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Influence of Georg Simmel Upon American Sociology

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THE INFLUENCE OF GEORG SIMMEL UPON AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Sociology

The Municipal University of Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Walter Ludwig Basumler

November 1960

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM, THE METHODS OF STUDY AND THE DEFINITION OF THE KEY CONCEPTS

"Contrary to the opinion of both German and American sociologists," says William J. Goode, "American sociology had little influence upon German sociology and German sociology had no influence whatsoever upon American sociology."¹

It seems that William J. Goode postulates an opinion rather than a conclusion to research on the subject of influences of German sociological thought upon American sociology. Even a cursory examination of the recent editions of sociology textbooks reveals an increasing number of references to the writings of such German scientists as Max Weber, Ferdinand Toennies, and Georg Simmel. But if German scholars have made important contributions to the social sciences in general and to sociology specifically, it is not so much to the credit of Germany but to the credit of outstanding men who, by their abilities and scholastic efforts, have gained recognition beyond national borders. Thus the question of influence along the line of nationalities is futile and tends to produce ethnocentric opinions rather than objective appraisals of the contributions to scientific knowledge of outstanding men.

¹William J. Goode, "Beziehungen zwischen amerikanischer und deutscher Soziologie," Koelner Zeitschrift fuer Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, 11(1):166, 1959.

It is the purpose of this thesis to trace and to determine the influence of Georg Simmel, a German sociologist, upon American sociology.

The problem was approached by library research. The following study procedure was employed. What is presented here as a successive, point after point program, was in reality a constantly overlapping process.

In order to get acquainted with Simmel's sociological theories, and to learn some of the criticisms of his ideas, the writer made a preliminary survey of books and articles about Georg Simmel's work. These appraisals of Simmel provided the basis for a comparative study of the extent of criticism by various authors and what aspects of Simmel's theories they criticized. It was also learned what the various authors had to say about each other's appraisals and critiques of Simmel's works. This led to a critical analysis of the conceptual and connotational correspondence of the translations with at least the key terms of Simmel's German original. A similar analysis was done with the "interpretations" of Simmel's propositions which, although based on correct translations, seemed to present misconceptions of Simmel's ideas.

Throughout the study, special attention was paid to bibliographical references. With a few exceptions, only those references which referred to books and articles in the English language were followed up and evaluated on the basis of relevance for the problem. This procedure aided considerably the survey of American sociological literature in order to establish factual data on Simmel's influence.

Finally, in order to limit the scope of this study, three out of the twenty-three theoretical analyses by Georg Simmel were selected from his "Soziologie"² as representative samples of his work and employed as indicators of Simmel's influence upon American sociology.

Simmel's key concept, "forms of sociation," has been translated by various authors with different English terms. In order to avoid terminological confusion in this treatise, it seems necessary to clarify and define Simmel's "Formen der Vergesellschaftung" before proceeding. "Vergesellschaftung" has not less than three different English translations. Small³ and Spykman⁴ use "socialization" as the English equivalent; Theodore Abel employs "societalization" in his early work⁵ while in his later writings⁶ he adopts, like Kurt Wolff,⁷ "sociation" in his translations. This last term seems to approximate the meaning of the German original best and it is, therefore, used as the translation of "Vergesellschaftung" throughout this thesis. In

²Georg Simmel, Soziologie. Untersuchungen ueber die Formen der Vergesellschaftung (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1908).

³Georg Simmel, "Superiority and Subordination," trans. Albion W. Small, Am. Jour. Soc., 2(2):167-189, 1896-97.

⁴Nicholas J. Spykman, The Social Theory of Georg Simmel (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1925).

⁵Theodore Abel, Systematic Sociology in Germany (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929).

⁶Theodore Abel, "The Contribution of Georg Simmel. A Reappraisal," Am. Soc. Rev., 24(4):473-479, August, 1959.

⁷Kurt H. Wolff, The Sociology of Georg Simmel (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1950).

quotes from authors who employ a different term, "sociation" has been substituted for the sake of clarity. Sociation, according to Simmel's perception of the term, stands for: the process of reciprocal psychic interaction between human beings, both as individuals and as group members, in which they mutually influence and determine their behavior. The process of sociation constitutes the true nature of society; it is the social reality which is to be studied in its various "forms" by sociology.

"Forms of sociation" are the different kinds of sociation patterns or structures which can be abstracted from the totality of human interaction. In this abstraction, the distinction between the "forms of sociation" and the "contents of sociation" is necessary in order to arrive at the "purity" of the concept which is needed for the scientific approach.⁸ Simmel does not ask what happens, but how it happens. His "forms" then are to be understood as the fundamental patterns of human sociation which exist in all interaction, no matter what the setting may be. As an example, the "form" of superordination and subordination exists in all human groups. In modern terms, all groups are stratified along the line of status, role, function, etc. Thus by the analyzation of the forms of superordination and subordination in Simmel's thinking, a most valuable body of scientific knowledge on

⁸ Weber's "ideal types" are of the same order. Simmel used the "pure form" concept which, he asserts, never exists in actuality, as a theoretical abstract, as an aid in analysis. It could be compared with a laboratory experiment in which all normally intervening variables are controlled.

the social behavior of man could be gained. Since the "forms of sociation" underlie all inter-human relations, the knowledge gained by their study is general enough as to permit - in due time - a certain accuracy in the prediction of human behavior.

CHAPTER II

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON GEORG SIMMEL

I. PERSONAL DATA⁹

On March 1, 1858, Georg Simmel, son of Edward and Flora Simmel, was born in Berlin, Germany. Both parents were of Jewish background but confessed the Christian faith and Georg Simmel was baptized in the Evangelical-Lutheran church. His father was the founder of the well known chocolate factory "Felix und Sarotti." The firm, however, did not remain in the possession of Edward Simmel. He died in 1874, when Georg was close to graduation from the Gymnasium. A friend of the Simmel family, Julius Friedlaender, became Georg's guardian. Friedlaender was the founder and owner of "Edition Peters," a renowned music publishing house. Georg and his guardian grew very close to each other and upon Friedlaender's death, Georg Simmel inherited his guardian's wealth which enabled him to pursue his academic career, and to continue his work in spite of the lack of recognition and the low pay which he received in Berlin.

In 1890, Georg Simmel married Gertrud Kinel. An only son, Hans, was born to them. He later became Professor of Medicine at the University of Jena and was forced to migrate to the United States when

⁹Adapted from Kurt Gassen und Michael Landmann (ed.), Buch des Dankes an Georg Simmel (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1958), pp. 11-14.

Hitler came to power.

Simmel left the Lutheran church during World War I, not to return to the Jewish faith, but to satisfy his need for unconfined thinking and expression. During the early war years, Simmel felt extremely nationalistic. He delivered speeches to soldiers. A young friend of his, Ernst Bloch, said to him, "A life long you evaded decisions and now you find the absolute in the trenches."¹⁰ Bloch was told by the angry Simmel to leave his house and not to return again. But in 1917, Simmel saw his errors. He stated: "There are two catastrophes in the course of German history, the Thirty-Year War and the period of Wilhelm II."¹¹

At the age of fifty-nine, Georg Simmel was hopelessly ill. Knowing that he had cancer, he demanded to be told by the doctor how much time he had to live. Less than one year was the answer. Simmel withdrew from all outside contacts and concentrated on his writings. He finished what is considered his main philosophical work, "Lebensanschauung" (view of life). On September 28, 1918, he died at Strasbourg. He had arranged to place his corpse at the disposal of the faculty of medicine for autopsy if this would contribute to the study of cancer.

After his death, Gertrud Simmel made the attempt to publish a total edition of her husband's writings. But she was unable to get the

¹⁰Ibid., p. 13.

¹¹Ibid.

many publishers to give up their copyrights. The majority of Simmel's unpublished manuscripts were either lost or willfully destroyed by the Nazis after 1933.

II. ACADEMIC CAREER¹²

At the age of eighteen, Simmel passed the final examination of the Gymnasium, called "Abitur", and received his Certificate of Maturity. In 1876, he began his studies at the University of Berlin. Among the subjects for which he enrolled were history, psychology, history of art, and philosophy. He received his Ph.D., cum laude, during January of the year 1881. In October of 1883, he applied for habilitation, the right to lecture at a university, which is granted after scholastic ability has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the faculty. He was accepted for candidacy but did not pass. He tried again one year later and fulfilled all requirements. In January, 1885, Simmel began his teaching career at his alma mater.¹³ He was extremely successful with his lectures and soon he needed the largest lecture hall at the university.

This popularity may have caused the jealousy of some of his colleagues on the faculty and can be considered one of the factors which contributed to the delayed promotion of Simmel since the faculty members had to issue a joint memorandum, suggesting the promotion of a member, to the Ministry of Education. The main reasons, however, were

¹²Ibid., pp. 14-33.

¹³Ibid., pp. 20-22.

the facts that Simmel did not get along too well with Dilthey, his closest co-worker on the faculty, who had already gained much recognition and influence, and that Roethe, one of the most powerful men on the faculty, was outspokenly anti-Semitic. In addition, Simmel's unorthodox approach to lecturing (developing an idea to the point where it seemed absolutely logical, and then analyzing it, attacking it, and showing its shortcomings when viewed from a different angle), as well as the mistrust against the new field of sociology which Simmel represented, may have had a considerable influence upon the tradition-bound faculty members.

Thus he remained a "Privatdozent" (private lecturer) in spite of his popularity amongst the students. Finally, in June, 1898, the faculty issued an application to the Ministry of Education for the promotion of Georg Simmel to "Extraordinarius." But, ignoring the highly positive contents of the faculty references, including Dilthey's, who by then had recognized Simmel's ability, the Minister did not consent. The reasons are not known. It took until the spring of the year 1900, after the faculty again wrote to the Ministry, that Simmel received his first and only promotion at the University of Berlin.

