has been important for social psychology.¹⁹ Perhaps his most fundamental propositions were: "Mind is social; society is mental."²⁰ Each man's imagination was "a special phase of society" because it was a "mass of personal impressions worked up into a living growing whole." Mind or imagination as a whole was "human thought considered in the largest way as having growth and organization extending throughout the

¹⁷ Charles Horton Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order (revised edition; Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1956), p. 135.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 134.

¹⁹ George Head, "Cooley's Contribution to American Social Thought," American Journal of Sociology, 35:699, March, 1930.

ages, as the locus of society in the widest possible sense."²¹

These were the facts as we know them in experience.

Society, then, in its immediate aspect, is a relation among personal ideas. In order to have society it is evidently necessary that persons should get together somewhere; and they get together only as personal ideas in the mind. . . . What other possible locus can be assigned for the real contact except as impressions or ideas formed in this common locus? Society exists in my mind as the contact and reciprocal influence of certain ideas named "I" Thomas, Henry, Susan, Bridget, and so in every mind.²²

The Person.

Cooley insisted on the "vital unity of every phase of personal life, from the simplest interchange of a friendly word to the polity of nations." He rejected "the crudely mechanical" idea that "a person, or some trait of personality or of intercourse" was "the element of society," and that society was "an aggregation of these elements," for he contended that this "mechanical conception" was "inapplicable to vital phenomenon." Instead he maintained that "living wholes have aspects but not elements."²³ From the aspect of personal intercourse, since society was "a relation among personal ideas," the real person was the personal idea.

. . . My association with you evidently consists in the relation between my idea of you and the rest of my

²¹Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order, rev. ed., p. 136.

²²Ibid., p. 119.

²³Ibid., p. 166.

mind. If there is something in you wholly beyond this and makes no impression upon me, it has no social reality in this relation.²⁴

For Cooley, then, "the imagination which people have on one another are the solid facts of society."²⁵ He further maintained that since the genesis of personal ideas was experience, personality was the key in the study of the individual and society.

The Social Self.

Cooley, in his discussion of the social self, dismissed any metaphysical problems by observing that its mystery was "simply a phase of the general mystery of life." To him the empirical self was simply "that which is designated in common speech by the pronouns of the first person singular, 'I', 'me', 'my', 'mine' and 'myself'."²⁶

Carrying over his views of the nature of reality as a system of personal ideas, Cooley found the self and other organically interlaced in the same field of the individual's experience. Self and other did not "exist as mutually exclusive social facts," and phraseology which implied that they did, like the antithesis ~~to~~ egotism versus altruism, "was open to the objection of vagueness, if not falsity."²⁷

Cooley went further than his contemporaries, such as

²⁴ Ibid., p. 119.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 122.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 143.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 126.

James or Baldwin, by clarifying the mechanism by which the self developed. He called this phase of the self, "the looking-glass self" which he described in a couplet: "Each to each a looking-glass/ Reflects the other that doth pass."²⁸

As we see our face, figure, and dress in the glass, and are interested in them because they are ours, and pleased or otherwise with them according as they do or do not answer to what we should like them to be, so in imagination we perceive in another's mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are variously affected by it.²⁹

There were, according to Cooley, three distinct psychic elements of the looking-glass self: (1) the imagination of one's appearance to another person, (2) the imagined estimation of that appearance by the other person, and (3) a self feeling, such as pride or mortification, that was felt by the first person. "We are ashamed to seem evasive in the presence of a brave one, gross in the eyes of a refined one, and so on." In the reflected self, then, this matter of what we imagine the judgement of the other to be was what "makes all the difference with our feelings."³⁰

With children, the development of the role of the looking-glass self could be traced without difficulty. A child began very early to study the movements of others around it. He learned to have a measure of control over

²⁸ Ibid., p. 145. ²⁹ Ibid., p. 184.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 152-53.

them in the same way as he could control a rattle. Even before the sixth month, there were deliberate attempts to attract attention. He soon learned "to be different things to different people, showing that he begins to apprehend personality and to foresee its operation." For this reason, he became selective in his interest and his need for admiration and prestige. By the second year, the "child already cares much for the reflection of himself upon one personality and little for that upon another."³¹

In all this development, Cooley thought it useless to look for any regular stages. The whole process was one of imperceptible gradations. To be sure, there appeared to be periods in the life of youth when self-feeling was extremely strong, notably in adolescence. But in all sensitive, ambitious, strenuous natures, self-feeling "over how we appear to others and what we think of that appearance is likely to remain a powerful influence."³² Whatever the differences, Cooley believed that "directly or indirectly the imagination of how we appear to others is a controlling force in all normal minds."³³

³¹ Ibid., pp. 129-32.

³² Cooley believed that girls were more impressionable and more aware of their self image than boys.

³³ Ibid., p. 134.

Social Organization

Cooley maintained that "society" and "individuals" were not separable phenomena but were the "collective and distributive aspects of the same thing," such as the army and the soldiers or the class and the students.³⁴ The difference between the two was not in the objects themselves but rather in the point of view or the approach in looking at the two. Society, or group, was just a collective view of persons as ideas. Man has no existence apart from society or the group since he is bound to it by hereditary and social factors.³⁵

In discussing the problem of whether society was anything more than the sum of the individuals, Cooley maintained: "In a sense, yes." There was an organization in any social whole that you could not see in the individuals separately.³⁶ He did not use the term "group mind" but did not object to its use in denoting this aspect of the individual-group relationship.³⁷

Cooley found that the "mechanism through which human relations exist and develop is communication."³⁸ Communication also served as the foundation for the organization

³⁴Ibid., p. 37.

³⁵Ibid., p. 38.

³⁶Ibid., p. 40.

³⁷Jood, op. cit., p. 709.

³⁸Cooley, Social Organization, rev. ed., 1956, p. 61.

of society. Thus this concept furnished a substantial basis for understanding the psycho-sociological phenomena which was ordinarily called suggestion or imitation.

Cooley defined communication as:

. . . all the symbols of the mind, together with the means of conveying them through space and preserving them in time. It includes the expression of the attitude and gesture, the tones of the voice, words, writings, printing, railways, telegraphs, telephones, and whatever else may be the latest achievement in the conquest of space and time. All these taken together, in the intricacy of their actual combination, make up an organic whole corresponding to the organic whole of human thought; and everything in the way of mental growth has an external existence therein.³⁹

In the total movement of organic life, there were two processes or two branches of the same process--the biological working through the germ-plasm, and the social working through language as the medium of psychical communication. This was in contrast to evolution on the plant and animal level where adaptation to environment was primarily hereditary and fixed. The "distinctive thing in human evolution . . . is the development of a process which is not fixed but plastic," adapting itself, "directly to each particular situation," and "capable of a variety of modes of action."⁴⁰

The means of communication developed remarkably in the nineteenth century, chiefly in the following ways:

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Cooley, Social Process, pp. 197-99.

1. In expressiveness, that is, in the range of ideas and feelings they are competent to carry.
2. In the permanence of recording.
3. In the swiftness of communication.
4. In the diffusion to all classes of people.

With these improvements in the communication media, Cooley felt that society could be organized on the basis of "intelligence and of rationalized and systematized feelings" rather than on "authority, autocracy, and caste."⁴¹

A free intercourse of ideas, that is "freed and unimpeded communication," would not produce uniformity. Self-feeling merely would find enlarged opportunities for expression. An increased degree of communication thus would furnish the basis for making the individual conscious of the unique part he could and should play in improving the quality of the social whole. On the other hand, freedom of communication has tended to produce "the disease of the century," namely, the disease of "excess, of overwork, of prolonged worry, of a competitive race for which men are not fully equipped."⁴²

Public opinion, according to Cooley, was not merely an aggregate of opinions of individuals but "a co-operative product of communication and reciprocal influence."⁴³ It

⁴¹ Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order, rev. ed., 1956, p. 80.

⁴² Ibid., p. 103. ⁴³ Ibid., p. 12.

was a crystallization of diverse opinion resulting in a certain stability of thought. If it were produced by rational discussion, public opinion was usually superior to that of the average opinion of the members of the public.

The masses made fundamental contributions to public opinion, not through formulated ideas but through their sentiments. They, in their daily experiences, were close to the salient facts of human nature, and were not troubled with the preoccupation with ideas which would hinder them from immediate fellowship. Neither were they limited by the attention to the hoarding of private property which would prevent the wealthy from keeping in touch with the common things of life.⁴⁴

Social Process

The social process, as Cooley analyzed it, was not a "series of futile repetitions" or brutal and wasteful conflicts, but an "eternal growth" involving the "continued transformation and elimination of details."⁴⁵ While the element of conflict was useful in that it awakened and directed human attention, and thus led to activity, it was limited by a superintending factor of co-operation and organization, to which the contestants must adjust themselves

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 123.

⁴⁵ Cooley, Social Process, p. 34.

if they would succeed.

Social stratification hindered to the extent that it cut off communication. It tended to throw social ascendancy into the hands of a stable, communicating minority. The majority were submerged in the morass of ignorance. Degrading neighborhood associations, vicious parents, despised racial connections--these all served to produce stratification and to hinder progress.⁴⁶

Cooley held that in the social process the institutions bequeathed the standard gifts of the past to the individual and gave stability. At the same time, if rationally controlled, they left energy free for new undertakings. Vigor in the individual commonly led to dissatisfaction on his part with institutions. Disorganization thus arose from the reaction against institutional formalism manifested by energetic persons. It might be regarded as a lack of communication between the individual and the institution.⁴⁷

It was in the rational public will that Cooley saw the salvation of the social process. While he repeatedly expressed a large degree of faith in human nature as it was, he looked forward to a day, rather remote, when communi-

⁴⁶Cooley, Social Organization, rev. ed., 1956, pp. 217-18.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 320.

cation and education would enable all individuals to take a large grasp of the human situation and on the basis of this grasp to express effectual social purposes. Unconscious adaptation would be superseded by the deliberate self-direction of every group along lines of broadening sympathy and widening intellectual reaches.⁴⁸

Final Cause or Purpose

According to Cooley, "the aim of all organization is to express human nature and it does this through a system of symbols, which are the embodiment and the vehicle of the idea."⁴⁹ Human nature, as a social nature, referred to the sentiments, attitudes, and impulses which were characteristic of human beings at all times and all places.⁵⁰ It meant particularly "sympathy and the innumerable sentiments into which sympathy enters, such as love, resentment, ambition, vanity, hero-worship, and the feeling of social right and wrong."⁵¹ Cooley believed that human nature thus defined was a comparatively permanent element in society since all men "seek honor and dread ridicule, defer to public opinion, cherish their goods and their children, and admire courage,

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 419-20. ⁴⁹ Ibid., 342-43.

⁵⁰ Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order, rev. ed., 1956, p. 32.

⁵¹ Cooley, Social Organization, rev. ed., 1956, p. 28.

generosity and success.⁵²

Human nature was not something existing separately in each individual, but was a "group-nature or primary phase of society, a relatively simple and general condition of the social mind."⁵³ This observation paved the way for Cooley's analysis of the primary group which he considered to be the "nursery of human nature."

Considering human nature as the hereditary equipment of a child, Cooley regarded it as consisting of vague tendencies or aptitudes needing actualization through society. Babbling, for instance, was instinctive while speech became defined in society; curiosity came by nature, and knowledge by life; and instinctive sensibility developed into sympathy and love.⁵⁴ He concluded from this that the improvement of society did not involve any essential change in human nature but rather "a larger and higher application of its familiar impulses."⁵⁵

II. THE PLACE OF THE CONCEPT OF THE PRIMARY GROUP IN COOLEY'S THOUGHT

Since human characteristics belong to man in

⁵² Ibid. ⁵³ Ibid., pp. 29-30. ⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 30-31.

⁵⁵ Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order, rev. ed., 1956, p. 37.

association, Cooley asked the question, "What kind or degree of association is required to develop them?"⁵⁶ His answer was formulated in his concept of the primary group. These groups were "the carriers of social tradition and social custom," the chief "moulders of personality, and the carriers of the human element in personal life."⁵⁷ In the primary group "everywhere human nature comes into existence. Man does not have it at birth; he cannot acquire it except through fellowship, and it decays in isolation."⁵⁸ If human nature were "comparatively stable and universal," it was because the intimate face-to-face family and other primary groups were everywhere similar.⁵⁹

Cooley described primary groups as associations "characterized by intimate face-to-face association and co-operation."

They are primary in several senses, but chiefly in that they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual. The result of intimate association psychologically is a certain fusion of individualities in a common whole so that one's very self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Cooley, Social Organization, rev. ed., 1956, p. 30.

⁵⁷ Charles A. Ellwood, "Charles Horton Cooley, Sociologist 1864-1929," Sociology and Social Research, 14:6, September-October, 1929.

⁵⁸ Cooley, Social Organization, rev. ed., 1956, p. 31.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 30-31. ⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 23.

He further described this intimate feeling which was generated in these groups as a "sort of sympathy and mutual identification for which 'we' is the natural expression."⁶¹ The three most important primary groups universally were the family, the play-group of children, and the neighborhood group of elders.⁶² These groups were "primary in the sense that they give the individual his earliest and most complete experience of social unity." They were also the source of those ideals upon which human association depended; loyalty, truth, service to one's fellows, kindness, lawfulness, and freedom.⁶³

The point cannot be made too emphatic that we do not arrive at these ideals through abstract philosophy; we absorb them spontaneously in these fact-to-face associations. . . . It is in these groups that the self loses its narrowness, and attains its highest expression. It is a poor sort of individual that does not feel the need to devote himself to the larger purposes of the group.⁶⁴

The sacrifice of self-interest to the interests of a congenial group made a person more human. In so far as one identified himself with the whole, loyalty to the group was loyalty to oneself, or self-realization. These ideals of the primary groups were the basis for the systems of larger idealism--democracy and Christianity.⁶⁵

Perhaps one of the clearest statements of the nature

⁶¹Ibid. ⁶²Ibid., p. 24. ⁶³Ibid., p. 23.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 29-30. ⁶⁵Ibid., p. 51.

of the primary group was made in a private letter by Cooley to Frederick R. Clow in 1919.

I am accustomed to say that the primary group is simply an intimate group, the intimacy covering a considerable period and resulting in an habitual sympathy, the mind of each being filled with a sense of the mind of the others so that the group as a whole is the chief sphere of the social self for each individual in it--of emulation, ambition, resentment, loyalty.⁶⁶

There is some question as to where Cooley received his inspiration for designating some groups as "primary." In his later life he disclosed the fact that the chapters containing this concept, although they appeared early in the book, were "the very last part to be conceived and written, not appearing in the earliest draft at all." Cooley explained that when he had this draft before him there merely appeared to be a "hole in my exposition which I was impelled to fill up."⁶⁷

Edward Shils has pointed out that most of the stream of sociological thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century tended to flow around and past the primary group. He found only four sociological writers during this period who anticipated to any degree this later theory by

⁶⁶ Frederick R. Clow, Principles of Educational Sociology (New York: Macmillan Company, 1923), p. 96. The statement which is quoted above was given to Clow by Cooley upon request for a concise definition of this concept to go into Clow's book. Also see: F. R. Clow, "Cooley's Doctrines of Primary Groups," American Journal of Sociology, 25:329, November, 1919.

⁶⁷ Cooley, Sociological Theory and Social Research, p. 12.