In the meantime, Simmel drew record numbers in registrations for his lectures. In 1885, he had 124 students enrolled in a lecture series on the "Philosophy of Kant,"¹⁴ in 1894, lecturing on the new

¹⁴Ibid., p. 21.

subject "Sociology," he had an enrollment of 152 students; and in 1895, in a lecture series on "Pessimism," 269 students were enrolled. In later years, these numbers still increased, but no exact data are available.¹⁵

Simmel's time was not solely spent in the lecture halls of the university. To supplement his income and to acquaint the intellectuals of his time with his theories he wrote more than two hundred fifty essays and articles which appeared in scientific and popular magazines, bulletins, and newspapers. In addition to these he wrote thirty books. The first book, "Ueber soziale Differenzierung" (On Social Differentiation), was published in 1890. His main work, "Soziologie. Untersuchungen ueber die Formen der Vergesellschaftung," appeared in 1908 and constitutes an attempt to establish sociology as a distinct science. Simmel was creative up to his last days, when he concentrated all his energies on the completion of his main philosophical work "Lebensanschauung."

Looking at the titles of Simmel's writings, one can easily see that he was mainly concerned with philosophy. This becomes also apparent in his lectures. The philosophical topics outnumber the sociological ones. This should not be surprising since he belonged to the faculty of philosophy and presented his sociological theories under the subject of philosophy.

In 1908, a chair for a professor of philosophy was available at

¹⁵Ibid.

Heidelberg.¹⁶ Upon the recommendation of Goethein and Max Weber, the well recognized professor of philosophy, Rickert was requested as first choice and, if he should not be available, the Minister of Education should select Simmel. Again, there were forces which prevented Simmel from receiving the post at Heidelberg in spite of Rickert's not being available. Simmel's Semitic background was reason enough to doubt his loyalty to Germany and his ability to teach in a Christian classical form. It was feared that Simmel would draw too many Jews from Eastern Europe and also an overly large number of Orientals to Heidelberg. There seems to have been a considerable number of students from these regions enrolled in Simmel's classes at the University of Berlin.

The type of opposition and prejudice which Simmel had to face at Berlin is demonstrated by a letter which was written by one of his colleagues. Dietrich Schaefer,¹⁷ a historian, gave an appraisal of Simmel's abilities and personality which shows the deep rooted anti-Semitism and personal jealousy that existed at that university. This reference had been requested by the Ministry of Education in Baden. That Simmel was not accepted at Heidelberg may have been a result of this negative evaluation.

Schaefer wrote that he did not know whether or not Simmel had been baptized, but what he knew was that Simmel was an Israelite not only in his outward appearance and his bearing, but also in his manner

¹⁶Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 26-27. Also translated by H. Menzel, "A Contemporary Academic View of Georg Simmel," Am. Jour. Soc., 63:640-641, May, 1958.

of thinking. He indicated that this fact may have stood in the way of Simmel's promotion at Berlin, as well as his receiving a chair at another university. But it was not necessary to rely on his being Jewish for an explanation, said Schaefer, since his literary and academic merits and successes were very circumscribed and limited. Simmel's lectures were well attended, but this was due to his habit of conducting two-hour lectures which were very popular with the students at Berlin. Simmel spoke exceedingly slowly and thus, in Schaefer's opinion, offered only little material which, however, was well rounded, succinct, and polished. In addition, he spiced his words with witty remarks. These features were very much appreciated by a "certain kind of students." Women constituted a large contingent, even for Berlin.¹⁸ Also, a disproportionately large number of Orientals was attending his lectures since "his whole manner seemed in tune with their orientation and taste."¹⁹

Schaefer said that "one did not leave his lectures with too much of positive value;" but the students seemed to be satisfied with Simmel's fleeting intellectual caprices. "In addition to this," he continued, "comes the fact that a Semitic lecturer would always gain attention at a university where the corresponding part of the student body numbers

¹⁸In the pre-World War I Germany, women who pursued a scholastic career were rare. However, the University of Berlin, located in a large city, had a much higher number of female students than the universities of smaller towns.

¹⁹Simmel, unlike most Germans, underlined his words with expressive gesticulation.

several thousand, considering the cohesion that prevails in these circles."²⁰

Schaefer went on in his letter with the remark that, in his opinion, the University of Heidelberg would not gain much if such people would be attracted to its lecture halls. Simmel's philosophy of life and his "Weltanschauung" (view of the world, world philosophy) differed extremely from the German Christian-classical education and, said Schaefer, he believed that "such admixture as may be desirable for healthy development had been attained." He continued by saying that there could be only limited justification for tendencies which undermined and negated more than they laid foundations and built up. "This," he said, "is not always out of scholarly zeal, but also out of a desire for notoriety."²¹

"Simmel," he continued, "gained his reputation chiefly through his 'sociological' activity." But in Schaefer's view sociology was not a scientific discipline and in his eyes it was a most perilous error to put "society" in the place of state and church as the "measure providing organ of human co-existence." It did not seem right to him to give official standing to this orientation at this early date, and especially not at a university as important to state and nation as Heidelberg was to Baden and Germany. Simmel would be entirely out of place at Heidelberg since he belonged to those persons who operated more by wit and

²⁰The author of the letter seems to refer to the notion that the Jewish minority has more group cohesiveness than the non-Jews.

²¹This is probably aimed at Simmel's tendency to critically analyze existing theories.

pseudo-wit than by solid and systematic thinking.

No permanent value could be derived from Simmel's writings, as far as Schaefer knew them, and it seemed hardly possible that the subject of "mental life of the metropolis" could be treated in a sparser way than Simmel did in a lecture which Schaefer had heard.²²

His closing words were: "I believe that there are more desirable and productive occupants for Heidelberg's second chair of philosophy than Simmel. I regret that I must give such an unfavorable account. But I can only state my opinion truthfully as you expected me to do and which you will evaluate as you see fit."²³

In 1910, the faculty of philosophy at the University of Greifswald requested Simmel or Hermann Schwarz. The latter was preferred by the Prussian Ministry of Education, for unknown reasons.

At one time an American university (Chicago?) seemed interested in Simmel, but his appointment there did not materialize. Again, the reason is unknown.

On October 28, 1911, the University of Freiburg i. Br. (Baden) conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Political Science (Staatswissenschaften) upon Simmel who "has as the founder of the science of sociology furthered all knowledge which is concerned with human society."²⁴

²²Schaefer refers to the paper "The Metropolis and Mental Life." Vide Wolff, Sociology, p. 409 ff.

²³Gassen und Landmann, op. cit., p. 27.

²⁴Ibid., p. 29.

Finally, in 1914, a few months before the war started, Georg Simmel was called to the Kaiser Wilhelm University of Strasbourg. The fact that the request of the faculty for the establishment had to be addressed to Wilhelm II personally, and that the Kaiser did consent, may explain why Simmel, who was fifty-six years old then, acted as he did when the war broke out. He disliked to leave Berlin which, in spite of many disappointments, had become dear to him.

Only four years later, on September 28, 1918, Simmel died. He sensed the coming catastrophe for Germany but did not have to live through it. A plain tombstone marks his grave in Strasbourg.

CHAPTER III

THE SCIENTIFIC SUBJECT MATTER OF SOCIOLOGY

I. SIMMEL'S BASIC THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Sociology as an independent science does not pre-date the present century although efforts to establish a distinct science of sociology had been put forth by such men as Comte and Spencer. Especially Comte's approach to the delineation of a subject matter of sociology gained influence in Europe during the nineteenth century. Comte assumed that the specific reality of the social fact is already established as the basis for studying society. This led to proposals of a variety of principles which tried to explain social phenomena. The result was a confusing array of theories of social realities and programs of reform. Theodore Abel appraises this period as follows:

With hardly an exception, every writer in the nineteenth century who published his work under the aegis of sociology followed the Comtean program. Each one who wrote a general treatise tried to propound a new over-all explanatory system that could account for all manifestations of social life. Racial, geographical, psychological, economic, and social factors were each singled out to serve as a basis for such explanation. The result was an accumulation of diverse and overlapping interpretations of the nature of social order that lacked continuity and was full of blind alleys. At the same time, the writers who were proposing schemes of social reform also followed Comte and claimed the authority of sciences for their proposals in the name of his sociology.²⁵

It is not surprising under these circumstances that sociology

²⁵Abel, "Contribution," Am. Soc. Rev., 24(4):474.

found little sympathy among the representatives of "true" science at the European universities. In Germany, sociology not only failed to gain academic recognition but was even actively opposed.²⁶ One of the main arguments against sociology was that if it attempts to encompass all that actually happens in the "human realm" it cannot be a science but would merely provide a label for a string of unrelated ambitious works, each advocating a different explanatory theory.²⁷

Simmel agreed with this criticism but his mind was not prejudiced against sociology for which he showed interest. This stemmed primarily from his philosophical concern with ethics.²⁸ Realizing that a drastic revision of the existing attempts to establish a science of sociology was needed, Simmel occupied himself increasingly with the problems of sociology. The result was a collection of brilliant essays and articles dealing with a variety of social phenomena. The majority of these essays appear in his main sociological work, "Soziologie." Here, Simmel proceeded to delineate the scientific subject matter of sociology and thus established sociology as an independent science and academic discipline.²⁹

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Wilhelm Dilthey, Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften (second edition; Berlin: Teubner, 1922), p. 113 ff.

²⁸In 1887, Simmel offered a lecture course with the title: "Ethik mit besonderer Beruecksichtigung soziologischer Probleme." Vide Gassen und Landmann, op. cit., p. 345.

²⁹Vide Harry E. Barnes and Howard Becker, Social Thought from Lore to Science (Washington, D.C.: Harren Press, 1952), II, p. 889; Abel, "Contribution," Am. Soc. Rev., 24(4):474.