Cooley: these being Tonnies, Simmel, LePlay, and Durkheim.⁶⁸
 Jandy, however, has contended quite correctly that Cooley nowhere in his writings gave any indication of being influenced directly by European sociology. It is rather Jandy's belief that Cooley obtained much of the essence of his idea from Sumner and the label itself from a chapter by that name in the book An Introduction to the Study of Society by Small and Vincent which appeared in 1894.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Edward A. Shils, "The Study of the Primary Group," Daniel Lerner and Harold D. Lasswell (eds.), The Polity Sciences (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1951), pp. 44-45.

⁶⁹ Jandy, op. cit., pp. 180-81; The problem of where Cooley obtained his original ideas regarding the primary group will probably never be answered. It should be noted, however, that Cooley himself seemed to think of this concept as his own creation and felt no need to acknowledge another author. Even in his later writing, quoted above, he saw it only as a hole in his exposition which he was forced to fill in. Besides Sumner's possible influence, there was that of Westermarck and Howard whose works Cooley cited as "the best comparative studies of the family" in the field; Cooley, Social Organization, rev. ed., 1956, p. 37.

As for the label of "primary", it would seem very possible that Cooley acquired it from the Small and Vincent source. The term, however, is not so unusual, and he might have invented it merely because it adequately described the phenomena which he was studying. Indeed, anyone who reads both Small and Vincent's and Cooley's discussion of this subject can scarcely fail to note that, outside of the label and one or two suggestions about the psychological bonds connecting individuals in these groups, there is no further parallel in the two treatments. See: Small and Vincent, An Introduction to the Study of Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1894), Bk. III, Chap. II, especially p. 183.

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Having surveyed the relation of the concept of the primary group to the main body of Cooley's social thought, the next three chapters will be devoted to three different aspects of the influence which this concept has had upon the field of sociology. Evidences of Cooley's influence upon sociological theory will be considered in Chapter IV, upon social research in Chapter V, and upon introductory sociology textbooks in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER IV

THEORETICAL REITERATION AND ELABORATION OF THE CONCEPT OF THE PRIMARY GROUP BY AMERICAN SOCIOLOGISTS

It is commonly recognized today that science walks on two legs--theory and research. Although it is true that these two aspects are ultimately inseparable and that scientific ideas cannot be developed or analyzed fruitfully without reference to fact, still this basic distinction holds true. In this chapter, the attempt will be made to delineate and make explicit the influence which the concept of the primary group has had upon American sociological theory. This will be done in two sections. In the first, those instances in which sociologists have acknowledged Cooley's influence by merely reiterating or repeating his concept of the primary group in their works without attempting to make theoretical improvements upon it or use it in research will be analyzed.¹ The second section will deal with further theoretical criticisms and elaborations which have been made concerning this concept. Cooley's influence upon research

¹In the material that follows, instances in which sociologists merely repeat Cooley's concept without attempting to add anything theoretically or empirically to it will be designated by the term "theoretical reiteration." Thus, this first section is concerned with theoretical reiterations of the concept of the primary group by American sociologists.

will be investigated in the next chapter, and in Chapter VI one specific area of theoretical influence will be considered as attention is centered upon the use of Cooley's concept of the primary group in recent introductory sociology textbooks. Then, in the summary, these basic areas of influence will be brought together and the course and major trends of primary group development between the years of 1909 and the present day will be described. Somewhat analogous to a tree in the world of botany, the endeavor will be made to show how this concept, having germinated in Cooley's Social Organization, slowly took root, grew robust by recognition and reiteration in the writings of his early contemporaries, and then divided, branching into the many theoretical and research trends and tendencies of the present day.

I. THEORETICAL REITERATIONS

Because so much of sociology revolves around the study of the group in one form or another, most sociologists have either had to develop or to borrow some system of group classification. These classifications, usually in the form of dichotomies or trichotomies, portray an interesting array of similarities and differences. Some of the more important have been Tonnies' "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft"; Durkheim's "mechanical" and "organic" solidarity; Sorokin's "familistic," "contractual," and "compulsory" groups; and Sumner's "we" and

"they" groups. In American sociology, however, as Jandy concluded in 1942, "It is not too much to say that Cooley's concept of the primary group is regarded as basic to any classification of groups."² This concept seems to have been particularly meaningful because it marks a logical starting point for the study of the genesis of the early development of human nature and personality and because it enables one to set the intimate personal group over against the impersonal non-primary ones.

In the light of the eminence which this concept has achieved in modern American sociology, it is somewhat surprising to see how slowly it was adopted by social scientists in those initial years following 1909. A survey of the American Journal of Sociology, for instance, shows that the first mention of Cooley's primary group came some ten years after its original publication. Frederick Clow, in a November, 1919, article, reviewed this concept and attempted to demonstrate its importance to the field of sociology. He particularly criticized social scientists for not having made better use of the term.

Here is a neglected chapter in the theory of social organization. Everyone at once admits the importance of such groups as are described above /primary groups/, yet with few exceptions every social theorist has paid no

² Edward C. Jandy, Charles Horton Cooley, His Life and His Social Theory (New York: Dryden Press, 1942), p. 172.

attention to them, doubtlessly taking them for granted; they have been too commonplace to require notice by the learned.³

A thorough perusal of the other literature in the field also revealed very few sociologists who had incorporated this concept into their systems of thought before 1920. Many social scientists such as Howard, Dealey, Hayes, Keller, and Gillette did not cite Cooley in their works at all during this period. Others such as Giddings, Small, Ross, Vincent, Weatherly, and Ogburn mentioned Cooley but seemed to find no use for his primary group concept which they did not cite.⁴

There were some exceptions to the rule, however. Charles Ellwood, who showed many evidences of Cooley's influence throughout his career, cited this concept as early as 1910. After quoting the definitions of the term from Social Organization, he concluded:

Thus Professor Cooley says we get our notions of love, freedom, justice, and the like from such simple and widespread forms of society. . . . He adds that the ideals of both democracy and Christianity have sprung naturally from the primary group.⁵

³Frederick R. Clow, "Cooley's Doctrine of Primary Groups," American Journal of Sociology, 25:326, November, 1919.

⁴These conclusions are based on an inspection of the indexed listings of some thirty-nine works which could be found by these eleven sociologists.

⁵Charles A. Ellwood, Sociology and Modern Social Problems (New York: American Book Company, 1910), pp. 79-80.

Ellwood also referred to Cooley's concept in another work published in 1919. He observed that the "classification of the forms of association into primary and secondary forms" had been suggested by Professor Cooley. These primary groups were "characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation," and included such groups as "the family, the play group of children, and the neighborhood or community group."⁶

William I. Thomas also showed early evidence of being influenced by Cooley's concept of the primary group. In a 1917 article, he attempted to link his "definition of the situation" with this term. He stated regarding the primary group:

We are in the habit of calling "primary groups" those which, through kinsnip, isolation, and voluntary adhesion to certain systems of definitions, secure an emotional unanimity among its members. . . . By virtue of their unanimity the mob and the jury are also momentary primary groups.⁷

Among the other sociologists who showed evidence of Cooley's influence before 1920 were John Gillin and Frank Blackmar. In their early textbook they found that "within

⁶ Charles A. Ellwood, Sociology in its Psychological Aspects (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1919), p. 346.

⁷ William I. Thomas, "The Persistence of Primary-Group Norms in Present-Day Society and their Influence on Our Education System," Herbert Jennings, et. al., Suggestions of Modern Science Concerning Education (New York: Macmillan Company, 1917), p. 171.

the human hordes soon appear small, more closely related groups of people" which "form the primordial socializing forces." These were what "Cooley has called the primary social groups" and were primary "in the sense that they are fundamental in determining the social nature and ideals of the individual." Examples of the primary group were "the family, the play-group of children, and the neighborhood group of adults."⁸

The only other reference to this concept by an American sociologist which could be found during this early period was also in a textbook by Walter Beach. He observed that "another important feature of group life" was the distinction which "Cooley has made between primary and non-primary groups." Primary groups relied upon "simple and direct means of communication," such as oral speech and gesture; while "non-primary groups are held together by the newer developments of communication--the press, telephone, telegraph, and cable."⁹

This general early neglect of Cooley's concept of the primary group--which is a fate not unknown to other

⁸ John Gillin and Frank Blackmar, Outlines of Sociology (New York: Macmillan Company, 1915), p. 56.

⁹ Walter G. Beach, An Introduction of Sociology and Social Problems (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), p. 91.

original intellectual innovations¹⁰ has been commented upon by a number of writers. Richard T. LaPiere, for instance, stated that "Cooley's insistence upon the universality of the primary group" was generally "ignored by his fellow sociologists who continued to draw categorical contrasts between primitive and modern society and between urban and rural forms of life."¹¹ Arnold Rose also felt that it was a "pity that these early speculations of Cooley, so undogmatic and well balanced, did not encourage the empirical research which he hoped for and which they deserved."¹²

In their textbook, Introduction to the Science of Sociology, Park and Burgess in 1921 reviewed the concept of the primary group and introduced the complementary label of "secondary" to describe those groups which Cooley had merely referred to as non-primary.¹³ They seemed to feel

¹⁰ Many writers have commented upon the fact that original ideas are usually slow to be accepted by society. Kepler the astronomer, for instance, stated concerning his classic on planetary motions, "It may wait a century for a reader, as God has waited 6,000 for an observer."

¹¹ Richard T. LaPiere, A Theory of Social Control (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1954), p. 12.

¹² Arnold M. Rose, Sociology (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 105.

¹³ Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921), pp. 284-87. Although Park and Burgess are usually given credit for first using this term (See Jandy, op. cit., p. 126; and Paris, "The Primary Group: Essence and Accident," American Journal of Sociology, 38:41, July, 1932.),

that this essential distinction had already been made by Cooley, however, for they stated:

Charles H. Cooley, who was the first to make the important distinction between primary and secondary groups, has pointed out that the intimate, face-to-face associations of primary groups, i.e., the family, neighborhood and the village community, are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual.¹⁴

During the twenties, after the primary-secondary distinction by Park and Burgess, evidences of the use of this concept were easier to find. Burgess, for instance, again in 1925 observed that:

The newborn . . . acquires a personality. A quarter-century ago this acquisition was shown by Cooley to happen in the first groups, the primary groups, into which he is received. He becomes a person when, and because, others are emotional toward him.¹⁵

Allwood, too, used the concept of the primary group during the twenties. In his book The Psychology of Human Society published in 1926, he explained that "Professor Cooley has made it plain that the work of the sociologist and social psychologist must start with the face-to-face or 'primary groups.'" Secondary groups, on the other hand, "must be understood through the study of face-to-face

Allwood had already spoken of "secondary forms" of groups in 1919, quoted above.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 56. [italics not in original]

¹⁵Ernest W. Burgess, The Urban Community (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923), p. 34.

groups."¹⁶ After quoting Cooley's definition of the primary group in a 1929 article he again emphasized the fact that "Professor Cooley's works make it plain that the sociologist must start with face-to-face, or 'primary' groups."¹⁷

The concept of the primary group was also cited by L. L. Bernard in 1926. He declared that "Professor Cooley has shown very clearly how primary group contacts produce primary ideals or attitudes." This concept was "a very useful one in social psychology" and could be defined as "face-to-face organizations of individual responses on the basis of very elementary or primitive impulses or sets of impulses, native or acquired, in human nature."¹⁸

Ulyses G. Weatherly also asserted that "nearly all close associations are in those bodies for which Professor Cooley has, in an illuminating discussion, proposed the name 'primary groups.'" In such groups the contacts are "characterized by intimate, face-to-face association and for them the 'we' sense is the natural one." "To the early

¹⁶ Charles A. Ellwood, The Psychology of Human Society (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1926), p. vi.

¹⁷ Charles A. Ellwood, "Recent Developments in Sociology," Edward C. Hayes (ed.), Recent Developments in the Social Sciences (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1929), p. 21.

¹⁸ L. L. Bernard, An Introduction to Social Psychology (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1926), p. 42.

simple groups," observed Weatherly, "this description is particularly applicable."¹⁹

In one of his early books, Source Book for Social Psychology, Kimball Young also made use of Cooley's remarks concerning the primary group. By way of introduction to Cooley's statements, he concluded that very important "for sociological purposes is the distinction between primary and secondary groups." Primary groups were especially important for the understanding of social behavior "since the original form of association was an association of personal preference."²⁰

Floyd House, in his review of sociological theory published in 1929, showed the extent which this concept was being used by sociologists of his day.

Research supports the thesis, also, that some of the most potent of the influences forming personality and human nature are exercised in those groups in which the relationships of person to person are most intimate, direct and "personal." Conspicuous among such groups are the family, the neighborhood, and the play group. These are in fact the first groups in which the individual gets social experience, as well as the ones in which very fundamental processes of personal development take place; hence Professor Cooley has called them the "primary groups," a term which has become a standard element of

¹⁹ Ulysses G. Weatherly, Social Progress (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1926), p. 65.

²⁰ Kimball Young, Source Book for Social Psychology (New York: F. S. Crofts Company, 1927), pp. 62-63.

the American sociological vocabulary.²¹

At another point in his book, House again declared that "the theory of the relationship of human nature and personality to the primary group which is current today among sociologists in the United States was first definitely formulated by Cooley."²² Although he was correct in pointing to the growing acceptance of Cooley's concept during these years, it was not until after his book was published, during the 1930's, that the term really came into general usage in American sociology. A survey of some of the leading social scientists of the period will show the degree to which this was true.

In their comprehensive review of rural sociology published in 1931, Sorokin, Zimmerman, and Galpin found that "rural families who have lived in the locality over a period of years" know each other "in the sense of the primary group developed by Charles Cooley." This primary group was in its essence "a superdevelopment of family ideals in a larger community."²³

²¹ Floyd N. House, The Range of Social Theory (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929), pp. 137-38. *Italics not in the original*

²² ibid., p. 138.

²³ Pitirim A. Sorokin, Carle G. Zimmerman, and Charles J. Galpin, A Systematic Sourcebook in Rural Sociology (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931), II, p. 217.

Emory Bogardus, in his 1932 study of contemporary sociology, observed that the primary group was "a concept given wide currency in sociology by Charles H. Cooley." In it a child spent his early years, and from it he got "his first and often most enduring sets of reactions of life." It was the primary group which gave "each individual his first main configuration of personality in which later experiences are shaped."²⁴

MacIver and Page also made use of the concept of the primary group. In the following discussion they showed their indebtedness to Cooley's earlier statements by the use of a footnote.

The primary group is the nucleus of all social organization. The simplest, the first, the most universal of all forms of association is that in which a small number of persons meet "face-to-face" for companionship, mutual aid, the discussion of some question that concerns them all, or the discovery and execution of some common policy.²⁵

In other instances, MacIver sometimes referred to "face-to-face groups" as a separate category. These were defined as those primary groups which, "in the form of the family, initiate us into the secrets of society," and as

²⁴Emory S. Bogardus, Contemporary Sociology (Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, 1932), p. 136.

²⁵Robert MacIver and Charles Page, Society: An Introductory Analysis (New York: Hinehart and Company, 1934), pp. 218-19.

comrades and playmates give "creative expression to our social impulses."²⁶ In a footnote MacIver clarified the relationship between the face-to-face and primary group.

The expression, face-to-face group, is taken from Cooley. . . . Since we are here dealing with organized groups, we are using the term in a more restricted sense than Cooley did. We do not, for example, include the neighborhood, which belongs to our category of community; we do include the play group which is a simple form of association.²⁷

In his book The Fields and Methods of Sociology, L. L. Bernard noted that "Charles Horton Cooley brought the importance of 'primary groups' to the fore as a vital phase of social psychology," by "showing how a person develops in large part out of the ideals, ideas and reactions of his associates."²⁸

William I. Thomas invited the reader to compare Cooley's earlier description of the primary group with his discussion in the following paragraph.

From the foregoing it appears that the face-to-face group is a powerful habit-forming mechanism. The group has to provide a system of behavior for many persons at once, a code which applies to everyone and lasts longer than any individual or generation. In small and isolated communities there is little tendency to change or progress

²⁶ Robert MacIver, Society, Its Structure and Changes (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), p. 172.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ L. L. Bernard, The Fields and Methods of Sociology (New York: Farrar and Rinehart Inc., 1934), p. 121.

because the new experience of the individual is sacrificed for the sake of the security of the group.²⁹

Before quoting Cooley's definition of this concept, Kimball Young noted in a 1935 publication that "it was C. H. Cooley who first gave us a clear picture of the importance of the primary group in society and in the formation of personality." Young also observed that "his [Cooley's] statement concerning the nature of the primary group has become classic in American sociology."³⁰

During the thirties, Paul Landis also gave evidence of being influenced by the primary group concept. He stated that "we call the intimate, face-to-face groups in which men associate primary groups," for they come first in human experience "as the child grows up in family, play group and neighborhood." Here sympathy, mutual aid, love, and kindness grow and "without these no infant could survive." Here, also, "the child learns moral and value judgments and the other essential rudiments of human nature which form the basis for social control in every human society."³¹

²⁹ William I. Thomas, The Unadjusted Girl (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1931), pp. 70-71.

³⁰ Kimball Young, Source Book for Sociology (New York: American Book Company, 1935), pp. 3-4.

³¹ Paul H. Landis, Social Control (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1939), p. 62.

E. T. Hiller cited Cooley's definition of the primary group in relation to the following paragraph.

It is in a primary group that the child attains its first awareness of other persons and subsequently acquires self-consciousness. Here the sense of belonging and having a place and a role, which is the essence of personality, is first derived; and here, also, the child learns to talk and acquire its habits of obedience and self-assertion, or their opposites, as well as its moral judgments. It is the family, the play group, the neighborhood, and other close relations, that the standards and traditions of the larger society, as well as those typical of primary groups are impressed most effectively.³²

If during the thirties the concept of the primary group became generally accepted in American sociology, after 1940 it was to become one of the very foundations of the science itself. The following paragraphs will be devoted to a sampling of some of the sociologists who have employed this concept in the last twenty years.³³

Robert Angell observed in a 1941 publication that "Cooley has pointed out that those larger systems of idealism like Christianity and democracy," which are most human and therefore of most enduring value, "have always been based upon experience in primary groups like the family."³⁴

³²H. T. Hiller, Principles of Sociology (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1933), p. 22.

³³It is felt that a more inclusive survey would take some thirty to forty pages and would only serve to further illustrate the fact that Cooley's concept of the primary group has been widely accepted in American sociology.

³⁴Robert Cooley Angell, The Integration of American Society (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1941), p. 147.

In his discussion of social institutions, Harry Elmer Barnes also showed evidence of being influenced by this concept. Before quoting Cooley's definition, he stated:

One of the most important aspects of the analysis of group life and social organization is the recognition of certain basic and elemental associations which we have come to know as "primary groups," a term made immortal by the late Charles H. Cooley.³⁵

Lowell Carr, who had been one of Cooley's graduate students at the University of Michigan, also made use of the concept during this period. He cited Cooley's Social Organization with reference to the following discussion:

Primary groups, small, intimate, face-to-face, lasting, unorganized forms of association such as pair groups, families, spontaneous play groups, and the old fashioned rural neighborhood, have constituted the matrix of human living for most members of the human race during most of their past. It was for this reason that Cooley regarded them as the primary sources of those peculiarly human qualities of insight, kindness, and sense of identification with one's fellows.³⁶

Discussing the family, Burgess and Locke also quoted Cooley's definition of the primary group. In their introduction to this quotation, they observed that Cooley was "one of the first sociologists to stress the relationship between family life and the development of personality," for it was

³⁵ Harry Elmer Barnes, Social Institutions (New York: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1942), p. 13.

³⁶ Lowell J. Carr, Situational Analysis (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 45.

he who had pointed out that "the child naturally and inevitably takes over the ways of behavior of groups like the family, the play group, and the neighborhood."³⁷

In a 1950 publication, Theodore M. Newcomb pointed out that Cooley had written years before that "men are dependent on others for the development of those qualities which we regard as distinctly human." Those people who had the most to do with developing human nature were "members of what Cooley called primary groups, such as the family and the child's play group."³⁸

Kimball Young again observed during this period that it was "Charles H. Cooley who first clearly delineated the nature and importance of the primary group." These groups were "characterized by intimate face-to-face contacts, direct interaction," covered "a wide range of needs and gratifications," and had a common locus.³⁹

In his study of the history of the primary group, Edward Shils acknowledged Cooley as the "author of the term" and the "first to direct attention to the phenomenon." Shils

³⁷ Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, The Family (New York: American Book Company, 1945,) p. 213.

³⁸ Theodore Newcomb, Social Psychology (New York: Dryden Press, 1950), p. 48.

³⁹ Kimball Young, Handbook of Social Psychology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1946), pp. 220-21.

then stated his own definition of the concept which as he acknowledged, had been derived from the earlier statements by Cooley:

By primary group we mean a group characterized by a high degree of solidarity, informality in the code of rules which regulate the behavior of its members, and autonomy in the creation of these rules.⁴⁰

In a later article in the British Journal of Sociology, Shils again declared that it was Charles H. Cooley who had first classified "neighborhoods, families, and play groups of children" as primary. Cooley had felt that the "larger society could take its ethos from the rules of life of the small intensely bound group," and had used the term "primary" because "he believed that their 'primary' nature lay in the fact that in such groups the higher ideals would govern conduct in the larger society they formed."⁴¹

Park used Cooley's concept in his description of the "changes in habits and character of the urban population" since the turn of the century. He concluded that:

The general nature of these changes is indicated by the fact that the growth of cities has been accompanied by the substitution of indirect "secondary," for direct,

⁴⁰ Edward A. Shils, "The Study of the Primary Group," Daniel Lerner and Harold Lasswell, The Policy Sciences, Recent Developments in Scope and Method (Stanford University Press, 1951), p. 44.

⁴¹ Edward A. Shils, "Primordial, Personal, Sacred, and Civil Ties," British Journal of Sociology, 8:130-49, June, 1957.

face-to-face, "primary" relations in the associations of individuals in the community.⁴²

Robert Faris felt that "the concept of the primary group," while perhaps not as important as some of Cooley's contributions, "may be the one for which he will be the longest remembered." In his book about human nature, he then quoted Cooley's definition of the concept and applied it to his own ideas concerning the way personality developed.⁴³ In a later publication he also showed evidence of being influenced by Cooley's primary group concept. He stated:

The groups in which men interact vary according to the degree of intimacy of personal contacts and therefore in the influence exerted by the group on the person. The groups with the greater degrees of intimacy and influence are commonly called primary groups--a concept introduced by Cooley.⁴⁴

In his textbook in social psychology, Emory Bogardus attempted to apply the concept of the primary group to the problems of informal education. He declared that "the importance of the primary group for teaching and learning has been well established." Its significance was found partly in the fact that in these groups "communication functions most

⁴² Robert Ezra Park, Human Communities (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1952), p. 32.

⁴³ Robert E. L. Faris, The Nature of Human Nature (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1942), pp. 36f.

⁴⁴ Robert E. L. Faris, Social Psychology (New York: Ronald Press, 1952), p. 250.

freely and easily." In them, also, there was a "deep community of experience" and the "slightest gesture has a meaning."⁴⁵

Scott Greer, in his book Social Organization, also concluded that the "groups control of individual behavior will be strongest in face-to-face interaction." Greer also quoted Cooley's original definition of the primary group and mentioned the "friendship group, the play group, and the family" as the most widespread examples of this type of association.⁴⁶

This concept was also acknowledged by Karl Mannheim as being "the locus of our earliest experience of social unity and identification." He also stated that "according to Cooley, love, freedom, and justice are primary ideals" which form the ideological basis for "Christianity, democracy and socialism."⁴⁷

Talcott Parsons acknowledged the influence of the primary group upon his concept of the "primary" level of social organization.

Indeed, I would like to suggest that Cooley's famous definition of the primary group as a group involving

⁴⁵ Emory S. Bogardus, Fundamentals of Social Psychology (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1952), pp. 239-40.

⁴⁶ Scott A. Greer, Social Organization (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), p. 35.

⁴⁷ Karl Mannheim, Systematic Sociology (New York: Philosophical Library, 1958), p. 46.

face-to-face interaction also defines the "primary" level of social organization. The crucial part is the involvement of individuals with one another in cooperative activities which involve physical presence, at least part of the time, and direct cooperation in physical manipulation of the environment.⁴⁸

In this section, statements from selected works in which sociologists have made use of Cooley's primary group concept, without attempting to make theoretical improvements upon it or to use it in research, have been quoted in a more or less chronological fashion. The trend of influence is fairly easy to follow. From 1909 until 1921, when Park and Burgess added the complementary label of "secondary group," there was little acceptance of the term in American sociology. After this date, however, the influence of this concept gradually increased until as early as 1929 and 1932 such writers as House and Bogardus were already speaking of the primary group as a "standard element" in American sociology. After 1930, only a sampling of the social scientists who have used this concept in their works was necessary to show its general acceptance and use in the field.

Reiterative restatements of Cooley's concept of the primary group, such as the ones quoted in this section, will remain in the background in the paragraphs which follow. It

⁴⁸Talcott Parsons, "Problems of Sociological Theory and Methodology," Robert Merton Leonard Broom, Leonard Cottreel, Jr., Sociology Today (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1959), p. 10.

should be remembered, however, that the bulk of social scientists, not being specialists in the area of the primary group, have merely incorporated this concept into their writings without attempting to develop it in either of these two ways. Thus some crude measure of the influence which the primary group has had upon American sociology can be gauged from this section. Such writings as these provide the solid matrix from which spring the innovations which occupy so much of the energy of the present day. Unlike the tree analogy, however, the reiterative restatements of Cooley's concept run side-by-side with the branching innovations, for in the science of sociology, new students must constantly be trained. Consequently, one important area of reiterative restatements, those in introductory sociology textbooks, will be returned to in Chapter VI.

II. CRITICISM AND ELABORATION

The concept of the primary group is in essence, like every concept, a system of classification. It is useful to the social scientist in that it allows him to state certain generalizations about a number of groups which have similar effects upon the individual's developing personality. This being true, it is rather natural that much of the theoretical criticism and elaboration should center around the crucial

properties which classify these groups. Because these attempts to improve theoretically this concept have been intermittent and relatively few in number, they will be dealt with in some detail.

The question as to exactly what properties Cooley meant should critically define the concept of the primary group was first raised by two separate writers at about the same time. Edward Shubank, in his investigation of the important concepts in the field of sociology, stated the initial problem in the following manner:

In this connection it should be noted that in various discussions of the primary group it is sometimes difficult to determine whether the writers are making the essence of "primariness" to consist of a qualitative element, such as a high degree of affection or esteem, or quantitatively, of closeness of relation." Thus Cooley . . . seems to introduce an element of each. It is characterized not only by "intimate, face-to-face association," but also by a cooperation involving a sort of sympathy. Again it is identified with distinctly idealistic aspects; for "it will be found that those systems of larger idealism which are most human and of most enduring value (e.g. democracy and Christianity) are based upon the ideals of the primary group."⁴⁹

In 1932, Ellsworth Paris also observed that Cooley's conception of the primary group "raised certain difficulties" for the sociologist.⁵⁰ First, there was the fact that he

⁴⁹ Carlo Edward Shubank, The Concepts of Sociology (New York: D. C. Heath and Company, 1932), p. 148.

⁵⁰ Ellsworth Paris, "The Primary Group: Essence and Accident," American Journal of Sociology, 38:41-50, July, 1932.

nowhere provided any terminology for those groups which were not primary. But even more confusing were the various properties which Cooley felt should distinguish this concept. In a manner similar to Eubank, Paris distinguished these as "the face-to-face relation, the temporal priority in experience, and the feeling of the whole as expressed by 'we.'"⁵¹

To help determine which of these three sets of properties should critically define the concept, Paris felt it necessary to distinguish between its essential and accidental characteristics. An "accident" was defined as those properties which were not absolutely essential to the category involved, such as the properties of square, brown, and oaken were not essential to a table being a table. The "essence" of a concept, on the other hand, consisted of those properties which set it off from all other classes of objects.⁵²

Paris then asked how essential to the definition of the primary group was "the physical property of face-to-face relations." He made note of the fact that there were some face-to-face groups which were not primary.

An American criminal court with judge, jury, defendant, and counsel, are in a face-to-face nearness with none of the essential properties of the primary group as set forth in the quotation and the other passages in which Cooley uses the concept. For the court is externally controlled and governed by rules made by absent and

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 42.