The way in which he effected a separation of sociology from social philosophy, the philosophy of history, and related subjects which concern themselves with social phenomena, was to concentrate on the modes of social interaction; on the manner in which human beings associate and dissociate.³⁰

Simmel departed from a new interpretation of the nature of society. During the nineteenth century two main theories of society had dominated social thought. One was the atomistic theory which grew from nominalism and the rationalistic-individualistic philosophy of the previous centuries. It emphasized the autonomy of the individual and of inherent reason as the determinant of behavior. The individual was pictured as an independent entity and the community as the mechanical summation of individuals. Society was the result of a rational reflection that led to a social contract. The bases of social life were perceived to be natural rights. Kant wrote the most convincing theory of the atomistic society and the theory of natural rights.³¹ The second theory was the organic theory which conceived society as an organism. Both Spencer and Comte followed this notion in their writing.

Simmel found these theories of society too vague and unscientific as to serve as a scientific subject matter. If society was to be the

³⁰Barnes and Becker, Social Thought, II, p. 890.

³¹Abel, Systematic Sociology, p. 13.

subject matter of sociology it needed to be defined in such a fashion as to permit the application of the scientific method of investigation. The notion that sociology should and could be the all embracing science of everything in the human realm, of all the traditional "human studies"³² was rejected by Simmel. He says:

If we examine more closely this throwing together of all traditional fields of knowledge, we note that it creates no new field. Everything this name (sociology) designates is already defined in its content and in its relations or is already produced by the traditional branches of study.³³

Simmel, however, did not look for, as he put it, "a new object hereto unknown," but proceeded to abstract a specific quality from the totality of social phenomena present in all interhuman relationships and to which the scientific method of inquiry could be applied. Simmel defends this abstraction as follows:

Each science rests upon an abstraction. It regards the actual totality of any given thing from the viewpoint of some specific concept. No science can grasp the totality of things as a unity.³⁴

Simmel's ability to analyze led him to the insight that man "in his whole nature and in all his expressions is determined by living in interaction with other men."³⁵

³²This translation of the term "Geisteswissenschaften" is Hodge's coinage. Cf. footnote by Kurt H. Wolff (ed.), Georg Simmel 1858-1918 (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1959), p. 335.

³³Simmel, Soziologie (fourth edition; Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1958), p. 2; and trans. Wolff, Georg Simmel, p. 31.

³⁴Simmel, Soziologie, p. 2; and trans. Wolff, Sociology, p. 312.

³⁵Simmel, Soziologie, p. 3.

Without this interaction society could not exist. From this point, Simmel abstracted a new object of study by analyzing the concept of society and distinguishing between the form and the content of society. The reason for this distinction, which caused a great deal of misunderstanding and will be discussed later, may be sought in Simmel's philosophic background, especially in his Kantian relativism. Like Kant, he was concerned with the relation between subject and object. His approach to the problem was a relativistic, conceptual analysis which led him to conceive of society as "a function which is manifest in the dynamic relations among individuals and in interactions between individual minds."³⁶ Thus Simmel views society as a process. The unity that society seems to exhibit is relative and depends on a certain point of view.

Theodore Abel interprets Simmel's definition of society in a very precise and comprehensive fashion.

. . . for sociological purposes a society is best conceived, not as composed of biological units, but as consisting of the modes of reciprocity, the patterns of interrelated activities in which human beings act for, with, and against each other. If they are conceived in this way societies can increase or diminish in a fashion that is independent of their numerical population.³⁷

Although not originally Simmel's,³⁸ the concept of social

³⁶Georg Simmel, Grundfragen der Soziologie (Leipzig: Goeschel, 1917), p. 12.

³⁷Abel, "Contribution," Am. Soc. Rev., 24(4):476.

³⁸Simmel neglects references and footnotes. The above statement is inferential since both Gumplowicz and Ratzschhofer employed the concept before Simmel did.

interaction thus was for the first time put into a theoretical framework which was suited for scientific methodology.

According to Simmel, sociology is the science of the reciprocal human relationships. These relationships are dynamic and constitute society which is, therefore, in a continuous state of "becoming." This becoming or growing into a unity is the most basic social process and Simmel termed this process sociation (*Vergesellschaftung*). Thus the unity of society is a function of the sociation process. Society would be an impossibility without sociation and since it is a relative concept, there can be "more or less" society. Simmel relates:

The social unities which result from these processes of mutual influencing, these processes of sociation, may therefore be of different duration and of different gradation. They may range from the ephemeral association for a promenade to the permanence of the family group, from the temporary aggregation of guests in a hotel to the intimate bonds of a medieval guild.³⁹

Sociation between persons incessantly takes place and ceases. Society is not a simple, fixed concept; there can be more or less of it.⁴⁰ A collection of human beings does not become a society because specific impulses actuate the individuals as such, but they grow into a unity only when these impulses lead to reciprocal influencing. Only when an influence is exerted by one upon another, whether immediately or through a third, has society come into existence out of the mere spatial proximity or the temporal contemporaneity or succession of individuals.⁴¹

Thus, summing up, society exists wherever humans are in interaction. The "unity" of society is relative and depends on the "distance"

³⁹Simmel, *Soziologie*, p. 6; and trans. Spykman, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 11; and trans. Spykman, p. 34.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 7; and trans. Spykman, p. 32.

or viewpoint of the observer. Just like an automobile can be viewed both as a culture trait and a culture complex depending on the view of the observer, so can society be conceived of as a unit or as the constant process of relations and actions between individuals.

In Simmel's words,

". . . society is not an integral unit in the sense that from it the qualities, relations, and transformations of its parts can be deduced; there exist only relations and actions between individuals of whom one may say from a certain point of view that they are forming a unity."⁴²

Simmel, however, uses the term society also in a broader sense. It stands for all individuals who are in interaction plus all the interests which unite them. In the narrower sense, society stands only for the process of interaction as such. In the broader sense, the interests of the individuals are included and the distinction between the two is made on the basis of differentiation between form-of-sociation and content-of-sociation. As Simmel puts it,

Everything which is present in the individuals, the immediate bearers of sociation, in the way of impulse, interest, or purpose, and which brings about the sociation, may be designated as its content. This content is economic or religious, domestic or political, intellectual or volitional, but these materials with which sociation is filled, these motives which impel it, are in and for themselves not sociological in nature. Neither hunger nor love, neither labor nor religiosity, as they are given immediately and in their strict sense, signify sociation. They constitute sociation only if they shape the spatial proximity of individuals into some definite form of interaction which belongs under the general concept of reciprocity.⁴³

⁴²Simmel, Grundfragen, p. 14; and trans. Abel, Systematic Sociology, p. 15.

⁴³Simmel, Soziologie, p. 6; and trans. Spykman, op. cit., p. 32.

The process of sociation may take various forms which are to be studied by the sociologist. In these forms the individuals grow into a unity or group on the basis of their interests or needs (content), which are satisfied and find their realization within and through sociation. Simmel, however, stresses the fact that in any social phenomenon, content and form of interaction constitute an inseparable unity. A social form can no more exist without content than a spatial form can exist without substance. Therefore, the concept of society as applied in the scientific study of society is an abstract which stands for something dynamic, functional. It is not a thing, but a process or rather a number of processes of this fundamental characteristic. Simmel suggests not to speak, in this connection, of society but of sociation.¹⁴ It is not the plainly recognizable human institutions like the state or trade unions, priesthood or the family, economic or military systems which make up society - these are crystallizations of the sociation process into ideal units - but the immeasurable number of minor, and in many cases seemingly unimportant, interactions and relations between individuals which is the truly "social" and which influences and determines human conduct.

In summary, Simmel's basic theoretical contribution to sociology consists of the following propositions.

1. Society is a continuous process of sociation, consisting of relations and interaction between humans who, from

¹⁴Simmel, Soziologie, pp. 7-9.

- a certain point of view, appear as being a unity.
2. The social aspect of human life can be subjected to scientific study when it is abstracted into its "forms" of interaction apart from the "contents" which consist of the concrete elements that make up social life, in short, the totality of man's material and non-material culture. In social reality, form and content are inseparable.
 3. The forms of sociation are patterned and appear with minor modifications in all human interaction.
 4. Sociation has the inherent function of reciprocally influencing the behavior of the interacting individuals.
 5. Sociology is the scientific study of the human forms of sociation and the resulting general social phenomena.

II. THE FORMALISTIC MISINTERPRETATION OF SIMMEL'S SOCIOLOGICAL PROPOSITIONS

Before proceeding with the presentation of some of Simmel's empirical contributions to sociology it seems necessary to deal briefly with the misinterpretation of Simmel's sociological aim.

With regard to Simmel's conception of sociology there have been critics who have objected to his differentiation between the form and the content of sociation. However, as Simmel has pointed out, all sciences are in the last instance based upon an abstraction.⁴⁵

⁴⁵vide footnote 34.

Nicholas Spykman, in 1925, writes in his conclusion after appraising Simmel's theory:

The particular difficulty about the sociological abstraction is a problem of technique, not of method, and there is no reason for assuming that it will not be solved in time. It is due to the unfamiliarity with the new differentiation, not to any inherent obstacles.⁴⁶

The majority of critics elaborated on his distinction between form and content, interpreted his phraseology as an advocacy of "formal" sociology, evaluated the illustrations in his essays, and concluded that he refuted his own theory by violating the formalistic principles which he, supposedly, had set in his abstraction of form from content. Nevertheless, one has to admit that Simmel is not easy to read and his style of writing, brilliant as it is, can also lead to confusion. The danger of misinterpretation increases when the critics have to rely on translations. Simmel's awkward phrasing of the relation between "form and content" and the terms themselves which have a well defined meaning and do not confer Simmel's novel definitions readily, contributed highly to the misconceptions about his theory. These misconceptions occurred in spite of Simmel's statement that this terminology (form and content) is preliminary and should not be confounded with the usual meanings of the terms.⁴⁷ In Small's translation it reads:

This is here properly only an analogy, for the sake of approximately designating the elements to be distinguished.

⁴⁶ Spykman, op. cit., p. 271.

⁴⁷ Simmel, Soziologie, p. 4

This antithesis should be understood immediately in its peculiar sense, without prejudice to the provisional names from remoter meanings of the term.⁴⁸

The regrettable part of this is that Simmel, although aware of the ambiguity of the terms, failed to correct his preliminary phrasing. Considering this omission in conjunction with his own inconsistency of usage and the many analogies which Simmel drew to mathematics and geometry, his emphasis on the pure or "formal aspect" of sociation and his reference to pure sociology as being analogous to grammar in language, it is not at all surprising that he was classified - and filed away - with the proponents of the formalistic school of sociology. It is, however, evident from Simmel's writing that he did not advocate

. . . formal analysis of sociological data akin to geometry or grammar . . . Simmel's numerous studies clearly show that he had no intention of assigning a procedure empty of concrete reference to sociology.⁴⁹

To grasp Simmel's ideas takes a great deal of looking beyond instead of looking at his concepts and terminology. Simmel admits or rather states that he does not consider his "Soziologie" to be invulnerable.

If I myself stress the wholly fragmentary incomplete character of this book, I do not do so in order to protect myself against objections to this character. . . Yet if this character should strike one as a defect, it would only go to prove that I have not been able to clarify the fundamental idea of the present volume. For according to this idea,

⁴⁸vide Albion W. Small's translation, "The Problem of Sociology," Am. Jour. Soc., 15:289-320, 1910.

⁴⁹Abel, "Contribution," Am. Soc. Rev., 24(4):476.

nothing more can be attempted than to establish the beginning and the direction of an infinitely long road. . . .⁵⁰

Among Simmel's many critics the most severe is Pitrim Sorokin.

From a purely methodological standpoint, Simmel's sociological method lacks scientific method. I must express my complete disagreement with Dr. R. Park's or Dr. Spykman's high estimation of the sociological method of Simmel. . . . Besides the logical deficiency, due to the ambiguous term 'form', Simmel's method entirely lacks either experimental approach, quantitative investigation, or any systematic factual study of the discussed phenomena.⁵¹

This criticism of Simmel is partly due to Sorokin's misunderstanding of the terms that Simmel used, and to Simmel's unsystematic presentation of ideas.

Kurt H. Wolff explains Sorokin's negative critique as follows:

On the whole, however, it might be more fair to seek an explanation of the formalistic misunderstanding, not in any shortcomings on Simmel's part, nor in any failure on the part of his interpreters, but in more general conditions. It might be suggested that when Simmel was writing, the social sciences did not have available the conceptual tools which he needed to express his thought articulately. He had to work mainly with such non-specific concepts, illustrations, and images as the cultural sciences of his day could offer him.⁵²

Theodore Abel, in his "Systematic Sociology," launches this criticism:

Unfortunately Simmel formulated his theory before he made his sociological studies instead of building a theory upon the results of these studies. He thus failed to give the methodological basis for this special science. We have tried to

⁵⁰Simmel, Soziologie, p. 13; and trans. Wolff, Sociology, p. XXXIII.

⁵¹Pitrim Sorokin, Contemporary Sociological Theories (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1928), p. 502.

⁵²Wolff (ed.), Georg Simmel, p. 63.

deduce the methodological implications which Simmel's writings embody. But they are far from meeting our requirements for an adequate methodology. The tasks of investigation are not specific, no basis for systematization of the subject-matter is given and the methods of investigation employed require further elaboration. The only positive theoretical contribution is the delimitation of the subject-matter, but it is, nevertheless, confusing because of the application of the ambiguous term 'form'.⁵³

In his recent article⁵⁴ in the American Sociological Review, Abel takes a stand which shows that he no longer is pre-occupied with questions that pertain to Simmel's terminology or system of presenting his sociological propositions. Abel, in this article, demonstrates that Simmel has far more to offer in his functional analysis of social processes than could be apprehended by his early critics, including himself. This is also expressed by Robert A. Nisbet in his comment on Abel's article. Nisbet, however, does not go as far as Abel in his positive appraisal. He says:

The evidence is convincing, I believe, that the earlier Abel is still sound. What the present paper does make clear and important, however, is the fact that when Simmel set himself to the study of actual forms, he lost a good deal of his purity. For this we may be grateful. Had Simmel held chastely to his methodological commandments when he turned to such subjects as secrecy, subordination, and the stranger, sociology would be the poorer. . . His own superb studies of concrete forms of association make him less than, and a great deal more than, a formal sociologist. On this point, Abel is emphatically right.⁵⁵

⁵³Abel, Systematic Sociology, p. 49.

⁵⁴Abel, "Contribution," Am. Soc. Rev., 24(4):473-479.

⁵⁵Robert A. Nisbet, "Comment" on Abel's article, "The Contribution of Georg Simmel," Am. Soc. Rev., 24(4):480.

More than thirty years ago, Arthur F. Bentley demonstrated a deep insight into the essential aspects of Simmel's work. He writes:

One only weakness he (Simmel) seems to have, and this he brings out so clearly himself that a hunt for criticism is needless. His forms he compares frequently to form in geometry, in Euclid. He uses the illustration so frequently that he may perhaps be said to have justified his search for social forms by analogies with geometric forms. Today, however, when Euclidean geometry is absorbed into physics, for Simmel's sociology what it manifestly needed is that its statement too should pass into one of energy, of activity, or of interests or pressures, if those last terms happen to be used without false meanings. In his day-book, found after his death, Simmel had written, 'I shall die without heirs of the spirit. So be it.'⁵⁶ But he has left us nevertheless the greatest heritage of all.⁵⁶

Bentley's appraisal of the importance of Simmel's work is remarkably modern. This is astounding since at the time he wrote this, Simmel was either refuted or ignored by the majority of sociologists.

A recent analysis of Simmel's "formal sociology" is presented by F. H. Tenbruck.⁵⁷ He quotes Timasheff:

Few would agree today with Simmel's insistence upon confining sociology to the study of social forms - and Simmel himself was a conspicuous offender of this principle.⁵⁸

Tenbruck's comment on this critique reads:

⁵⁶Arthur F. Bentley, Relativity in Man and Society (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1926), p. 165.

⁵⁷Fredrick H. Tenbruck, "Formal Sociology," Georg Simmel, Wolff (ed.), pp. 61-99.

⁵⁸Nicholas S. Timasheff, Sociological Theory, Its Nature and Growth (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955), p. 102.

Indeed, the violation of the program as viewed by the formalistic interpreters are truly obvious, gross, striking and persistent. However, the very crudeness and continuance of all alleged transgressions should have cautioned against the formalistic interpretation.⁵⁹

Tenbruck points out that Simmel was misunderstood and this misunderstanding resulted in a vicious circle. Since formal sociology confines its investigation to a classification and analysis of the general aspects of society, it becomes a mere "catalogue of human relations."⁶⁰ Thus Simmel's investigations violate the program of the formalistic school; hence Simmel's sociology lacks unity and system; hence his program is of little value to systematic sociology and, therefore, it is useless to search for a better understanding of Simmel's program.⁶¹

Tenbruck realizes that Simmel's writings readily lend themselves to a formalistic misconstruction. So does the recent Abel who says:

Superficial support for this argument can be found, but only by stressing some of Simmel's pronouncements to the exclusion of others, and, particularly, by ignoring the nature of the procedure exemplified in his concrete studies.⁶²

Woodbury A. Small, though being far more objective in his criticism of Simmel than Sorokin, is also a victim of misunderstanding.

⁵⁹Tenbruck, op. cit., p. 62.

⁶⁰Sorokin, op. cit., p. 513; also: Samuel Koenig, Man and Society (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1957), p. 250.

⁶¹Tenbruck, loc. cit.

⁶²Abel, "Contribution," Am. Soc. Rev., 24(4):476.

He comments on a passage in "The Problem of Sociology"⁶³ that Simmel was violating his formalistic system.

Simmel is constantly making unintended, but for that reason all the more significant, concessions to my claims, by dropping into use of process-concepts in place of form-concepts when he wants to be most exact.⁶⁴

Small seems to have given the term "form" the connotation of being static while Simmel had a conception of form that was essentially dynamic. It is unfortunate that the term "form" was isolated. What Simmel wanted to convey were not forms as such but forms-of-sociation. It is important to note that these three words cannot be separated. Instead of forms-of-sociation he might just as well have spoken of "modes of reciprocity" or "types of transactions." Pattern, structure, type, even social process are appropriate equivalents for Simmel's "form".⁶⁵

Small, without recognizing that Simmel in actuality was doing what he proposed in his comment on the abstraction of "social forms," nevertheless conceived the essential idea that was the basis of Simmel's distinction between forms of sociation and contents of sociation. Small comments:

Simmel is quite within his rights in making this abstraction of social forms the subject matter of a special science. He is doing an invaluable service by his analysis of the social forms.

⁶³Simmel, "The Problem of Sociology," trans. Small, Am. Jour. Soc., 15(3):289-320, 1909-1910.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 299; Small's footnote 11.

⁶⁵Abel, "Contribution," Am. Soc. Rev., 24(4):476.