⁵² Ibid.

ancient authorities. The actions are essentially institutional in character.⁵³

In the same manner, a legislative body, even when small like a board of directors, might not be a primary group, or even groups of two, if they happened to be an "unwelcome bond salesman in your office" or a "delinquent student summoned into the office of the dean." Paris thus contended that "it may be assumed that not all face-to-face groups are in essence primary groups."⁵⁴

He was also of the opinion that there were primary groups which did not have the face-to-face properties. Examples of these might be a "kinship group widely scattered in space, communicating only by letter," a woman student "who fell in love with a woman author," or historic friendships among intellectuals such as Emerson and Carlyle.⁵⁵

Paris concluded that "attitudes and feelings are the essence" of the primary group and that "space and position are but accidents." This meant that no certain type of group such as the family or school group was necessarily primary and that one "must look to subjective criteria" instead of depending "wholly on mere observation, externally attempted" in the study of such groups. He also felt that this conclusion was entirely consistent with the earlier

⁵³ Ibid., p. 43.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 42-43.

definition of the concept by Cooley. The latter's statement that primary groups were characterized by "the sort of mutual identification and sympathy for which 'we' is a natural expression" suggested "that he did not mean to make the face-to-face relation the essence and in qua non of the primary group."⁵⁶ Paris further stated:

That Cooley so held [that attitudes and feelings are the essence of the primary group] is clear in his statement that democracy and Christianity are the outgrowth of the primary group and are its ultimate expression and flower. It is clear from his discussion that he did not mean the institutions, for the Church is not Christianity, nor is democracy the same as the state. But, if conceived ideally, Christianity is expressed in love, sympathy, and loyalty by those who consider themselves members of an encompassing whole of which they are part and in which "we" is the golden word.⁵⁷

Pitrim A. Sorokin, in the 1940's, reviewed Cooley's concept of the primary group in his book Society, Culture and Personality. At the outset of his discussion he concluded that Cooley's concept was not "merely a 'face-to-face interacting group' but something much more complex." It was rather a social relationship involving intimacy and sympathetic understanding similar to his own classification of the "familistic" group.⁵⁸

He felt that an alarming trend was that of "mechanically

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 48. ⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Pitrim A. Sorokin, Society, Culture and Personality (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 164.

applying Cooley's distinction between direct 'face-to-face' and indirect interaction" which the latter had indicated for other purposes. He called such classifications "pathological" and felt that this fact was "much less important than the number of Linnæan stamens in a plant."⁵⁹

He cited Kimball Young's classification of primary and secondary groups, which he felt was typical of "most other textbooks in sociology," to prove his point.⁶⁰ In the category of primary, Young placed such groups as the family, neighborhood, village community, congeniality groups, play groups, and crowds. Into the secondary classification he put political, economic, religious, organized recreational groups, criminal gangs, and public. And then "somewhere outside or in between these classes are mentioned race, society, and community." Sorokin concluded concerning Young's classification and by implication all others who in a similar manner used this physical characteristic to differentiate between the two types of groups:

In all their essential properties these groups are as different as they can be, and vice versa, essentially similar groups like "play groups" and "organized

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Young's treatment of this topic was taken from his textbook, An Introduction to Sociology (New York: American Book Company, 1942), pp. 5-17.

recreational groups" are divorced from one another and put into different classes. The whole classification is as artificial as a classification "man has a nose and dog has a nose, therefore they belong to the same class of organisms."⁶¹

After reviewing Cooley's discussion of the primary group, Kingsley Davis, in his book Human Society, noted that "close scrutiny of Cooley's statements concerning this concept seems to reveal some ambiguity."⁶² In a manner similar to that of Paris and Eubank, Davis pointed out that whereas Cooley often used the phrase "face-to-face association", he actually placed "emphasis upon particular qualities of the relationship such as sympathy and mutual identification." This Davis felt had led to some confusion since it was generally agreed "that all groups tend to some degree to possess consensus" and "to engender a 'we' feeling in their members."⁶³

Davis therefore argued that if such qualities as sympathy and mutual identification were used as the basis of the classification, "it does not constitute a means for separating concrete groups into two types called primary and secondary." He used a number of examples similar to those of Paris to show that these subjective qualities were not limited to

⁶¹ Sorokin, Society, Culture and Personality, p. 165.

⁶² Kingsley Davis, Human Society (New York: Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 290.

⁶³ Ibid.

face-to-face groups. There were "friendly and intimate relationships," he thought, which involve indirect contacts such as the "friendships of two distant scholars" or the "love affairs of soldiers and girls initiated through correspondence." The military salute and the act of prostitution, on the other hand, were formal and impersonal acts carried on in a face-to-face situation.⁶⁴

Davis felt that Cooley had not "sufficiently analyzed" this concept to see both its "broader implications and its narrower limitation."

He should have realized that there are not one but three essential conditions which, when present tend to give rise to the primary group. The first of these is close "face-to-face" physical proximity of the group members; the second is smallness of the group; and the third, durability of the bond.⁶⁵

Each of these three conditions--closeness, smallness, and continuation--"were equally essential as well as mutually related." Close physical proximity such as "caressing, kissing, and sexual intercourse; eating and dwelling together; playing, traveling, studying together--all tend to be regarded as external symbols of close solidarity." In a like manner the duration of the relationship was important because "intimacy is largely a matter of the frequency and intensity of association." The longer a group was together, the deeper its ties could become for "deep ties develop slowly." Also

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 291.

the "smallness of the group" was an important factor since it affected the frequency and intensity of interaction among the members.⁶⁶

Davis' conclusions concerning the crucial properties which should define this concept were not so different from those of Paris and Sorokin. He realized that the physical conditions "merely constitute the external setting in which a certain kind of social milieu is extremely likely to arise." It did not follow, however, that "this milieu will inevitably arise under these conditions," or "that it may not arise under other conditions." This meant that:

The essential thing is not so much the physical conditions as the values, the regard for each other, that drew these persons together. . . . It is necessary to keep the temporal and spatial conditions of primary association analytically separate from its social nature.⁶⁷

Some years after this study by Davis, Lowell Carr reviewed the concept of the primary group and the further theoretical elaborations since Cooley.⁶⁸ Like Paris, Sorokin, and Davis, he also felt that "the degree of intimacy in any form of association" was more important than the physical properties associated with it. But in a manner somewhat opposed to Davis, he felt that "instead of

⁶⁶ Ibid. ⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 292.

⁶⁸ Lowell Julliard Carr, Analytical Sociology (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955), pp. 343-44.

emphasizing a dichotomy between primary and non-primary association" modern researchers should focus more "attention on an associational continuum." At one end of this continuum would be "the most complete, spontaneous, and unstructured, i.e., the most primary, type of association." Examples of this would be the close mother-infant relationship in the home or the small pre-school play group in the neighborhood. As opposed to this, on the other end of the continuum would be the least complete, the most unspontaneous and structured groups such as the large business concern or one of the various publics which make up modern society. Most groups, however, would fall inbetween these two extremes and could be spoken of as more or less primary.⁶⁹

One of the most recent attempts to improve the theoretical aspect of the concept of the primary group has been that by Alan Bates and Nicholas Babchuk in 1961.⁷⁰ These two sociologists also expressed concern over the fact that Cooley's concept "from its very inception" had "proven to be a source of confusion." They felt that its shortcomings were particularly apparent "when one attempts to use the concept in research," but that it had not been abandoned by social scientists because it was "rich in connotation"

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 344.

⁷⁰ Alan P. Bates and Nicholas Babchuk, "The Primary Group: A Reappraisal," The Sociological Quarterly, 2:181-91, July, 1961.

and summarized "basic aspects of human experience more adequately than most formulations."⁷¹

In a manner similar to that of Paris, these authors distinguished three sets of properties which Cooley had used to designate the primary group. These were labeled as the "social-psychological," the "sociological," and the "temporal" dimensions of the concept.⁷² The first of these, the social-psychological dimension, was composed of "member orientations toward other members" and the "emotional quality" of such orientations.

Defined thus, the primary group is one in which members are predisposed to enter into a wide range of activities (within the limits imposed by such factors as member interest, sex, age, financial resources, etc.) and their predisposition to do so is associated with a strong predominance of positive affect.⁷³

In their discussion of the sociological dimension,

⁷¹Ibid., p. 190.

⁷²For Bates and Babchuk the "social-psychological dimension" included those properties which Cooley, Paris, Davis, and others had designated by such words as intimacy, sympathy, "we," and psychological properties. Their usage of the "sociological dimension" is identical with what these earlier writers, after Cooley, had spoken of as physical properties. It is felt that with reference to this latter category the earlier usage may have been superior, since the Bates and Babchuk terminology seems to intimate that the sociologist is limited to the study of the physical properties, such as the smallness of the group, frequency of interaction, and so forth.

⁷³Bates and Babchuk, op. cit., p. 187.

Bates and Babchuk found four physical properties which were conducive to a favorable social milieu for primary group development. These were the frequency of interaction, duration of interaction, smallness, and homogeneity. They felt that as you "add to the smallness in size, greater duration and frequency of interaction, and homogeneity of members," it became "increasingly probable that the indispensable social-psychological dimension" would emerge.⁷⁴

The temporal dimension was alluded to by Cooley when he spoke of these groups being primary in "forming the social nature and ideals of the individual." Bates and Babchuk felt that "what Cooley is doing here is describing an important end product of the extension of primary group experience."⁷⁵ This, then, should not be construed as part of the definition since "many primary groups develop among adults who are fully socialized and whose 'social nature and ideals' are already fully formed." Historically the confusion caused by including these temporal properties as part of the definition has led to overemphasizing "the primary group as a socializer of children." Not only is this

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 186. Scott Greer listed four elements--size, time, ecology, and homogeneity--which he felt were conducive to the formation of primary groups. His discussion closely parallels the one quoted above. See, Scott Greer, op. cit., p. 87.

⁷⁵Bates and Babchuk, op. cit., p. 187.

misleading, but the lack of voluntariness, inability of the child to participate in the activities of the adults, and a number of other factors raise interesting questions as to how much of a primary group the average home really is.⁷⁶ whatever the answer to these problems, the authors concluded that "no single kind of group is necessarily primary, and the word 'primary' does not only denote groups that come very early in experience for the individual."⁷⁷

Like Carr, in the above study, Bates and Babchuk saw the relationship of the primary and secondary group as that of a continuum. They stated in this regard:

Primary groups may differ in the extent to which they have the properties of primariness. This has been implicit throughout our discussion. Thus if indexes or scales are constructed to measure the dimensions of the group, it will be found that groups will vary with respect to any of the properties considered either independently or collectively. Consequently, some groups will be more primary than others.⁷⁸

The conclusions of Bates and Babchuk were essentially the same as those of the earlier studies which have been reviewed above. They felt that the "social-psychological dimension is critical and defines the concept" and that "much of the confusion disappears when one sees the sociological components as merely facilitating the critical social-psychological dimension."⁷⁹ Especially for research, these

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 188-89. ⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 191.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 189. ⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 182.

authors concluded, the concept would have "greater vitality" if it were "reserved for a type of group having members with social-psychological attributes."⁸⁰

In this section a number of theoretical criticisms and attempts to further elaborate and improve Cooley's concept of the primary group have been considered. These suggested improvements, all of which have been important to American sociology, can perhaps best be summarized in three essential areas.

(1) There seems to be general agreement among the sociologists cited in this section that the "psychological properties" of the primary group relationship should be its crucial defining factors. This emphasis, though implicit in Cooley's writings, has been more clearly stated since his time, and his preoccupation with the face-to-face and temporal properties has been untangled from the central meaning of the concept.

The changes which have come about in American society since 1909 would seem to make this distinction between physical and psychological properties of considerable importance. Improvements in mass communication and transportation have made the physically separated primary group more than a mere possibility.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 191.

(2) Such social scientists such as Davis, Bates, Babchuk, and Greer have further elaborated upon the physical properties which facilitate the formation of primary groups. Whereas Cooley spoke only of physical proximity, these later writers have added such considerations as size, time, and homogeneity.

(3) The relation of primary to non-primary groups has gone through a process of evolution since Cooley's original statements were published. In the latter's writings, it would seem that he considered the one category of primary groups, which had essential similarities, to be opposed a number of other categories which he merely labeled non-primary.⁸¹

Cooley's model was somewhat changed when the opposing classification of "secondary groups" was added. The writings of Davis emphasize this revision. Here the true dichotomy was set up with each of the opposing categories, primary and secondary groups, conceived as mutually exclusive of each other and collectively exhaustive of all types of groups.

With later writers such as Carr, Bates, and Babchuk, the "association continuum" has become more emphasized. According to these sociologists, groups are to be considered more or less primary according to certain psychological characteristics such as spontaneity and intimacy.

⁸¹Jandy, op. cit., p. 183.

CHAPTER V

RESEARCH AND EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN WHICH AMERICAN SOCIOLOGISTS HAVE EMPLOYED COOLEY'S CONCEPT OF THE PRIMARY GROUP

In the present chapter, the influence which Cooley's concept of the primary group has had upon research in the field of American sociology will be discussed. The problem of doing justice to the wealth of empirical investigations which in the last few years have been stimulated by this concept is particularly acute. The aim here will not be so much to summarize all of the findings of primary group studies as to attempt to locate and categorize the major areas of primary group influence and elucidate some of its more important features by the use of key studies. This will be done in five sections which will deal with the influence of this concept upon early research before 1945, small group research, public opinion research, Group Dynamics, sociometry, and group therapy.

I. PRIMARY GROUP RESEARCH BEFORE 1945

A number of research studies involving small intimate groups had been made in American sociology before 1945, but, almost without exception, these writers did not make direct

use of Cooley's concept of the primary group. Some of the more important of these were Anderson's investigation of the hobo, W. F. Whyte's exploration of the street corner society, I. L. Child's study of the Italian American immigrant neighborhood, and Park and Stonequist's analysis of the marginal man. There were also a number of community studies which, while not dealing specifically with the primary group, did explore the family, play groups, informal gossip groups, and so forth. Some of the best known of these investigations were those by the Lynds, Warner, Davis, Korbaugh, and Withers. Although many of the conclusions from these later studies were consistent with Cooley's earlier formulations, his influence was nowhere mentioned by them. Only two investigations were found which, during these early years, made explicit use of Cooley's concept of the primary group. These will be dealt with in the paragraphs that follow.

Frederic M. Thrasher, in his study of the gang published in 1927, quoted Cooley's definition of the primary group. He then observed that:

While the nature of the gang code varies in different groups, depending upon differences in social environment and previous experiences, it tends to include in every case some expression of the primary group virtues, or moral attitudes which focus about the group rather than the welfare of its individual members.¹

¹Frederic M. Thrasher, The Gang (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), p. 288.

Thrasher concluded, however, that although Cooley had made a valuable contribution to the study of the development of personality "his statement [defining the primary group] was an entirely too idealistic view with reference to the behavior of the average gang."²

Edward Shils, in his review of findings pertaining to the primary group in Stouffer's et. al., The American Soldier,³ felt that "since the time of Charles Cooley, the primary group has been acknowledged in American Social science as one of the most important modes of concerted human action." Shils further emphasized the fact that the largest single collection of research data concerning the phenomena was this group of studies in which "many concrete attitudes and relationships which can be understood as elements of the problems of the primary group," were analyzed. He felt that the strength of these studies lay in their analysis of "the influence of membership in the primary group upon the behavior of the soldier," and of "the factors which promote the formation of primary groups and the acceptance of membership in them."⁴

² Ibid., p. 278.

³ Although Shils' article did not appear until 1951, it is included in this section because it refers to research carried on before 1945, and also because it is difficult to fit this study into any of the more specific modern trends in primary group research which will be dealt with in the following sections.

⁴ Edward A. Shils, "Primary Groups in the American Army," The American Army, Continuities in Social Research

The bulk of Shils' presentation dealt with many of the various conclusions reached during these investigations which supported the early theoretical speculations of Cooley and his followers. He mentioned, for instance, the fact that "primary group solidarity strengthens the soldier's sense of moral obligation and responsibility" and that not "letting the other fellow down" was one of the most important factors keeping soldiers going in battle.⁵

Again, the primary group "served two principal functions in combat motivation:" it "set and emphasized group standards and behavior," and "it supported and sustained the individual in stresses he would otherwise not have been able to withstand." Primary group relations also helped "the individual soldier to bear threatened injuries and even death by increasing his self-esteem and his conception of his own potency."⁶

Shils concluded from these studies of the American soldier that:

. . . the primary group has been put into its proper context and by ingenious use of material . . . they succeeded in adding to our knowledge of how primary groups in conjunction with other factors affect the achievement of collective goals.⁷

This section, dealing with explicit acknowledgements

(Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1950), pp. 16-18.

⁵ Ibid., p. 21. ⁶ Ibid., p. 24. ⁷ Ibid., p. 26.

of Cooley's influence in primary group research conducted before 1945, is quickly concluded. Although it was shown previously that this concept had already had such theoretical recognition and elaboration by this date, it would seem that there had been relatively few attempts to employ it in actual research. In the sections that follow, a number of more specific areas of later research will be dealt with in which there was explicit acknowledgments of Cooley's primary group influence.