He asserts below, however, that there is no other possible subject-matter for a special science of sociology. Waiving altogether the previous question, namely, special science versus comprehensive method, all that is valid in Simmel's reasoning or in any other reasoning pertinent to the subject, would point to social processes as equally obvious and much more important subject-matter of a social science. . . .⁶⁶

According to this comment, Small did see that Simmel's examples and analogies pointed at "social processes" as the subject matter of sociology but he took this for unintentional and saw in this only the proof that Simmel could not methodologically support his formalistic theory. Small has, like many others, overlooked Simmel's statement as to the preliminary character of the terms which served only as an analogy in order to approximately designate the elements to be distinguished. Simmel warns his readers not to attach other meanings than this analogous one to the terms.⁶⁷

As Tenbruck points out, it was always devastating for Simmel's ideas whenever the significance of this warning was overlooked. In his comments on Sorokin's relentless criticism of Simmel⁶⁸ he calls it "a learned commentary on the historical meaning of 'forms'." Sorokin fails completely to comprehend Simmel's usage of the term.⁶⁹

In recent appraisals of Simmel's work there is a marked decline

⁶⁶Vide Simmel, "The Problem of Sociology," trans. Small, Am. Jour. Soc., 15(3):295.

⁶⁷Simmel, Soziologie, p. 4; also Small's trans., "The Problem of Sociology," Am. Jour. Soc., 15(3):289-320.

⁶⁸Vide Sorokin, op. cit., p. 495.

⁶⁹Tenbruck, op. cit., p. 64.

of criticism in regard to Simmel's "formal" propositions. This is probably the result of a growing awareness of the essential aspects of his contributions which go far beyond his attempt to delineate the scope and subject matter of "pure" sociology, and the thorough objective translations and interpretations which became available to the English reader and which paid attention to Simmel's note of the provisional character of his terms, especially the word "form." By realizing that Simmel, as he himself admits indirectly, did lack the conceptual tools for the precise presentation of his ideas and, therefore, had to rely upon analogies, a much more objective appraisal of his work became possible.

Tenbruck expresses this very clearly:

Simmel was unable to articulate his fundamental idea programmatically and thus, in order to illuminate it, he had to rely on its illustrative applications in analysis.⁷⁰

Rudolf Heberle comes to a similar conclusion when he writes:

It is clear from these examples (of Simmel's sociological analysis) that Simmel actually intended more than a mere systematization of social forms.⁷¹

In a just appraisal of Simmel's work, one has to consider that he had not the knowledge at his disposal that was gained by empirical and quantitative research in the years that have lapsed since his death. The foundations upon which he built his theory were not yet reinforced

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 65

⁷¹Rudolf Heberle, "The Sociology of Georg Simmel: The Forms of Social Interaction," An Introduction to the History of Sociology, Harry Elmer Barnes (ed.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 264.

by the painstaking research which marked the growth especially of American sociology. But again, one must credit Simmel for being aware that his foundations needed to be tested and verified by those who would pick up where he left off, after showing the direction. In his own words,

I hope, however, that the method of the sociology which I am commending will emerge more surely, and even perhaps more clearly, from exposition of its concrete problems. . . . In things of the mind, indeed, it is not infrequent . . . that the portions which . . . we must call the foundation, are less secure than the superstructure erected upon it.⁷²

III. SIMILARITIES OF SIMMEL'S BASIC THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN PRESENT-DAY SOCIOLOGY

Simmel's sociological work was met, both in Europe and in the United States, with enthusiastic approval on one side, and with severe criticism on the other. To the former we can count Robert E. Park, Nicholas Spykman, and Arthur F. Bentley. To the latter we have to count Pitrim Sorokin, Theodore Abel (in his earlier work), and F. Znaniecki. Woodbury A. Small credited Simmel with showing keen insight into sociological phenomena but disagreed with him on essential points, especially those concerning the "formalistic" concept.

Today, the problems of formal sociology are not vanished. One of these problems is to comprehend what is meant by social interaction. As Simmel had pointed out, interaction is more than the sum of actors

⁷²Simmel, *Soziologie*, p. 13; and trans. Small, "The Problem of Sociology," *Am. Jour. Soc.*, 15(3):309.

pursuing their individual goals while being influenced by such favorable or unfavorable moments as the action systems of other actors may represent.⁷³ Social interaction, according to Simmel, creates a certain level of unity directly related to the intensity of the interaction. This same idea, though in a different terminology, is expressed by Florian Znaniecki when he writes:

A real objective social connection between two agents, not merely between two actions, is made only when these agents rise above the one-sidedness of their separate points of view as agents, so as to create together a mutuality of experience and activity which did not exist originally.⁷⁴

The most criticized concept in Simmel's sociology was his distinction between form and content of sociation. In Talcott Parsons' theory of social action one finds a quite similar discrimination between form and content as two different aspects of action:

The scheme, that is relative to the units of action and interaction, is a relational scheme. It analyses the structure and processes of the systems of such units to their situations, including other units. It is not as such concerned with the internal structure of the units, except so far as this directly bears on the relational system.⁷⁵

Only a few pages further, Parsons says even more clearly:

In the most general sense the 'need-disposition' system of the individual actor seems to have two most primary or elementary aspects which may be called the 'gratificational' aspect and the 'orientational' aspect. The first concerns the 'content' of his

⁷³Tenbruck, op. cit., p. 76.

⁷⁴Florian Znaniecki, Social Actions (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1936), p. 121. Cf. Tenbruck, op. cit., p. 77.

⁷⁵Talcott Parsons, The Social System (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1951), p. 4. Cf. Tenbruck, op. cit., p. 17.

interchange with the object world, 'what' he gets out of his interaction with it, and what its 'costs' to him are. The second concerns the 'how' of his relation to the object world, the patterns or ways in which his relations to it are organized.⁷⁶

This illustrates how Parsons uses a distinction between gratificational aspect - content in Simmel's distinction - and orientational aspect - form at Simmel. This similarity, however, does not imply that Parsons' distinction was modeled after or influenced by Simmel. It merely serves as an example for the fact that modern sociological theorists are not free from the problem of designating specific qualities to an abstraction by differentiation between two aspects of an empirically indivisible phenomenon.

Reinhard Bendix expresses this when he says:

It can, indeed, be maintained that the problems raised by men like Simmel and Durkheim are still far from settled.⁷⁷

There is, however, an even more fundamental way in which Simmel's approach can be considered as being part of modern sociology. Kurt H. Wolff says, "It is close to the modern concern with 'social structure'."⁷⁸ And in the words of Tenbruck,

Modern sociology has developed an extensive vocabulary for the description of social structure in general; the concepts of status, role, typical expectations, typical actions, and norms are foremost among these. In principle, the forms of sociation are specific roles, statuses, and norms, viewed as reciprocities and as they occur in historical complexes. Conversely, the theory of social structure is merely a theory of form per se.⁷⁹

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 7.

⁷⁷Reinhard Bendix, "Max Weber's Interpretation of Conduct and History," *Am. Jour. Soc.*, 51:518, 1946.

⁷⁸Wolff, *Sociology*, p. XXXVI. ⁷⁹Tenbruck, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

It was Simmel who was the first to introduce this viewpoint for a study of the structure of society. Though he did not develop a systematic conceptualization of societal structure he comprehended this important aspect of social reality. Whether sociology deals with institutions or processes, the frame of reference is always structure.⁸⁰ MacIver serves as another illustration for this point. After presenting a table of "General Classification of Interests and Associations" in which he differentiates between "interests" (content) on one side and "type forms" of associations (form) on the other side,⁸¹ he says:

Our task in this study (of the social structure) is to reveal the distinctive types of association which enter into the social structure.⁸²

Leopold von Wiese, who credits Simmel in many footnotes, writes under the heading "Distinctive Character of the Sociological Viewpoint":

Sociology . . . must deal with interhuman relations without immediate reference to ends, norms, or purposes; it involves a wholly different kind of abstraction.⁸³

Von Wiese, without using the terms form or content, nevertheless emphasizes that there must be, from the sociological viewpoint, an abstraction of interhuman relations. Sociology cannot be immediately

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 78.

⁸¹Robert Morrison MacIver, Society. Its Structure and Changes (New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), pp. 163-164.

⁸²Ibid., p. 164.

⁸³Leopold von Wiese and Howard Becker, Systematic Sociology (John Willey and Sons, Inc., 1932), p. 11. (This work is included because of Howard Becker's adaption and amplification of von Wiese's Beziehungslehre.)

concerned with "ends, norms, and purposes" (content) which leaves for the "different kind of abstraction" only what Simmel termed "forms of sociation."⁸⁴ Thus, the conception of sociology as being the science of interhuman relations (Beziehungslehre) is in essence identical with Simmel's view of sociology as the science of the human forms of sociation.

Ellwood, in his classic "Sociology and its Psychological Aspect" defines Simmel's form of sociation in terms of relationship.

A form of association is . . . a type of coordination or coadaptation between individuals. It is the form of relationship to one another which individuals take on in carrying on some phase of common life. As has already been said, it is largely to be accredited to Professor Simmel that more attention has recently been paid to this important phase of the social life.⁸⁵

In the text of Broom and Selznick, Sociology, the opening sentence of the first section reads:

A major objective of this book is to explore the following general principle: The way men behave is largely determined by their relations to each other and by their membership in groups.⁸⁶

And again from Ellwood:

As Simmel . . . emphasized, the way in which people are associated together is frequently very influential in determining their behavior.⁸⁷

⁸⁴Beziehungslehre is a less ambiguous term than "Formen der Vergesellschaftung" which Simmel used. The terms, however, circumscribe the same phenomenon.

⁸⁵Charles A. Ellwood, Sociology and its Psychological Aspect (second edition; New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1912), p. 344.

⁸⁶Leonard Broom and Philip Selznick, Sociology (second edition; Evanston, Illinois; White Plains, New York: Peterson and Company, 1958), p. 11.

⁸⁷Ellwood, op. cit., p. 345.

Keeping in mind the definition of sociology as Simmel conceived of it⁸⁸ a survey of definitions of sociology since the time of Simmel demonstrates the validity of his conception even today, while many such definitions of his contemporaries became obsolete. Without making the claim that Simmel is the sole contributor of essential ideas to the present definitions of sociology, it is, nevertheless, remarkable that no aspect of Simmel's conception is outdated or irrelevant.