II. SMALL GROUP RESEARCH

A recent bibliography of small group research listing 1,407 items revealed, when classified by periods, that from one item per decade at the turn of the century, the rate of production of small group items has increased to three per week at present.⁸ In this study, too, it was found that such investigations were of all shapes and forms, if not of all sizes. Of the literature surveyed there were studies of families, informal work groups, boy scout troops, airplane

⁸ Fred L. Strodbeck and A. Paul Hare, "Bibliography of Small Group research from 1900 through 1953," Sociometry, 17:107-78, April, 1954. In considering the amount of small group research in the United States at the present time, Strodbeck also found that "there are some 1,100 courses concerning the study of groups" in American colleges and universities. See, Fred L. Strodbeck, "The Case for the Study of Small Groups," American Sociological Review, 19:651-52, December, 1954.

crews, submarine crews, college student groups hired for the experiment, therapeutic groups, committees of various sorts, mock and real juries, groups of job applicants, children's play groups, classroom discussion groups, friends, and neighbors.

One of the reasons for the mounting interest in the study of the small group would seem to be a methodological one. These groups can be placed in a specified space and time, the individual members can be readily singled out in terms of identifiable status and role relations and can be studied intensively. Definitions can be operational and the results quantitative. Thus, the investigator is allowed to study a small-scale system of interaction without becoming involved with such non-measurable aspects as the qualities of the internal relations or the psychological bonds which hold the group together.⁹

Cooley's concept of the primary group, along with Simmel's investigations of miniature social systems, has frequently been mentioned as starting points of small group research. Paul Walter Jr. of the University of New Mexico stated, "While usually treated as a somewhat unique field of concentration, the focus of the small group had earlier

⁹ Muzaffer Sherif and M. O. Wilson, Group Relations at the Crossroads (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), pp. 14-15.

beginnings in the work of Cooley and Simmel decades ago."¹⁰

In a similar manner, Cartwright and Zander observed that

"Cooley and Simmel are only the best remembered of the early sociologists who dealt with the small group."¹¹ Henry

Riecken and George Homans also found that "one main line of interest in small groups is exemplified by the work of Georg Simmel" and another "in the writings of C. H. Cooley, whose name is usually linked to the concept of the primary group."¹²

Robert Merton preferred to think of "the rapid mounting interest in the study of the small group" not as "something new" but as a "renaissance" of the studies of former sociologists such as Cooley and Simmel. He stated:

An earlier generation of sociologists--Cooley and Simmel are the best remembered--had been much interested in the small group, within limits dictated by the primitive research methods and scantily developed theory of the time.¹³

¹⁰ Paul Walter Jr., "Military Sociology," Joseph S. Roucek (ed.), Contemporary Sociology (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950), p. 644.

¹¹ Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander, Group Dynamics (Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson, and Company, 1953), p. 249.

¹² Henry W. Riecken and George C. Homans, "Psychological Aspects of the Social Structure," Gardner Linzey (ed.), Handbook of Social Psychology (Cambridge, Mass: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1954), II, p. 786.

¹³ George C. Homans, The Human Group (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950), p. xvii.

In a similar manner, Hare, Borgatta, and Bales in their recent source book on small groups cited Cooley, Durkheim, Simmel, and Mead with regard to the early theoretical beginnings of this type of research.¹⁴

Sidney Verba, in a recent work, found that "one of the earliest sociological works on the small group defines the group" as one "characterized by intimate face-to-face cooperation and association." In this definition, Verba felt that Cooley "points to the key aspect of the small group as it has been analyzed in the many works on the subject" since his time. This was the "aspect of direct, face-to-face contact" which was often merely referred to as interaction by later researchers. Verba also declared that his own definition of the small group had been anticipated by Cooley's earlier statements. He stated his definition as follows:

Thus a small group is one in which the members communicate on a direct face-to-face basis and are aware of each other as individuals even if that awareness is limited to a recognition of the others' presence.¹⁵

¹⁴ Paul Hare, Edgar Borgatta, and Robert Bales, Small Groups (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), pp. 3-26. Also, for an excellent analysis of the influence which Simmel has had upon small group researchers in the United States, see: Walter Ludwig Baumler, "The Influence of Georg Simmel upon American Sociology," (unpublished Master's thesis, Municipal University of Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska, 1960), pp. 103-115.

¹⁵ Sidney Verba, Small Groups and Political Behavior (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 13.

A survey of some thirty-six articles indexed in the American Sociological Review between the years of 1936 and 1960 under the heading of "small group" revealed a fairly good cross section of social scientists interested in this field.¹⁶ Some of the more important of these were Sales, Hare, Borgatta, Strodtbeck, Mills, Homans, Olmsted, Couch, Sherif, and Caplow. The two general conclusions which could be drawn from this study were that most of the research was of relatively recent origin--since all of the articles except one were printed after 1950--and that most investigators seldom acknowledge the influence of social theorists upon their works. Footnoted citations of only eleven social theorists could be found in these thirty-six articles. The names of these theorists and number of times cited are shown in Table 1.

It is hypothesized that two possible explanations of this general lack of explicit reference to social theorists in these studies may be: (1) Lack of space in the journal articles limits the amount of background and theoretical material which can be presented; and (2) The quantitative behaviorist approach of these studies creates little need for the intuitive speculations of the traditional theorist.¹⁷

¹⁶ Only those articles which contained descriptions of actual research projects or reviews of such investigations were included in this survey.

¹⁷ From the above table it can also be observed that

TABLE I

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF SOCIAL THEORISTS IN AMERICAN
SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW ARTICLES

NAMES	TIMES CITED	NAME	TIME CITED
J. L. Moreno	11	H. B. Becker	2
K. Lewin	6	C. H. Cooley	1
G. Simmel	6	F. Znaniecki	1
T. Newcomb	5	M. Weber	1
T. Parsons	4	K. Marx	1
G. H. Mead	3		

Howard Becker, in the one study published in the American Sociological Review in which Cooley's influence was cited, analyzed the structure of the dyadic group. With reference to the destruction of such groups he stated:

In larger associations, the departure of one member does not result in demise of the structure, but in the dyad such a loss not only destroys the pattern but also results in changes, sometimes radical, in the personalities of the two. As Cooley says, "The result of intimate association, psychologically, is a certain fusion of individualities in a common whole, so that one's very self, for many reasons, at least is the common life and purpose of the group." Any disruption of the dyadic pattern means fundamental changes in the selves of the members.¹⁸

citations of modern theorists, in general, outnumber those of traditional social scientists. For Sorokin's account of the general "amnesia" of the writings of early sociologists such as Durkheim, Simmel, and Cooley by modern researchers, see Pitirim A. Sorokin, Fads and Fables in Modern Sociology and Related Sciences (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1956), p. 198.

¹⁸ Howard Becker, "Sociological Analysis of the Dyad," American Sociological Review, 15:15-16, February, 1950.

A general survey of other research in the field also revealed only occasional references to social theorists such as Cooley. George C. Homans, in his classic work The Human Group, referred the reader to Cooley's earlier statements in this area with reference to his definition of the central concept of the human group. He stated on the beginning page of his book:

In this book we shall study the most familiar features of the most familiar thing in the world--the human group. We mean by the group a number of persons who communicate with one another often over a span of time and who are few enough so that each person is able to communicate with all the others, not at secondhand, through other people, but face-to-face. Sociologists call this the primary group. A chance meeting of casual acquaintances does not count as a group for us.¹⁹

In a later study by Homans and Henry Kiecken, these authors in their introductory comments reviewed Cooley's definition of the primary group and acknowledged that "Cooley's

¹⁹ George C. Homans, The Human Group (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1950), p. 133. What Homans seems to have done in this instance is substitute the term "human group" for the traditional term "primary group". Although there are some reasons for wanting to use a neutral concept instead of the more value laden older term, it would seem that the traditional meaning of the group is distorted. The implication that "secondary groups" should be called by another name, leads to confusion. It is for these reasons that writers such as Kimball Young have suggested that Homans' book would have been more aptly called "The Human Primary Group," for "he deals only with this form of human association." See, Kimball Young, Handbook of Social Psychology. (New York: American Book Company, 1942), p. 221.

interest in such small groups was more than a 'formal' curiosity about social structure." They also noted, with reference to their study, that "he believed that the small group is a medium of context for productive changes in its members and changes that endure beyond the existence of the group."²⁰

Michael Olmsted in his book The Small Group reported a study in which he contrasted four-man groups having primary norms with larger newly-formed groups with secondary norms. In his definition of the primary group he quoted Cooley and pointed out that it was by him that "the primary group received its classic formulation." He further stated:

In primary groups members have warm, intimate, and "personal" ties with one another; their solidarity is unselfconscious, a matter of sentiment rather than calculation. Such groups are usually of the small, face-to-face sort, spontaneous in their interpersonal behavior and devoted, though not necessarily explicitly, to mutual or common ends.²¹

Robert Faris, in an article published in 1953, sought to distinguish between the two types of groups which could be small. In the first category were "primary groups" which were "held together by common traits and sentiments." In his further discussion of primary groups Faris quoted Cooley's

²⁰ Henry W. Riecken and George C. Romans, op. cit., p. 787.

²¹ Michael S. Olmsted, The Small Group (New York: Random House, 1959), pp. 91-92.

original definition of this concept. "Institutional groups", which were the second kind of small group as labeled by Faris, were of "an entirely different nature." They consisted of formal, unspontaneous, segmented relations, usually dedicated to the task of getting something done more efficiently.²²

After reviewing a number of empirical studies, Faris concluded that in small group research the distinction between institutional groups and primary groups must be kept with "scrupulous clarity" and that "the small intimate group, long known in sociology, since Cooley, as the primary group," should be the "center of concern in the study" of such groups. He further made the distinction between "sympathetic contacts" and "categoric contacts" which he felt would help to differentiate between these two types of groups more clearly.

In the primary group relationship, the person is treated as unique, and the relationship is based on empathy or "sympathic contacts." Between strangers, however, there is less possibility of knowing the individual characteristics of the other person; and one is forced to make some kind of guess about the kind of person he is. These relations are called "categoric contacts."²³

Faris closed his study by asserting that "in time, of course, a variety of new unsuspected applications of our

²² Robert E. L. Faris, "Development of the Small Group Research Movement," Muzaffer Sherif and M. O. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 159-60.

²³ Ibid., p. 172.

knowledge of primary group principles is certain to come."²⁴

Robert F. Bales, in his theory and method of "Interaction Process Analysis" at the Harvard Laboratory of Social Relations, has also on occasion acknowledged Cooley's influence upon his work. Inspired in part by the pragmatism of John Dewey, Bales conceives of all group activity as being problem-solving activity. Thus, in his analysis of the social structure, he first asked about the fundamental human needs which must be met. In attempting to answer this question, Bales discerned four dimensions or axes of role differentiation which, taken together, "constitute the group's social structure." These dimensions were the differential degree of access to resources, control over persons, status in a stratified scale of importance of prestige, and solidarity or identification with the group as a whole. It is with reference to this last category of group solidarity that Bales in his book Interaction Process Analysis quoted Cooley's concept of the primary group as a means of illustration of those groups which have a "close intimate face-to-face solidarity for which 'we' is the natural expression."²⁵ He continued in the following manner:

²⁴ Ibid., p. 182.

²⁵ Robert F. Bales, Interaction Process Analysis (Cambridge: Addison-Wesley Press, 1950), p. 75-77.

Solidarity in certain of its aspects is a quality of social relationships which tends to arise spontaneously in primary groups. It does not necessarily arise because of the problem-solving process of each but the fact that it exists has an instrumental value for each, and the preserving and maintaining of it has an instrumental as well as an expressive value.²⁶

In this brief survey of the field of small group research, it has been shown that Cooley and Simmel are often acknowledged with reference to early theoretical beginnings. There is a general lack of reference to social theorists in the majority of the studies examined, however, and such references were usually limited to introductory data or the definition of the particular group to be studied. Small group researchers, in general, seem to be somewhat wary of Cooley's concept because of his emphasis on psychological traits which defy quantitative measurement. Olmsted concluded in his review of the small group that "if one wishes to stress the importance of certain sorts of feelings" among the members of the group, the term primary may be desirable. But "if one, on the other hand, wishes to study a small scale system of interaction and seeks to avoid the predetermination of qualities of its internal relations, 'small' is the better term."²⁷

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 79-80.

²⁷ Olmsted, op. cit., p. 23. In this regard, it is perhaps wise to defend Cooley's earlier view by pointing out that merely because these surface physical characteristics

III. PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

Public opinion polling is one of the most familiar applications of social science in contemporary America. Political campaigners, manufacturers, advertising agencies, public service organizations, and a host of other special interest groups are finding themselves more and more dependent upon this type of information. This tremendous public and commercial interest in trying to figure out whether people prefer this soap or that candidate, however, has tended to obscure the scientific and theoretical problems involved.

It has only been in the last few years that public opinion research people have begun to redefine their own focus so that it is no longer simply a question of whether a public act or statement changes people's attitudes or behavior, but, more broadly, how people make up their minds.

lead themselves to empirical research does not make them either important or problematic to sociology as an advancing science. The history of science is strewn with the wreckage of once fashionable but ultimately inadequate categories and conceptual models--from the four elements of Fire, Air, Earth, and Water to Thomas' four primary wishes of human behavior. Enthusiasm and fondness for mathematics do not make a science. What is required is a knowledge of what to look for and an understanding of how the variables selected for observation constitute the framework of a functioning whole. Grim pursuit of a few handy variables on the one hand, and essentially wishful talk about "theory" on the other do not quite measure up to this implacable demand.

Two recent authors, Paul Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz, have described this development as follows: ". . . mass media research has aimed at an understanding of how, and under what conditions, mass media 'campaigns' succeed in influencing opinions and attitudes. . . ." ²⁸ The basic assumption of such research, they continued, has been that of "the omnipotent media, on the one hand, sending forth the message, and the atomized masses, on the other, waiting to receive it--and nothing in-between." ²⁹

These authors proposed that public opinion research concern itself with more factors than the message on the one end and the polled respondent on the other. The public should not be seen simply as a mass of individuals but as a highly complex set of interlocking and overlapping face-to-face groups. With this general underlying assumption in mind, Lazarsfeld and Katz stated the general problem and emphasis of their study.

Our focus is the primary group. . . We are thinking specifically of families, friends, informal work teams, and so forth. Such groups are usually characterized by their small size, relative durability, informality, face-to-face contact and manifold, or more or less unspecialized, purpose. ³⁰

²⁸ Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz, Personal Influences: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communication (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1955), p. 19.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 48.

So important was the study of these groups, in these authors' opinion, that they prefaced their empirical study of the flow of influence in a midwestern community with a 134-page review of small group research. A major portion of this review dealt with what they called the "rediscovery of the primary group" in the various fields of social science. They concluded that,

. . . it is not simply the fact that the primary group exists that was discovered, but the fact that it was relevant to an understanding of . . . mass production [Hawthorn Studies], combat morals [The American Soldier], class, status, and mobility, [Street Corner Society], and communications behavior.³¹

Katz, in another study, also stressed the significance of "interpersonal communication in small, informal groups for understanding the dynamics of opinion." Again, also, he recognized Cooley's influence with regard to his definition of the primary group, and concluded that "personal influence typically takes place within the primary group."³²

One of the most comprehensive reviews of the place of the primary group in mass communication and public opinion research was made by Joseph Ford. He found that "in all the immense literature on mass communication, public opinion, and propaganda," there was "little coverage of communication in

³¹ Ibid., pp. 41-42.