The definitions of the "science of sociology" of many of his contemporaries did lack the scientific concreteness that was essential for sociology if it was to be regarded as an independent science. Simmel defined sociology in his essay "Das Problem der Soziologie"⁸⁹ in 1894. In 1895, a translation (translator not indicated) of this appeared in the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.⁹⁰ In 1900, Giddings defined sociology as "an attempt to account for the origin, growth, structure, and activities of society by the operation of physical, vital, and psychical causes working together in a process of evolution."⁹¹ One year later, in his Inductive Sociology, he defines sociology as the "scientific study of society."⁹²

⁸⁸ Vide page 21 of this treatise.

⁸⁹ Georg Simmel, Das Problem der Soziologie (Leipzig, 1894).

⁹⁰ Georg Simmel, "The Problem of Sociology," trans. unknown, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 6:412-423, 1895.

⁹¹ Franklin H. Giddings, Principles of Sociology (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900), p. 8.

⁹² Franklin H. Giddings, Inductive Sociology (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1901), p. 9.

Lester F. Ward, in 1902, defined sociology as "the science of society."⁹³ In 1905, Ross called sociology "the science of social phenomena."⁹⁴ In the same year, Small, who was well acquainted with Simmel's work, introduced sociology as "the science of social processes,"⁹⁵ and Lester F. Ward, in collaboration with J. Q. Dealy, formulated a new definition: "The study of human association, including whatever conduces to it or modifies it."⁹⁶

Today, the confusion about the definition of sociology has not altogether vanished, although it is more a problem of terminology rather than of content. A lack of precise terminology, which once had contributed to the refutation of Simmel by the misinterpretation of his ambiguous term "form", is still with us. Simmel inadvertently demonstrated, by his own lack of terminological precision, the necessity and importance of a definite, common, scientific terminology.

⁹³Lester F. Ward, "Sociology," Popular Science Monthly, June, 1902, p. 113.

⁹⁴Edward A. Ross, Foundations of Sociology, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), p. 6.

⁹⁵Albion W. Small, General Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1905), p. 35.

⁹⁶J. Q. Dealy and Lester F. Ward, Textbook of Sociology (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), p. 2.

CHAPTER IV

THREE STUDIES IN SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY BY SIMMEL

After formulating his theoretical framework, Simmel undertook to analyze a variety of social phenomena. Theodore Abel comments:

The fruitfulness of his theoretical proposals was demonstrated by Simmel's own writings. His subtle, perceptive and discerning mind produced a veritable horn of plenty of significant sociological studies. As a total output by a single person, the wealth of original contributions made by Simmel has yet to find its equal.⁹⁷

From among this wealth, three of Simmel's studies have been selected to furnish the factual basis for the testing of the existence of Simmel's influence. The first subject, "Superordination and Subordination," was chosen because Simmel assigned great significance to this sociation process.

The second subject, "Conflict," was selected because there exists an abundance of reference material which is relevant to the problem of this thesis.

The third subject, "The Quantitative Determination of the Group," was chosen since it incorporates various aspects of group theory which aroused interest among American sociologists at one time or another.

Each of the three subjects is presented in an abstraction of the main concepts. For each of these abstractions, Simmel's original as well as the various translations have been used.

⁹⁷Abel, "Contribution," Am. Soc. Rev., 24(4):475.

In all "forms of sociation" or, as they could be called, processes of psychic interaction, the individuals become linked together by mutual influence and determination. The involved individuals form, if the above criterion is met, a group in the sociological sense. However, as Simmel points out, not all interactions constitute a process of sociation. The mere exchange of glances between two individuals who happen to stand at the same bus stop is not a social process. Only if they mutually influence and determine each other's behavior, can one speak of a process of sociation, of a group.⁹⁸

This leads, logically, to a conception of a continuum of social interactions where the ephemeral interactions, such as the exchange of a glance, are located on one end, while the intensive intimate interactions of the primary group would be located on the other end. The processes of interaction can be viewed as the "social reality" which sociology is to study.

It is obvious that all social relations involve a psychic element. It is less obvious that social relations also involve a moral element.⁹⁹ In any kind of interaction in which one party loses all human significance for the other, any relationship in which one party considers the other merely as a means for an end which is not related to this other party, or in a case of complete indifference of one party to the other, no social relations in the sociological sense

⁹⁸Simmel, Grundfragen, p. 12.

⁹⁹Barnes (ed.), Introduction, p. 256.

of the term exist¹⁰⁰ since such relationships are lacking the reciprocity which is essential in sociation processes. True sociation always involves reciprocity of rights and duties. This is why society can be regarded as a system of relations of morally, legally, conventionally¹⁰¹ entitled and obliged beings.¹⁰²

This principle is highly significant in the analysis of power-relations. In his study of "Superordination and Subordination," Simmel demonstrates his keen insight into these relationships.

I. SUPER-ORDINATION AND SUB-ORDINATION¹⁰³

Every social occurrence consists of an interaction between individuals. Each individual contributes both in an active and a passive fashion to this relationship and thus a two-sided operation exists. In case of superiority and inferiority, this relation assumes the appearance of a one-sided operation. Such a relationship constitutes the sociological expression of psychological differences in human beings and appears in a more or less pronounced form. It seems as if the superior exerts an influence which the inferior merely undergoes.

¹⁰⁰Simmel, Soziologie, pp. 101-102; and trans. Small, "Superiority and Subordination," Am. Jour. Soc., 2:171, 1896-97.

¹⁰¹The similarity between the concepts moe, law, and folkways is striking.

¹⁰²Barnes (ed.), Introduction, p. 256.

¹⁰³Adapted from Simmel, Soziologie, chapter III., "Ueber- und Unterordnung," pp. 134-246; and trans. Small, "Superiority and Subordination," Am. Jour. Soc., 2:167-189 and 392-415; and Spykman, op. cit., chapter I., "Submission," pp. 95-111.

But the inferior is not a purely passive agent since he also exerts an influence on the superior. The important characteristic of this relation is that the effect which the inferior actually exerts upon the superior is determined by the latter. The relationship, then, of superior to inferior is a form of sociation. It always allows a certain amount of independence and spontaneity on the part of the subordinate. Even in the worst tyranny, the subordinate has the choice between submission and punishment. Thus, submission cannot be viewed as purely passive, but with an active aspect as well. The resulting relationship, therefore, is a form of social interaction.

What is called "authority" also requires much more active participation on the part of those who submit to it than is generally supposed. To a human being an authority means to subscribe to his judgments and decisions a certainty and infallibility which are otherwise ascribed only to universal postulates and logical deductions. Authority can be established in two different ways. First, it can be the result of the fact that a superior individual inspires his group to such faith and confidence in his opinions and decisions that they obtain for that group the character of objective validity. In the second instance, authority is given to an individual by a superindividual institution like the state, the school or the church. In the first case, authority develops out of the individual, in the second it descends into the individual from the outside. But in both cases, the spontaneous and active participation of the subordinates is necessary.

In a differentiation of the relation between superordination and

subordination, three possible types of subordination present themselves. They are, subordination to (1) an individual, (2) a group, and (3) an objective, impersonal principle.

Subordination to an Individual

The subordination of a group to a single person implies a very decided unification of the group. This is equally the case with both characteristic forms of this subordination, namely

a) when the superior is more a leader than master and as such only represents in himself the power and the will of the group. Thus real internal unity exists;

b) when the group is aware of opposition to the head and forms a party opposed to the head. This opposition to the controlling power creates group unity also.

Thus the termination of a group in a head, whether in case of harmony or opposition, helps to effect unification of the group. This is most obvious in the political realm. In a monarchy, for example, the disappearance of its head to which all are subordinate - with the end of this political pressure - all political unity often likewise ceases. There spring up a great number of party factions which previously, in view of that supreme political interest for or against the monarchy, found no room.

It has been stated that the termination of a group in a head leads to unification of the group. This unification may present itself in two different forms,

a) as a leveling of the group members;

b) as a gradation of the group members.

In the first case a collection of individuals are alike subordinate to a single person and in so far they are equal. The autocrat has an interest in equalizing the differences of social strata because marked superiorities and inferiorities in the relations between his subjects come into real as well as psychological competition with his own supremacy.

It seems irrational that a single person can exercise lordship over a great mass of others. This can only be understood from a psychological perspective. The ruler and the individual subject do not enter into the relationship of super and sub-ordination with the same quantum of their personality. The mass is composed through the fact that many individuals unite fractions of their personality, interests, one-sided purposes, and needs, while the rest of each personality rises above this common level and does not at all enter into that "mass" which is ruled by the single person. This explains why it is possible that in very despotically ruled groups individuality may develop itself very freely, in those aspects particularly which are not in participation with the mass. Thus began the development of modern individuality in the despotism of the Italian Renaissance. Here, it was for the direct interest of the despots to allow the largest freedom in all non-political aspects. Thus subordination was more tolerable. It is one of the foremost tasks of administrative art to distinguish properly between those characteristics of men with respect to which they may be included

in a leveled mass, and those other characteristics which may be left to free individual development. That in which the individuals composing the mass cannot be unified must be left outside the circuit of super- and sub-ordination.

This is the way that the leveling must be understood which corresponds with the superiority of a single person.

In the second case, the unification through gradation of group members, the group may assume the form of a pyramid. In this case the subordinates form a graded strata of power. These strata, as they grow smaller in number of members, grow, inversely, greater in significance. They lead up from the base of the inferior mass to the tip, the superior ruler. This pyramid may come into existence in two ways. It may result from a gradual loss of the substance of supremacy of the single ruler, while he is retaining its forms and titles. In such a case more of the power is retained by the orders nearest to the former autocrat than is acquired by those more distant. Since the power thus gradually declines, a gradation of superordination and subordination emerges.