³² Elihu Katz, "The Two-Step Flow Communication: An Up-To-Date Report on an Hypothesis," Public Opinion Quarterly, 21:77, Spring, 1957.

real interacting groups, especially primary groups." Fortunately, however,

. . . neglect has not been universal. The pioneer researchers in communication, especially Cooley, blazed a trail toward the twin understanding of communication and the primary groups where frames of reference and other basic aspects of communication are given their birth.³³

Ford further argued that research in mass communication had "mostly been conducted in a theoretic vacuum" and that the meaningful conclusions had proven, "like the masses and publics, somewhat phantom." He felt that "a return to the key insights of pioneer researchers like Cooley would go far in correcting this situation." The greatest promise in this type of research seemed to be in those studies which were focused on the primary group and have built up to the larger plurals from this base.³⁴

Ford also found that in the field of communications and public opinion research "explicit treatment of primary groups, as such, appears to be increasing after a rather lengthy slack interval since the early work typified particularly by Cooley in the United States." It was Ford's conclusion that:

Thus, the real group, usually primary, is the true nucleus of the communication phenomena. . . . In any

³³ Joseph B. Ford, "The Primary Group in Mass Communication," Sociology and Social Research, 38:152, January-February, 1954.

³⁴ ibid.

event, research in mass communication which has slighted such groups has been handicapped severely and produced few significant results. Research that has taken account of the primary realities in human communication has, on the other hand, shown that the even emphasis of Cooley and other specialists on communication and primary groups offer a most hopeful line of development for the study of mass communication, as well as public opinion research. Future investigations would prove far more fruitful if this primary group is kept clearly in focus and if hypotheses are developed and observations made in the light of it.³⁵

Ivan D. Steiner conducted two studies in which he attempted to measure the influence of "perceived norms" of primary groups upon member opinion on issues which norms were not clearly established. In his review of the literature, he stated:

Cooley contended that the primary group is an important determinant of the attitudes of its members. In recent decades this contention has received extensive documentation. These studies have established the validity of Cooley's contention that primary group pressures do, in fact, exert considerable influence upon the attitudes of group members.³⁶

In these studies, Steiner also concluded that if persons "who perceive their opinions on a controversial issue to be different from those of their friends show more variability than individuals who perceive their opinions to be similar to those of their friends."³⁷

³⁵ ibid., pp. 157-58.

³⁶ Ivan D. Steiner, "Primary Group Influences on Public Opinion," American Sociological Review, 19:260, June, 1954.

³⁷ ibid., p. 267.

Cooley's influence was also cited in the introductory remarks of an article by Harry C. Harmsworth. After reviewing works of Folsom, McClenahan, Bossard, Farrell, Thrasher, and Ferguson, he concluded that there was no doubt "the primary group, as exemplified by the isolated rural neighborhood with which its members were exclusively identified, has broken down under the impact of urbanization." The task of dealing with this disorganization, then, "calls for a vast amount of social research on the primary level." We need to know "more about the social and psychological processes governing the formation and dissemination of attitudes in the primary group."³⁸

The relation of the primary group and public opinion was also studied by E. Jackson Baur in a number of Kansas communities. He began by explaining: "We adhere to Cooley's usage by limiting the term primary group to one characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation."³⁹ He concluded that the data gathered during this study had given "compelling evidence that primary groups are the generators and sustainers of opinions." The conceptual model

³⁸ Harry C. Harmsworth, "Primary Group Relationships in Modern Society," Sociology and Social Research, 31:292-93, March-April, 1947.

³⁹ E. Jackson Baur, "Public Opinion and the Primary Group," American Sociological Review, 25:213, April, 1960.

which Baur arrived at envisaged public opinion as developing through three stages of increasing social complexity: an early stage of mass communication, a middle stage in which voluntary associations became involved, and a final stage in which political institutions were activated. "But at each stage," Baur concluded, "opinions are relayed through primary groups in which the content is sharpened and clarified."⁴⁰

The results of an investigation reported by Henry W. Riecken in 1959 also tended to demonstrate the importance of primary groups in the changing of public opinion during elections. He reviewed Cooley's definition of the primary group concept and quoted from the latter's Social Organization.⁴¹ Throughout the study, he also stressed the "reinforcement function of primary groups in elections." He concluded that there were two circumstances in which even strong convictions during elections might change. Riecken identified these as: ". . . a break in primary group attachments which lowers resistance to assaults on convictions; and changes in the social or economic environment of such a group which affects its welfare . . ."⁴²

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 218-19.

⁴¹Henry W. Riecken, "Primary Groups and Political Party Choice," Eugene Burdick and Arthur J. Brodbeck (eds.), American Voting Behavior (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1959), p. 176.

⁴²Ibid., p. 182.

Emory S. Bogardus, in his survey of the field of public opinion, observed that in an informal way it was "Charles H. Cooley who unfolded the formation of public opinion as a social process." He also noted that "public opinion has its beginning in the small informal group," for it is "natural for people to gather in what Cooley called primary groups and to talk."⁴³ And again he found that "public opinion by democratic means depends upon the nature of the discussion that every citizen engages in daily in his informal groups of friends and acquaintances."⁴⁴

From the studies which have been described in this section, it can be seen that there has been an increasing awareness of the importance of the primary group, as outlined by Cooley, in the field of public opinion research during the last decade. Investigators, who have attempted to form some theoretical conclusions about the reasons why publics make the choices they do, have increasingly been led to hypothesize the importance of the primary groups. With these facts in mind, the next two sections will be dedicated to a discussion of three other research areas--Group Dynamics, sociometry, and group therapy--in which acknowledgments of

⁴³ Emory S. Bogardus, The Making of Public Opinion (New York: Association Press, 1951), p. 125.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

Cooley's primary group concept have been somewhat fewer in number and perhaps, in general, less important.

IV. GROUP DYNAMICS

Group Dynamics is one of the most widespread and influential current approaches to the study of group behavior.⁴⁵ Its founder and guiding spirit was the social psychologist, Kurt Lewin, who emigrated from Nazi Germany and established centers for psychological research at the University of Iowa and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His colleagues, former students, and followers are now to be found in almost all the major centers of small-group research in this country, the most notable perhaps being the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the University of Michigan.

The perspective of Group Dynamics, generally speaking, is that of Gestalt psychology, the emphasis being on wholes or totalities as distinguished from particular stimuli and particular responses. It involves a conception of a field of forces which play upon and influence the various sub-parts or elements within the field.⁴⁶ The symbolic or notational

⁴⁵The term "group dynamics" is often used as roughly synonymous with "the study of small groups." In this investigation, however, the capitalized term refers to a particular conception of group analysis and not to the field as a whole.

⁴⁶indeed, the Lewinian-Group Dynamics approach is sometimes referred to as "Field Theory."

system developed by Lewin for portraying the individual's "life space" is drawn from physics and non-Euclidean geometry, and the thought-model behind it is spatial rather than, say, organic or mechanical.

A close survey of the works of Lewin and the works which could be found of such close followers as Kurt Back, Leon Festinger, Stanley Schachter, Norris Ellerton, Dorothy McBride, Davis Gregory, John Thibaut, Harold Kelley, and Morton Deutsch did not reveal any explicit acknowledgment of Cooley's influence upon their works. There were indications of Cooley's influence among a number of other Group Dynam-icists, however, these were somewhat more difficult to find than in the previously dealt with areas of small group and public opinion research.

Hurbert Bonner, in his recent survey of the field of Group Dynamics, declared that it was "difficult to understand the omission of Cooley's work on the primary group by those who attempt to attribute the origins of Group Dynamics to very recent researchers." Cooley's entire approach to both individual and social behavior, in Bonner's opinion, "was from the point of view of the concept of the primary group." He also believed that social process and social control, two fundamental factors of all group dynamics, "have their being in the intimate and face-to-face interactions which are the

mark of the primary group."⁴⁷ Bonner continued:

The primary group is thus seen by Cooley to have a psychological structure as represented by this feeling of close identification and intimacy. . . . When contemporary Group Dynamicists speak of the influence of the group on the individual's behavior, in which people of disparate personalities are led to the same opinions of behavior, they are but restating Cooley's basic and fruitful ideas.⁴⁸

Bonner also believed that terms such as "group influence, group cohesion, and group decision-making," while predominantly associated with recent Group Dynamics research, were "concepts which abound in different terminology in Cooley's writings."⁴⁹

Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander also acknowledged the importance of Cooley's influence upon the origins of Group Dynamics. At one point in their discussion, they declared:

Cooley, a pioneer in the study of the importance of group membership for the individual, recognized the existence of multiple-group memberships, describing the individual in modern society as a part through which numerous arcs, representing different group memberships, pass.⁵⁰

These two authors also attempted to relate a number

⁴⁷ Hubert Bonner, Group Dynamics (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1959), p. 12.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 13.

⁵⁰ Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander, Group Dynamics (Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson, and Company, 1953), p. 249.

of their empirical findings to the earlier speculations of Cooley, Mead, and others. In one study, for instance, they concluded that the relative magnitude of relationships between attraction and social worth found in the two different contexts "suggests that reference group processes are stronger within the small intimate work group than in the formal organization at large." These findings, they pointed out, were "consistent with Cooley's traditional emphasis upon the significance of the face-to-face group for a person's motivation and behavior." For, as Cooley had stated, it was "in the primary group that the person's interaction is concentrated and most intense."⁵¹

By noting the self-perceptions of participants in three communication situations, the authors also came up with the observation that "group members estimate group opinion more accurately with more interactions." They thus concluded that the Cooley, Mead conception of the self as being a result of intense interactions in such early forms of association as the family and the child's play group had been given added support.⁵²

In a review of progress of the research which had been carried on in the field, Head Bain declared that "Group Dynamics is not as new as some enthusiastic followers of

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 136.

⁵² Ibid., p. 702.

Lewin or Moreno seem to believe." It was, rather, Bain's opinion that "Cooley's three volumes (1902, 1909, and 1918) set forth much of the theory of Group Dynamics," and later, but still antecedent to Lewin's and Moreno's action research, "the emphasis by Cooley and I. J. Henderson on the importance of small social systems" had also been of great importance.⁵³

Herbert A. Thelen in the introduction to his study of the dynamics of working groups referred the reader to Cooley's original discussion regarding the primary group in the paragraph that follows:

The face-to-face group working on a problem is the meeting ground of individual personalities and society. It is in the group that personality is modified and specialized; and it is through the working of groups that society is changed and adapted to its times.⁵⁴

Although Group Dynamics has been more oriented toward psychology than sociology, there are, as we have seen in this section, some discernable evidences of the influence of Cooley's concept of the primary group upon the field. These evidences are somewhat more scattered and piecemeal than in two previous areas, however, and it would seem that the majority of Group Dynamics researchers have found little need to acknowledge, in an explicit way, any influences by Cooley upon their thought.

⁵³ Read Bain, "Action Research and Group Dynamics," Social Forces, 30:2, October, 1951.

⁵⁴ Herbert A. Thelen, Dynamics of Groups at Work (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. v.

V. SOCIOMETRY AND GROUP THERAPY

Cooley's influence upon two other areas of group research, sociometry and group therapy, will be briefly dealt with in this concluding section of the chapter. In neither of these fields has Cooley's influence been of central importance, but they are mentioned here primarily because they have helped to focus a great deal of attention upon the area of the small intimate group within the last decade.

In dealing with affective relations within the group, the technique of study which has probably gained more currency in research than any other is known as sociometry.⁵⁵ Sociometric techniques are useful practically in making up work or play groups, classroom seating arrangements, and the like, so that they will function more effectively. They are useful theoretically in providing insights into group structure as it is perceived by its inhabitants.

⁵⁵ It should be noted that this term like Group Dynamics has both a special and a general meaning. Sociometry in its special sense is associated directly with the psychiatrist J. L. Moreno. Moreno saw affective bonds, and the propensity to form them, as the crucial human and social fact. Probably his two most acknowledged contributions in his rather cosmic theory of man, society, and destiny are his therapeutic technique of "psychodrama" and his "sociometric test." In the more general sense in which sociometry is used here, however, it consists of any device which asks group members how they feel about each other.

As with other areas of group research, Cooley's name is sometimes related to the beginnings of sociometry. Timasheff, for instance, found that sociometrics could be traced back to "Tonnies' penetrating study of the community, to Simmel's analysis of the elementary social processes, and to Cooley's treatment of primary groups." These various elements, he added, "have been interwoven with a strong emphasis on measurement, the latter of neo-positivist inspiration."⁵⁶

Jeri Kehnevajsa traced the early beginnings of sociometry to the works of Le Bon, Durkheim, Tonnies, Simmel, "and, of course, at a later date in the classical treatises of Leopold von Wiese and Charles Horton Cooley."⁵⁷ Michael Olmsted also mentioned Cooley along with Simmel and Tonnies as innovators of this type of research.⁵⁸

Edward Shils, in his study of the relationship of the primary group and sociometric research, pointed out that,

. . . the wide and increasing popularity of the technique itself has helped to focus the attention of

⁵⁶ Nicholas S. Timasheff, Sociological Theory, Its Nature and Growth (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), p. 210.

⁵⁷ Jeri Kehnevajsa, "Sociometry: Decades of Growth," J. L. Moreno, et. al., The Sociometric Reader (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1960), p. 709.

⁵⁸ Michael Olmsted, op. cit., p. 134.

American sociologists on primary groups, since it has given them a means of describing one of the major elements of the primary group, i.e., the spontaneous mutual attraction or solidarity of its members, and has also provided the means of detecting cleavages and gaps in the solidarity.⁵⁹

In another article, however, Shils lamented the fact that Moreno's explanations were so "clouded in vatic language" that they seemed to have "little descriptive or explanatory relevance." What had made the task of adequately exploiting the scientific possibilities of Moreno's clinical ingenuity even more difficult, was the fact that he had failed "to extend his observational and recording techniques to the place where they could cope with the very subtle and complicated phenomena of primary group relations so dramatically described by Cooley."⁶⁰

It was Michael Olmsted's opinion that "the insight of perhaps the broadest significance from the viewpoint of the primary group" was Helen Jennings' "discovery that within the average small group it is possible to distinguish a "psychogroup" and a "sociogroup." In Olmsted's words:

The former is more personal, spontaneous, and effective (that is, it exhibits most clearly these

⁵⁹ Edward A. Shils, "The Study of the Primary Group," Daniel Lerner and Harold D. Lasswell, The Policy Sciences, Recent Developments in Scope and Method (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1951), p. 53.

⁶⁰ Edward A. Shils, Unpublished paper, quoted in Muzaffer Sherif and M. O. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 181-821.

qualities previously ascribed to the primary group), while the latter grouping is more "cool", more formal and impersonal (that is, it possesses "secondary" qualities).⁶¹

Olmsted went on to explain, however, that the psychogroup and sociogroup did not represent factions or cliques but rather two different structures into which the group aligned itself depending on the occasion. Operationally speaking, the psychogroup was defined in terms of the choices made by group members of those with whom they would like to relax; the sociogroup was defined by choices of those with whom they would like to work. Thus Charlie, a good guy, might be the center of the group in its psychogroup manifestation while Fred, the hard worker, would provide the nucleus of leadership in the group's sociogroup character.⁶²

Robert Paris felt that sociodramatic techniques, wherein the therapist involves the group members in role-playing situations, and so encourages them to act out their inner psychological problems, "may be thought of in part as an application of some principles of primary group interaction." He concluded, however, that they "are mixed with other psychological notions in such a way that neither theories nor results are easy to access."⁶³

⁶¹ Olmsted, op. cit., p. 99.

⁶² Ibid., p. 100.

⁶³ Robert Paris, op. cit., p. 131.

Because of their usefulness and their relative simplicity, sociometric techniques are employed today in many studies of group functioning, and very often accompany whatever other techniques particularly interest an investigator. Thus from a rather special beginning, sociometry has evolved into a widely employed tool for small-group study. As of the present time, however, there would seem to be little explicit acknowledgment by sociometrists of the influence of Cooley's concept of the primary group upon their work.

In the field of group therapy, also, there would seem to be little specific acknowledgment of Cooley's concept of the primary group or, indeed, sociological studies concerning the group, in general. As Olsted has stated,

. . . group psychotherapists have tended to think in terms of aggregates of individual cases when considering group therapy and to employ the intellectual constructs derived from therapy with individuals rather than more truly sociological theories about emergent group properties.⁶⁴

One of the exceptions to this rule, which is worth noting, was made by Freud himself in his book Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego published in 1921.⁶⁵ His basic point was that groups were held together by a

⁶⁴Olsted, op. cit., p. 99.

⁶⁵Sigmund Freud, Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego (London: Hogarth Press, 1941).

common identification with a leader. Freud put it this way: "A primary group . . . is a number of individuals who have substituted one and the same object for their ego ideal and have consequently identified with one another in their ego."⁶⁶ To Freud, the solidarity of groups was rather problematic and uncertain for he was much impressed with the anarchic, "narcissistic," and centrifugal character of man in society. Group life, consequently, was a rather odd circumstance which called for explanation. The explanation Freud gave was pretty much in line with the general tendency of his thought: on the one hand there was an unlikely conjecture about the first human groups, back before the dawn of history, and on the other hand there was the dramatic conception of the transformation of psychic impulses.⁶⁷ Though this book was not one of Freud's most important, and at no place was there any mention of Cooley or his works, it does nevertheless show Freud's general understanding of many of the sociological interworkings of the group.

Anthony B. Stone published a paper in 1959 which he hoped would help to "demonstrate that certain sociological concepts related to the primary group, especially as expounded by Cooley," should become more used in

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 80.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 82-127.

psychoanalytically oriented group therapy programs. After reviewing Cooley's statements on the subject, he stated his general thesis that "patients cannot progress far psychotherapeutically in the group setting until the groups they form begin to approximate the relationship solidarity patterns characteristic of the primary group situation."⁶⁸

He went on to declare that "the mere grouping of patients does not in itself establish the mutual trust and support and willingness to risk exposing differing opinions in the group without fear of consequence." These developments, even in the primary group setting, were slow to form and dependent upon the feelings of the participants. Stone thus felt that the "quality and quantity of social interaction recorded for therapy groups ought to reflect developments of primary group relationships paralleling the phase of the growth of the group being observed."⁶⁹

From case records of a number of therapy sessions, Stone concluded that in the first meeting patients usually spoke directly to the doctor or the group as a whole. "The lack of the essence of the spirit of Cooley's primary group concept," he concluded, "is evident in this successful initial phase of the group's formation."

⁶⁸ Anthony B. Stone, "Essence of Primary Group Relationships, as Seen in Group Therapy," Social Work, 4:38, April, 1959.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 40.

By the sixty-fifth meeting, however, there was much improvement in both the quality and the quantity of interaction. He concluded that:

. . . the tentative uncertain atmosphere in which patients seemed chiefly concerned with protecting themselves and finding out what they were supposed to do had been replaced by one of considerable emotional tension with free give and take and attempts not only to express but to examine attitudes and feelings and to assume responsibility for them.⁷⁰

It was Stone's conclusion that "preoccupation with size, phenomenologically documented interaction, purpose, setting, and so forth may tend to lead one farther and farther away from the basic idea behind the primary group concept."⁷¹

Since interaction between the disciplines of sociology and psychotherapy has been slight over the years, one is not too surprised to find that Cooley has had very little influence over this latter field. There are indications, however, that the future may bring more cross-fertilization between the two disciplines. As Shils has stated:

There is . . . gradually emerging from that major current of primary group analysis, a series of insights which are still inchoate and unformulated in any explicit fashion. These are the insights which have arisen from psychoanalytically oriented group psychotherapy.⁷²

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 43. ⁷¹ Ibid., p. 44.

⁷² Shils, "The Primary Group in Current Research," p. 325.

Also by way of summary, Shils in another previously quoted article after reviewing small group research, group dynamics, sociometry and group psychotherapy, found that there was a certain "convergence of various trends in American social research toward the study of the primary group." This convergence was still in its very preliminary stage, but it was "pushing us toward a more exact and elaborate understanding of the nature of the social structure as a whole." Despite the possible danger of overestimation of the significance of primary groups, there could be "no doubt that the renaissance of the study of primary groups in American society is leading to a new and more realistic awareness of the dynamic components of social life which operates in all spheres."⁷³

⁷³Shils, "The Study of the Primary Group," p. 68.

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CHAPTER VI

THE INFLUENCE OF COOLEY'S CONCEPT OF THE PRIMARY GROUP AS
SHOWN IN RECENT INTRODUCTORY SOCIOLOGY TEXTBOOKS

In this chapter, one special ^{of theoretical re-} ~~AREA of theoretical re-~~
~~iteration of Cooley's~~ ^{iteration of Cooley's} ~~iteration of Cooley's~~ ^{concept of the primary group,} ~~that of~~
references which have appeared in recent introductory soci-
ology textbooks, will be considered. ~~Chapter IV, a number~~
~~of early textbooks have already been mentioned for their played a~~
~~vital role in the recognition and initial growth of the con-~~
cept. Emphasis in this chapter, will be upon texts
published after 1940 and, thus, refer to only one special
area of influence of an already widely accepted term.

Richard Dewey, in a 1943 study of twenty standard in-
troductory sociology textbooks, found that:

. . . nearly every textbook in sociology or social
psychology, especially the introductory texts and those
on the family, are indebted for their viewpoint to the
tradition of which Cooley's thought is an integral part.¹

Upon analysis of references to Cooley in these text-
books, Dewey found that "the most frequent acknowledgments
were made to the concepts of the 'primary group' and the
'looking-glass-self'--more to the former than the latter."

¹Richard Dewey, "Charles Horton Cooley: Pioneer in
Psychosociology," Harry Elmer Barnes, An Introduction to the
History of Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,
1948), p. 847.

He concluded, however, that "Cooley's contribution in this respect cannot be accurately measured by the large number of references made to this concept alone" for his name was more readily associated with these concepts because of our liking for "catch-phrases" than with most of his other thought.²

More comprehensive than Dewey's study was an investigation of introductory texts which was published by Howard Odum in his book American Sociology published in 1951. It was Odum's opinion that "in some ways the story of American sociology can be told in the textbooks that have been written by the sociologists from the beginning up to now."³ In his survey, he found that there were just over a hundred textbooks which had been prepared for introductory students. Of these, he chose the fifty which were the most widely used during the last half-century for actual empirical analysis. He concluded concerning these books:

In a number of ways, however, there has been consistency and uniformity in the sociology taught to students in the introductory texts. . . . This is evidenced in the coincidence that the more than 300 sociologists who are indexed in a half hundred texts constitute almost the same catalogue as an index of who's who in contemporary sociology. An example may be found in the work of Charles H. Cooley whose texts were neither best sellers nor were they prepared to please the teacher; nevertheless, they

Ibid., pp. 845-46.

³Howard W. Odum, American Sociology (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1951), p. 248.

remain today standards of reference. So, too, of all the sociologists, Cooley is quoted more often and consistently in the approximately fifty selected texts most widely used in the last half-century. Out of forty-seven texts analyzed, Cooley is indexed and quoted in more than three-fourths. As compared with others, of the more than 300 authors cited, less than forty were cited in as many as half the texts. So, too, of the eight source books or reference books prepared as texts for class use, Cooley again leads in selected readings and is featured in six of the eight, which is true of only two other authors.⁴

Other writers have also noted Cooley's importance in this area of sociological textbooks. Mary Healy, for instance, stated:

Since the more recent textbooks on sociology and social psychology tend to be eclectic, Cooley's philosophical approach will hardly be incorporated in toto yet many of his important contributions such as his concept of the primary group probably will.⁵

Fay Karpf also concluded that "in so far as recent sociological textbooks are concerned. . . few writers are as frequently and confidently quoted as Charles Horton Cooley."⁶

An analysis of the indexed listings of some thirty-two standard introductory sociology textbooks published after

⁴ Ibid., pp. 254-55.

⁵ Mary Edward Healy, Society and Social Change in the Writings of St. Thomas, Ward, Sumner, and Cooley (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1948), pp. 128-29.

⁶ Fay Karpf, American Social Psychology (New York: American Book Company, 1942), p. 159.

1940 yielded similar results as did the above study by Odum. In the thirty-two texts, Cooley was either directly quoted or acknowledged with regard to his concept of the primary group in twenty five, i.e., in about 78 per cent. In two other works this concept was discussed, and his Social Organization listed in the bibliography at the end of the chapter. The concept of the primary group was also dealt with in three other texts without, however, Cooley's name being mentioned. In only two of the textbooks, i.e., about 6 per cent, was there no mention of the concept of the primary group.⁷

An investigation of the various discussions of the primary group in these textbooks revealed that the space devoted to this concept varied in length from one paragraph to eighteen pages. A synopsis of five of these discussions will be presented in this concluding portion of the chapter.

In a lengthy eight page discussion of the primary group, Earl Bell, in his recent book Social Foundations of Human Behavior, declared that "in the classification of groups, one of the most useful distinctions is that formulated by Charles H. Cooley." He continued by quoting

⁷For a complete listing of these thirty-two textbooks and the pages which Cooley's concept of the primary group is discussed, see Appendix B.

Cooley's definition of this concept and by stating that:

Primary group relationships involve an identity of ends. In primary groups, the relationship is in itself an end and only secondarily or incidentally a means to an end. . . . Consequently, in such a personal relationship the individual is not an abstraction. He is a complete concrete person and the relationship involves him in all his completeness, extending to his whole being.

Bell lamented the fact that in recent years primary groups had been "described largely in terms of their small size and face-to-face type of relationships." Many small groups were not primary and the number was constantly increasing in our mass society. The number of secondary groups was also rapidly increasing and taking away functions of the primary groups in a number of areas. Bell concluded his discussion by describing secondary groups and contrasting them with the characteristics of the primary group.⁹

Ogburn and Ninkoff, in their popular introductory textbook, also observed that "one of the first sociologists to note the special function of small groups in society was Charles Horton Cooley." They further stated that the intimate relations which characterized these groups were usually face-to-face but could be carried on in correspondence such

Earl H. Bell, Social Foundations of Human Behavior (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 297.

Earl H. Bell, Social Foundations of Human Behavior (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 297.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 298-300.

as early relationship between Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett. These authors declared that:

Cooley called the above-mentioned groups primary, because they are first both in time and importance. They are the groups of infancy and early childhood which usually play a commanding role in the development of personality.¹⁰

Ogburn and Nimkoff concluded by comparing functions of the "integrative" but "restrictive" primary relations as opposed to the "liberating" but "non-integrative" secondary relations. It was their view that both were necessary and important in any progressive stable society.¹¹

In their discussion of typologies of groups, Young and Mack referred to the distinction between primary and secondary groups as being the most frequently used classification of groups in American sociology. They described primary groups in the following manner:

The primary group is characterized by intimate face-to-face contacts and direct interaction made possible by common locality. The social stimuli are distinctly personal: voice, facial and other gestures, touch, smell, taste, and sight. These are the first groups into which the individual is induced.¹²

These authors discussed the family, play group, and

¹⁰ William F. Ogburn and Meyer F. Nimkoff, Sociology (3rd. ed.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1956), p. 134.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 135-36.

¹² Kimball Young and Raymond W. Mack, Sociology and Social Life (New York: American Book Company, 1959), p. 29.

neighborhood as the most important types of primary groups. Secondary groups, on the other hand, were referred to as "special-interest groups" which did not necessarily depend on face-to-face contacts. Because these groups were the opposite extremes of a typology, however, most forms of association had characteristics which did not completely conform to either category. Thus, these classifications were to be thought of more as "analytic tools" which would "sharpen our observation and help us see obvious differences in the structuring of groups."¹³

John Cuper, after quoting Cooley's definition of the primary group, also expressed the opinion that primary and secondary groups were not to be thought of as belonging to two distinct categories "into one of which each and every group could be pigeon-holed." There was rather a "continuum with poles of primariness and secondariness." It was the degree of interaction which was important.¹⁴

Cuper then discussed the decline in the numbers, functions, and time being spent in primary groups. He felt that the lack of emphasis on the traditional family, neighborhood, and so forth has resulted in a number of changes

¹³ Ibid., pp. 29-30.

¹⁴ John P. Cuper, Sociology: A Synopsis of Principles (4th. ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Incorporated, 1959), pp. 202-03.

which could not be proven to have resulted in a loss of ir-
retrievable human values.¹⁵

Paul Landis noted that "the most universally accepted group classification developed by sociologists is that which divides all groups into primary groups and secondary groups." The term primary group covered the most intimate groups in which man has experience. Secondary groups, on the other hand, were more casual and involved less of the person's total personality. Landis further stated:

Sometimes these groups are so meaningful that one has to say: "The group is all: the person scarcely exists" Sociologist Charles H. Cooley defined the primary group and showed its effects on the formation of the personality. By his definition, the primary group is one marked by three characteristics: (1) intimacy, (2) face-to-face association, (3) permanence.¹⁶

In conclusion, then, it would appear that one of the more important areas of primary group influence has been in the field of introductory sociology textbooks. Perhaps two reasons for Cooley's general acceptance in this field has been: (1) his lucidness and clarity of literary style;¹⁷ and

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 205-08.

¹⁶ Paul H. Landis, Introductory Sociology (New York: Ronald Press, 1958), p. 161.

¹⁷ Cooley's writings are a pleasant contrast to the poor prose of many scientists in the field. Edmund Wilson, who has been spoken of as the "best critic in the English speaking world," stated in this regard: "As for my experience

(2) the fundamental importance of the classification itself in any comprehensive study of group life.

with articles by experts in anthropology and sociology, it has led me to conclude that the requirement, in my ideal university, of having the papers in every department passed by a professor of English might result in revolutionizing these subjects--if indeed the second of them survived at all." In another article Malcolm Cowley referred to sociological terminology as "socspeak," a term which he adopted from Huxley's 1984. See, Edmund Wilson, A Piece of My Mind (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy Company, 1956), p. 164; and Malcolm Cowley, "Sociological Habit Patterns in Linguistic Transmogrification," The Reporter, 20:41ff., September, 1956.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The problem with which this thesis-- has been concerned is that of analysing the influence which Charles Horton Cooley's ~~concept of the primary group~~ has had upon the field of American sociology. Discussion, however, has necessarily been limited to explicit acknowledgments by American sociologists as to the influence this ~~concept~~ has had upon their works. ~~The attempt in this chapter will be to draw together the various lines of evidence which have been presented and to trace the history of the primary group from its original formulation in 1909 to the present time.~~ that of the primary group, has been given special attention through out this study

A general review of the literature of those initial years before 1920 indicated that there were few social scientists who had adopted this concept into their writings. Even sociologists such as Small, Ross, Vincent, Giddings, weatherly, and Ogburn, who acknowledged Cooley's influence in other areas, seemed to take little notice of his primary group. Ricahrd T. La Piere has suggested that the prevalence in the early part of the century of the economic concept of man as a rational and socially unrestrained creature, and the subsequent vogue among psychologists and sociologists of the McDougallian doctrine of instincts, played an important

part in distracting attention from this concept.¹

Frederick R. Clow's article in 1919 concerning the importance of Cooley's concept of the primary group was the first explicit attempt to focus attention upon this concept in the American Journal of Sociology, which was the official publication of the American Sociological Association at the time. Perhaps even more important for the eventual acceptance of this term, however, was the discussion by Park and Burgess in their widely read textbook Introduction to the Science of Sociology published in 1921. The striking and succinct primary-secondary dichotomy which they suggested helped both to clarify the term and to make it easier to remember and understand.²

During the twenties a gradual growth of the number of sociologists who incorporated Cooley's statements concerning this concept into their writings could be noted. By the end of the decade such writers as House and Bogardus were already

¹Richard T. La Piere, A Theory of Social Control (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1954), p. 11.