A pyramid-shaped power structure may also evolve in a fashion which is the reverse of that just described. Starting with a relative equality of the members of the group, certain members gain greater influence. Within the group of such elevated members, certain especially powerful individuals differentiate themselves until this development accommodates itself to one or a few heads. This form of development is frequently found in economic relationships where it is not uncommon that a single individual dominates a certain branch of industry.

Subordination to a Group

Subordination to a group occurs in two different forms;

a) the superior may be a group (crowd) of individuals actually assembled and in close spatial proximity; or

b) the superior group may be an abstract unity which is expressed by a more or less permanent, objective social structure (state, church, organized associations).

In subordination to an objective structure, the superior - inferior relationship itself obtains a more or less objective character. The participation of the superior in the relationships loses its subjective aspects and obtains a superindividual character. Sentiments, feelings, and emotions are excluded from the participation of the superior, and the relationship becomes more or less cold and formal. Such a relationship can be an advantage to the individual subordinate if he is helped by a formal, impartial, factual, and business-like relationship. It is a disadvantage if the individual is helped by a benevolent, altruistic, and merciful relationship. As an example, the stock company, representing a superindividual structure, exploits its employees less than the private entrepreneur, but is not at liberty in a case where indemnities or special aids are in question, to act as generously as a private owner who need not give account of his outlays.

Subordination to a crowd shows another variation. In impersonal institutions (state, church, etc.) which function as legal persons, the relationship of the superior to the subordinate is stripped of personal

elements and obtains more rational, superpersonal elements. In crowds, the participation of the superior loses also the personal elements, but this time it obtains infra-individual collective emotional elements.¹⁰⁴

Subordination to an Impersonal Principle

Subordination to an impersonal principle or a law does not involve a reciprocity. The individuals who do not obey a law are not really subordinate to that law. If they change it, they really abolish the old law and put a new one in its place by which they obey. This leads to a very interesting sociological constellation, the subordination of the superior to the laws which he gives himself.

Subordination to an impersonal principle gives to the individuals concerned a peculiar double relationship. The fact that they are, as a group, imbued with a single spirit or subject to the same law, gives them in their relations to outsiders a more or less equal position. Within the group, however, they stand to one another in different relationships of superiority and inferiority.

This double aspect of their formal sociological situation affects their whole social life. The manager of a store holds a commanding position within the organization; in his relations to the customer, however, he will hold the role of a servant, not a superior. On the other hand, even the holders of the lowest positions will feel themselves bearers of the objective principles and upholders of the dignity of the firm in their relations to the outside world. As another

¹⁰⁴Simmel, Soziologie, pp. 172-177.

example, the power of the father amongst the Germanic people was originally unlimited and entirely subjective. But this power gradually became limited by a feeling of responsibility. The unity of the family group embodied in the family spirit grew into an ideal power. Thus the family is thought of as standing above all individual members and the family head himself is subordinate to the family idea. He can command the other members of the family, but only in the name of the higher ideal unity.

II. CONFLICT¹⁰⁵

The unity of groups is not solely derived from common interests and harmonious co-ordination of elements. Societies require a certain proportion of attraction and repulsion, harmony and disharmony, association and dissociation, co-operation and competition among their elements to obtain a definite organization. The acceptance of leadership and the subordination to authority are not the only forms of interaction which make for social unity. Conflicts and oppositions between the elements of a group fulfill the same function. They are also contributing to the total process of sociation and, therefore, must be studied with reference to that function. Conflicts and oppositions may arise from different subjective impulses, wants,

¹⁰⁵Adapted from Simmel, *Soziologie*, chapter IV, "Der Streit," pp. 247-336; and trans. Small, "The Sociology of Conflict," *Am. Jour. Soc.*, 9:799-802; and Spykman, *op. cit.*, chapter II, "Opposition," pp. 112-127.

desires, envies, or hatreds. But once antagonism has arisen, the function of the actual struggle or conflict is to overcome the existing dualism and to arrive at some form of unity, even if it involves the destruction of one of the parties. That conflict eventually terminates in a peace, either in the form of coordination or in the form of subordination, is the obvious expression of the fact that it is a special form of synthesis between elements. It is a higher concept which contains and implies both union and opposition.

The sociological function of tension and repulsion is most clearly manifest in social structures which consist of a hierarchy of classes. The caste system of India does not derive its form solely from the internal coherence of elements within each caste, but also from the external repulsion between castes. The opposition and enmities between them prevent the gradual disappearance of the class boundaries and are, therefore, positive contributing factors in the preservation of the existing structure. But opposition does not merely function as a means of the preservation of a total system of relationships, it is in many forms of sociation an integral part of the relationship itself.

A conflict and struggle exclusively for the sake of the struggle and without any other impulse or ulterior motive occurs only in the case of the contest game. It contains nothing in its sociological motivation but the contest itself. The worthless markers for the sake of which men often play with the same earnestness with which they play for money, indicate the purely formal aspect of this impulse, yet a certain unity is prevalent which implies sociation. People unite to

contest, and the contest takes place according to rules and regulations. Thus, a contest implies a form of group whose norms (rules) are usually much more strict and impersonal, and are lived up to with a finer sense of honor, than are the norms of co-operative associations.

A special type of correlation between unity and opposition occurs in the different forms of competition. In one form of competition the object of the conflict is in the hands of a third person, and the mere victory over the opponent, although the first necessary step, is not the final aim. In the second form of competition, each competitor works immediately for the final aim without spending any energy on his opponent. This type of competition is illustrated in a track meet and in modern business.

This complete concentration on the factual aspect of the issue leaves only an antagonism of a formal nature. The result is that competition can be used as a form of conflict which will be of benefit to both parties. Therefore, it is often stimulated artificially and it leads to an increased activity on the part of each competing group, which will be for the benefit of the whole.

This peculiar character of competition, the neglect of the opponent and the concentration on results are a way to stimulate the creation of objective values as a means to subjective satisfaction. This is the situation in modern business where the producers fight their competitors by producing better and cheaper goods.

Apart from these indirect advantages, competition is a most important socializing force. It produces results which could otherwise

be brought about only through love and altruism. Since the decline of the small group and the resulting disappearance of solidarity, individuals act in the interest of other individuals only if they are forced or stimulated to it by competition. In its modern form, it is not merely a struggle of all against all, but also a struggle of all for all. Therefore, a competitive system is not identical with a system that is purely individualistic. The competitor works, of course, for his own interests. But as the contest is fought by means of objective values or social services and is usually advantageous to the group, it may be in the interest of the group to foster competition.

The Results of Conflict for the Internal Structure of the Group

Apart from the sociological significance which conflicts possess for the relationships between opponents, they lead also to important modifications of the inner structure of the involved parties. These modifications are of sociological importance only if the parties are social groups.

At the outbreak of a struggle, a group is forced to concentrate its energies and centralize its activities. In time of peace, it can allow a great deal of local autonomy and decentralization. As a result, conflict leads to purification of groups through the expulsion of in-harmonious elements. In time of peace, a certain number of antagonistic elements can be tolerated. But in a struggle, the group can allow only small derivations from the norm and must suppress or expel any member whose divergence threatens the harmonious unity on which the strength

of the group depends.

A struggle, therefore, strengthens the unity of groups. But a common opponent not only strengthens unity but often creates a unity which did not formerly exist. Military alliances and political combinations are only two instances of this phenomenon. The unifying force of conflict is illustrated not only in the formation of new combinations but also by the fact that the termination of the struggle often leads to a split in the victorious group. Combinations made especially for the purpose of fighting a common opponent often contain elements which could not combine for peaceful pursuits. As long as the struggle lasts, the individual differences are suppressed, but when the conflict is ended, the divergence between the elements reasserts itself and leads to separation or even perhaps to a mutual antagonism.¹⁰⁶

The Termination of Conflict

Among the many forms which terminate conflicts, there are three main categories, (1) victory, (2) compromise, and (3) conciliation.

The simplest and most radical form of passage from war to peace is victory. Since victories occur in different types of completeness, the one in which a resignation of the opponent is involved is of special importance for the succeeding peace. This confession of inferiority and acknowledgement of defeat before actual exhaustion is not a simple phenomenon. It may be induced by various motives such as a tendency toward self-humiliation, or the feeling that the confession of defeat

¹⁰⁶Simmel, Soziologie, pp. 306-323.

is a gift to the conqueror and, as such, a last act of strength.

The termination of a conflict by compromise is completely different from a termination by victory. In primitive times, conflicts over a single specific object would not be terminated if the object was indivisible. One of the great advancements in civilization is that this is possible today by differentiating between the value of an object and the object itself (invention of exchange). Once this differentiation had been accomplished, the possibility of terminating conflicts about objects (conflicts induced by hatred or revenge allow no compromise) through an exchange of values was created.

In contrast to compromise, which is an objective means of terminating conflict, conciliation is purely subjective. The tendency toward conciliation, which seeks to end struggle apart from any objective grounds, is a specific sociological impulse similar to the impulse to quarrel without objective grounds. The spirit of conciliation often manifests itself most clearly after an enthusiastic devotion to struggle and when the fighting energies become exhausted. Conciliation is relatively independent from the objective or actual situation. It can occur after the complete victory of one party or in the midst of an undivided struggle. It is a subjective means of terminating struggle without reference to the probable outcome, be it victory or compromise. It is thus a removal of the roots of conflict without reference to the fruits which these formerly bore, as well as to that which may later be planted in their place.