²It is interesting to note in this regard how very often sociologists are remembered not for the point of view they represent but for some one or two concepts or "catch-phrases" which they employed. Consider, for instance, Tonnies' "Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft," Giddings' "consciousness of kind," Thomas' "definition of the situation" and "four wishes," Mead's "generalized other," and Reisman's "traditional and outer directed groups."

speaking of the general acceptance of primary group in the field of American sociology. The only empirical investigation which could be found during these years in which there was reference to this concept by Cooley, was Thasher's study of the gang. Even in this piece of research, however, the term was employed "along side of" rather than as a vital part of the investigation. Thus, Thasher did not attempt to make any hypotheses about primary groups or test any of the variables involved. He merely endeavored to relate his findings to the concept.

Beginning with the theoretical criticisms and elaborations of Parls and Subank in 1932, another dimension of Cooley's influence in this area could be noted. These and other sociologists up until the present time have pointed out that the physical property of face-to-faceness merely facilitates the feelings of affection and "we-ness" which are the actual defining criteria of the concept. Later social scientists such as Davis, Bates, and Babchuk have also indicated that properties other than physical proximity such as size, time, and homogeneity are important in primary group formation. In the case of both of these propositions, later writers have probably only made explicit that which was already implicit in Cooley's earlier statements. Most sociologists in recent years have also come to regard primary

and secondary groups as the poles of an "associational continuum" with the majority of groups being located somewhere inbetween. This would seem to be an improvement over Cooley's original primary-non-primary model or even the primary-secondary dichotomy emphasized by such sociologists as Park, Burgess, and Davis.

Although no acknowledgment of Cooley's influence in sociological research could be found in the thirties, it was nevertheless during this decade that the concept of the primary group, because of its wide incorporation into the various works published during this period, became generally accepted in the field. The number of theoretical restatements of this term also increased during the forties and fifties until at present it is generally recognized by American sociologists as basic to any classification of groups.

One special area of Cooley's influence, especially during these two latter decades, is that of introductory sociology textbooks. Perhaps because of the clarity of Cooley's literary style and the fundamental importance of the classification itself, a survey of thirty-two texts published in this period revealed that Cooley's influence was either cited directly or at the end of the chapter in 84 per cent of the cases and that the concept of the primary

group itself was mentioned in some 94 per cent of the books. These results would seem to be consistent with the earlier investigations of introductory textbooks by Dewey and Odum.

It is in the field of empirical research after 1940 that a number of sociologists have spoken of the "rediscovery of the primary group." They mean by this that the general importance of this concept to all areas of group life has been rediscovered by researchers, and that these investigators have in turn given new direction and emphasis to the traditional meaning of the term.

An analysis of five general areas of current research indicated that the fields of small group and public opinion research have perhaps been the most influenced by Cooley's primary group concept. Concerning the former, it was shown that Cooley and Simmel are often acknowledged as the best remembered of early sociologists who contributed to the beginnings of this type of research. In actual investigations, too, Cooley's influence is sometimes mentioned. Perhaps because of the lack of space in the journal articles in which many of these studies are published and also because of the quantitative nature of the studies themselves, there is a lack of any explicit acknowledgment of traditional social theorists in a large number of the studies investigated. This would perhaps indicate that in the area of the small group as well as the field of research in general much of Cooley's

influence is on the implicit rather than the explicit level.

In the area of public opinion research, it would seem that writers such as Lazarsfeld, Katz, Ford, Steiner, and Baur are pushing toward a new awareness of the importance of the primary group. Considerable emphasis upon this concept could already be noted in the field, and it would seem, as researchers become more engrossed in the fundamental question of "how" public opinion is formed, it will play even a larger role in this type of research.

The other three areas of group research--Group Dynamics, sociometry, and group therapy--were mentioned more because of the interest they have aroused with regard to small groups and the potential importance which the primary group concept would have upon the fields in the future, rather than actual acknowledgments of Cooley's influence up until the present time. The fact that each of these fields of research had an original founder and initial guiding philosophy would seem to partially account for the present lack of emphasis on the primary group. A survey of close followers of Lewin such as Festinger, Back, Schachter, Ellerton, McBride, Gregory, Thibaut, Kelley, and Deutsch, for instance, did not reveal any references to Cooley. It was only among later investigators such as Cartwright, Zander, Bonner, and Thelen that acknowledgments to the primary group could be found.

Also, in the field of sociometry, it was primarily among sociologists such as Olmsted, Shils, and Paris where evidences of Cooley's influence were to be noted. Except for the article by Stone, it would seem that group therapists generally have been content to merely transpose individual therapy techniques for their work with groups rather than employ sociological concepts which have been developed such as the concept of the primary group.

It has thus been demonstrated in the foregoing paragraphs that Cooley's ^{system of social thought} ~~concept~~ of the primary group has had a continuous influence upon American sociology and that in recent years this influence has branched into a number of theoretical and research trends and tendencies. The full extent of this influence has not been measured, however, for it was necessary to limit investigation to explicit acknowledgments of Cooley's influence upon the works of other American sociologists. To organize this diversity of material into a relatively coherent picture has also required a certain amount of grouping, omitting and equating; this has its danger, but the risk--to adopt the cliché--is a calculated one.

The growing interest in Cooley's thought can be seen not only by the increasing number of acknowledgments of such concepts as the primary group and looking-glass self but also in the republication of his two books Human Nature and the

Social Order and Social Organization in 1956 after being out of print for some twenty years. This, too, may lead to renewed interest in the concept of the primary group, for Cooley's writings do not offer so much specific hypotheses, or even a theory, as an abstract frame of reference for viewing human life. If this frame of reference were seriously and consistently followed, it would force questions and suggest lines of investigation which would even further emphasize the importance of the primary group.

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APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF COOLEY'S
LIFE AND WRITINGS²

²The list of Cooley's writings was obtained from, C. H. Cooley, Sociological Theory and Social Theory, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930, pp. 257-58.

1864. Charles Horton Cooley was born on April 17 at Ann Arbor, Michigan.
1880. Entered college at the University of Michigan where he continued his studies, with many interruptions because of health, until he received his Bachelor's degree in 1887.
1882. Summer surveying job in Colorado.
1883. Extended trip through the Carolinas.
1884. Trip to Europe where he studied in Munich, Germany; and vacationed in the Switzerland Alps.
- 1887-88. Graduated from Michigan University and spent an additional year learning Mechanical Engineering. During the latter part of 1888 he also worked in Bay City, Michigan as a draftsman.
- 1889-91. Went to Washington D.C. where he worked for the Interstate Commerce Commission. In 1890 he married Elsie Jones of Ann Arbor who was the daughter of the Dean of Homeopathics at the Medical College. In 1891 his first published work appeared: "The Social Significance of State Railways," (Abstract only), Publications of the American Economic Association, vol. 6, pp. 71-3.
- 1891-92. Took bride to Europe for a six months vacation in the Italian hills. In 1892 he became a part-time instructor in Economics at the University of Michigan.
1894. Received his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Michigan. The title of his thesis was: "The Theory of Transportation," Publications of the American Economic Association, vol. 9. He also published in 1894: "Competition and Organization," Michigan Political Science Association, vol. 1, pp. 33-45. Cooley taught his first course in sociology during the first semester of the 1894-95 school year.
1896. "'Nature versus Nurture' in the Making of Social Careers," Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, pp. 399-405.
1897. "The Process of Social Change," Political Science Quarterly, vol. 12, pp. 63-81; "Genius, Fame, and the Comparison of Races," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol. 9, pp. 1-42.

1899. "Personal Competition" Economic Studies, vol. 4, No. 2.
1902. Human Nature and the Social Order (New York: Scribner's Sons); "The Decrease of Rural Population in the Southern Peninsula of Michigan," Michigan Political Science Association, vol. 4, pp. 20-37.
1904. Discussion of Gidding's Paper, "A Theory of Social Causation," Publications of the American Economic Association, vol. 5, pp. 182-7.
1905. Helped to organize the American Sociological Society.
1907. "Social Consciousness," The American Journal of Sociology, vol. 12, pp. 675-87.
1909. Social Organization (New York: Scribner's Sons); "Builder of Democracy," (James Burill Angell), Survey, vol. 22, pp. 210-3.
1913. Warren Thompson, well known for his population studies, was added to the sociology department at the University of Michigan. Cooley published: "The Institutional Character of Pecuniary Valuation," The American Journal of Sociology, vol. 18, pp. 543-55; "The Sphere of Pecuniary Valuation," The American Journal of Sociology, vol. 18, pp. 188-203; "The Progress of Pecuniary Valuation," Quarterly Journal of Economics, vol. 30, pp. 1-21.
1917. "Social Control in International Relations," Publications of the American Sociological Society, vol. 12, pp. 207-26.
1918. Elected president of the American Sociological Society. Social Process (New York: Scribner's Sons); "A Primary Culture for a Democracy," Publications of the American Sociological Society, vol. 13, pp. 1-10; "Political Economy and Social Process," The Journal of Political Economy, vol. 25, pp. 366-74.
1920. "Reflections Upon the Sociology of Herbert Spencer," The American Journal of Sociology, vol. 26, pp. 129-45.
1923. "Heredity or Environment," Journal of Applied Sociology, vol. 49, pp. 454-6.
1924. "Now and Then," Journal of Applied Sociology, vol. 8, pp. 259-62.

1926. "Heredity and Instinct in Human Life, Survey", vol. 10, pp. 303-7; "The Roots of Social Knowledge," The American Journal of Sociology, vol. 32, pp. 59-79.
1927. Life and the Student (New York: A. A. Knopf)
1928. "Case Study of Small Institutions as a Method of Research," Publications of the American Sociological Society, pp. 123-32; "Sumner and Methodology," Publications of the American Sociological Society, pp. 248-54.
1929. At the time of Cooley's death, there were eight full time teachers in the department of sociology at the University of Michigan. The department, however, still remained under the wing of the economics department because he never cared to assume the administrative burdens of a department head.

APPENDIX B

INFLUENCE OF COOLEY'S CONCEPT OF THE PRIMARY
GROUP ON THIRTY-TWO RECENT INTRODUCTORY
SOCIOLOGY TEXTBOOKS

In the entries below, instances in which Cooley was acknowledged directly with regard to his primary group concept are marked with three asterisks. The length and exact place of the discussion of the primary group concept in each of the textbooks is indicated by the page numbers. Instances in which Cooley's influence was cited in the bibliography at the end of the chapter is indicated by two asterisks, and instances in which the primary group was discussed without any direct reference to Cooley will be denoted by the use of one asterisk. Entries which do not have an asterisk before them are those in which the primary group was not mentioned.

- ***Bell, Earl H. Social Foundations of Human Behavior. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961, pp. 302-08.
- ***Bennett, John W., and Melvin M. Tumin. Social Life, Structure and Function. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949, pp. 149-50.
- **Bernard, Luther Lee. An Introduction to Sociology. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1942, p. 614.
- *Biesanz, John B., and M. Biesanz. Modern Society. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1954, p. 118.
- ***Bogardus, Emory S. Sociology. 4th. ed.; New York: Macmillan Company, 1954, p. 3.
- ***Broom, Leonard, and Philip Selznick, Sociology. Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson, and Company, 1955, pp. 58-60.
- ***Carr, Lowell Julliard. Situational Analysis. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948, pp. 45-46.
- ***Cuber, John F. Sociology: A Synopsis of Principles. 4th. ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Incorporated, 1959, pp. 302-308.

- ***Davis, Kingsley. Human Society. New York: Macmillan Company, 1950, pp. 289-309.
- ***De Grange, McQuilkin. The Nature of Elements of Sociology. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953, pp. 343-44.
- Eldridge, Seba, St. al. Fundamentals of Sociology. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1950.
- ***Freedman, Ronald, et. al. Principles of Sociology. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952, pp. 120-122.
- ***Gillin, John Lewis and John Philip Gillin. An Introduction to Sociology. New York: Macmillan Company, 1942, pp. 199-201.
- ***Green, Arnold Wilfred. Sociology: An Analysis of Life in Modern Sociology. 2nd. ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956, pp. 33-34.
- *Jones, Marshall. Basic Sociology Principles. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1949.
- ***Landis, Paul E. Introductory Sociology. New York: Ronald Press, 1956, p. 161.
- ***Lundberg, George A. Foundations of Sociology. New York: Macmillan Company, 1953, pp. 299-311.
- ***_____, Clarence C. Schrag, Otto M. Larsen. Sociology. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958, p. 408.
- ***MacIver, Robert Morrison and Charles H. Page. Society and Introductory Analysis. New York: Hinehart, 1949.
- **Martindale, Don Albert and Elio D. Monachesi. Elements of Sociology. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951.
- *McCormick, Thomas Carson. Sociology: An Introduction to the Study of Sociological Relations. New York: Ronald Press, 1950, p. 66.
- ***Marrill, Francis E. Society and Culture. 2nd. ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1961, p. 47.
- ***Odum, Howard W. Understanding Society; the Principle of Dynamic Sociology. New York: Macmillan Company, 1947. pp. 261-269.

- ***Ogburn, William F., and Meyer F. Nimkoff. Sociology. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958. pp. 134-136.
- ***Park, Robert Ezra. Society. 3rd. ed.; Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1955. p. 241.
- ***Pendell, Elmer. Society Under Analysis, an Introduction to Sociology. Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Jaques Cattell Press, 1942. p. 242-48.
- ***Rose, Arnold M. Sociology. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957. p. 149.
- ***Southerland, Robert Lee, Julian L. Woodward, and Milton A. Maxwell. Introductory Sociology. 5th. ed.; Chicago: Lippincott Company, 1953. p. 240-41.
- *Timasheff, Nicholas and Paul W. Facey. Sociology: An Introduction to Sociology Analysis. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1949. pp. 120-130.
- ***Wilson, Logan. Sociology Analysis; An Introductory Text and Case Book. Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1949. p. 267.
- ***Wright, Verne and Manuel C. Elmer. General Sociology. New York: Farrar and Rinehart Incorporated, 1940. p. 69.
- ***Young, Kimball and Raymond W. Mack. Sociology and Social Life. New York: American Book Company, 1959.