III. THE QUANTITATIVE DETERMINATION OF THE GROUP¹⁰⁷

A group of a certain size must build organs, establish forms, and maintain regulations which a smaller group does not need. Small groups, on the other hand, develop forms of interaction which disappear when they grow in size. This quantitative determination of a group, as it may be called, has a twofold function. Negatively speaking, certain developments which are necessary or at least possible as far as the contents or conditions of life are concerned, can be realized only below or above a particular number of elements. Thus the content determines the size of the group and thereby the form. The forms of secret organizations and of certain religious sects which are limited in their membership on account of their doctrines are illustrative of this negative determination. The positive aspect is evident when a change in form is directly required by a purely quantitative change of the group. In that case, the size immediately determines the form.¹⁰⁸

The numerically simplest structures which can still be designated as social interactions occur between two elements. Nevertheless, we may even subsume under the sociological category a single individual but only because two phenomena, isolation and freedom, appear in relation to the individual and are distinctly of a sociological

¹⁰⁷Adapted from Simmel, Soziologie, chapter II, "Die quantitative Bestimmtheit der Gruppe," pp. 47-133; and trans. Wolff, "Quantitative Aspects of the Group," Sociology, p. 85 ff.; and Spykman, op. cit., chapter III, "The Numerical Relations of Social Forms," pp. 128-143.

¹⁰⁸Simmel, Soziologie, p. 47.

character. Not only are these phenomena characteristic of the relation between the individual and the group, but the amount of freedom and isolation which the group allows the individual members is immediately significant for the structure of the whole.

The mere fact that an individual maintains no interaction with other individuals is, of course, not sociological. But the situation that is expressed by the concept isolation does not consist of this fact alone. Isolation does not signify merely the absence of all society. For the isolated individual, society exerts a long-distance influence either as lingering-on of past relations or as anticipation of future relationships. The isolated man does not suggest a being that has been the only inhabitant of the globe from his birth. For his condition, too, is determined by sociation, even though negatively.

Isolation is interaction between two parties, one of which leaves after exerting certain influences. The isolated individual is isolated only in reality, because ideally, in the mind of the other party, he continues to live and act. For example, the feeling of isolation is rarely as decisive and intensive when one actually finds oneself physically alone, as when one is a stranger, without relations among physically close persons, at a party, in a train, or in the traffic of a large city. An essential trait of a group structure is whether it favors or even permits such loneliness in its midst. Close and intimate groups allow no such intercellular vacuums in their structure. But in larger groups a certain quantity and quality of social life will produce a distinct number of temporarily or chronically

isolated existences. They constitute anti-social phenomena similar to the criminals, prostitutes, and suicides.

Isolation thus is a relation which is lodged within an individual but which exists between him and a certain group or group life in general. But it is sociologically significant in still another way: It may also be an interruption or period occurring in a given relationship between two or more persons. As such it is especially important in those relationships whose very nature is the denial of isolation. This applies, above all, to monogamous marriage. A marriage in which husband and wife occasionally enjoy the pleasures of isolation, even though happy in their relationship, is different from one in which such isolation would be considered as lack of faithfulness or as a danger to the relationship.

It must be clear that isolation has also a positive sociological significance. Not only isolation but also freedom appears in the first place as a negation of sociation, as an absence of all social restraint. This may describe the position of a Christian or Hindu hermit or of a solitary settler, but for a social being freedom has a much more positive meaning. Freedom itself is, for any individual who does have relations to other individuals, a specific relation to the environment. It appears as a continuous process of emancipation from social restraints, as a struggle not merely for independence but for the right to enter voluntarily into dependence. This fight must be renewed after every victory. Thus freedom, or the absence of relations, as a negative social attitude is almost never a permanent possession. It is a process

of constant liberation from restraints which limit in reality, or attempt to limit ideally, the independence of the individual. It is not a being, but a becoming, a social activity. It is, even though only from the viewpoint of the individual, a relationship.

Not only in its functional aspect, but also with regard to the content, does freedom mean more than absence of restraint. Freedom from the influence of others would in numerous cases have no meaning or significance for the individual if it did not facilitate an extension of his will over others. While apparently negative in character, freedom has in reality a very positive significance. To a great extent, freedom consists in a process of liberation and it obtains meaning and significance as a reaction against restraint. But it no less consists in a power relation to others, in the possibility of making oneself count, and in the opportunity for making others tributary or subject. It is in these relationships that it finds its positive value and realization.¹⁰⁹

That such apparently individual qualities as isolation and freedom are in reality forms of sociological relationships can, however, be pointed out only by referring to indirect and complicated connections. In view of this, the simplest sociological formation is, therefore, the reciprocity which occurs between two elements. Such interaction is present in the dyadic group (union of two). That the dyad has a typical sociological form is evident from the fact that the

¹⁰⁹Simmel, Soziologie, pp. 76-80.

most divergent individuals uniting for the most varied motives will show combinations of the same formation. The dyad, in itself sociation, contains the scheme, germ, and material of innumerable more complex forms.

Everyday experiences show the specific character that a relationship attains by the fact that only two individuals participate in it. A secret between two persons ties each of them in a very different manner than if even only three have a part in it. General experience seems to indicate that this minimum of two, with which the secret ceases to be the property of the one individual, is at the same time the maximum at which its preservation is relatively secure.

The difference between the dyad and larger groups consists in the fact that the dyad has a different relation to each of its two elements than the larger groups have to their members. In the dyad, there exists never that super-personal life which the individual conceives as not dependent on him. As soon, however, as there is a sociation of three, a group continues to exist even if one of the members drops out. This dependence of the dyad upon its two individual members causes the thought of its existence to be accompanied by the thought of its termination much more closely and impressively than in any other group where every member knows that even after his retirement or death the group can continue to exist.

Ideally, any large group can be immortal. A dyad, however, depends on each of its two elements alone in its death though not in its life: for its life it needs both, but for its death only one.

The Triadic Group

That the combinations of two elements have specific traits is shown by the fact that the entrance of a third element modifies it entirely. For among three elements, each one operates as an intermediary between the other two, exhibiting a twofold function, namely to unite and to separate. Added to the direct relationship which both reinforces and interferes with the immediate reciprocity, the new group is less dependent on the active participation of the elements than the dyadic group. It absorbs less of the total personality and can continue its existence if one element drops out.

The triadic group may manifest three characteristic formations which are impossible in dyadic groups. The first is the mediation or non-partisan arbitration, the second the "tertius gaudens"¹¹⁰ and the third is indicated by the motto "divide et impera."¹¹¹

In the first instance, the mediation aims to prevent a disruption of the existing unity between the opposing elements and thus serves as a means to the ends of the group. In the second instance, he makes the antagonism between the others serve as a means to his own ends; and in the last instance, the third element plays an even more active role by actually creating a conflict to gain advantage. The result is that they will mutually counterbalance each other and leave

¹¹⁰Literally, "the laughing third," meaning the third party which draws advantage from the quarrel of the two others.

¹¹¹Literally, "Divide and rule," meaning that the third element directs the actions of the two other elements against each other so they are weakened and come under the dominance of the third element.

the third element free to pursue its own interests, or mutually weaken each other enough to give the third element a predominance which no other single element can dispute.

These configurations occur not only as relationships between persons but also as relationships between groups.¹¹²

The Large and the Small Group

For groups larger than triadic groups no correlation between specific formations and numerically definable magnitudes can be formulated. But a clear distinction can still be drawn between the forms of small groups and the forms of large groups. The correlation between the size of the group and the form is apparent in social gatherings. A party for thirty guests requires certain standards of food, drink, dress, and behavior which do not exist for a party of two or three. In the greater social circle, the more intimate contacts between individuals disappear and need to be compensated for by other means. For that reason, there is a close relation between the size of the social gathering and the luxury necessary to make it a success. Also, more standardized, formal behavior is exhibited. In their sociological aspect, smaller groups are characterized by more active participation from the individual members, that a greater part of the personalities of the individuals is absorbed, and that they are more clearly and sharply separated from one another. The larger groups show in these respects just the opposite sociological characteristics. The

¹¹²Simmel, Soziologie, pp. 99-126.

forms which are characteristic of large groups result from the fact that they are forced to build special structures to take over the function which the immediate interaction between the people fulfills in small circles.

The formal difference between large and small groups is also manifest in the type of norm which secures the self-preservation of a group. In small groups, the relationships between individuals are regulated by mores. The large group needs, in addition to these, the law.

Society is interested in the moral perfection of the individual only so far as it guarantees an adequate social behavior, that is, only so far as it regulates social relationships.

Mores regulate a large part of the individual's existence, but their function is limited to a small social circle and their sanction is not always sufficient. Laws regulate a small part of the individual's existence, but its function extends over a large social circle and its sanction is guaranteed by severe and forceful restraint. Morality regulates the whole of the individual's existence, but it has no sanction other than the distastes of conscience.

These are the three special forms of norms which regulate the internal and external relations of the individual in his social groups. Their purely formal aspect is evident from the fact that the same content may, at different periods, be left to the mores, the laws, or individual morality.

CHAPTER V

THE INFLUENCE OF SIMMEL'S SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES ON AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

In the attempt to trace the influence of Simmel's sociological theories upon American sociology, an almost Simmelian problem comes to the foreground. Since, according to Simmel, influences are exerted through psychic interaction and since the influence may result in a positive or a negative attitude, which may or may not be expressed in overt behavior, a truly speculative position is reached.

Since it is essential for this study to demonstrate Simmel's influence through specific manifestations, the full range of his influence cannot be demonstrated. Influence, as already indicated, may result in positive or negative attitudes. This leads to a relative position from which "influence" could be deduced on the mere basis of being acquainted, even partially, with Simmel's work. From such a point of view it cannot be denied that for example Sorokin, Simmel's most severe critic, was influenced by him. So were all the others who studied Simmel's work whether they valued it or not. In Sorokin's critique of Simmel, Simmel's influence is manifest in his negative attitude toward Simmel's work. Thus Simmel's writings exerted a negative influence upon Sorokin. However, the problem of this thesis does not concern negative influence or the rejection of Simmel's sociological theories, but positive influence and the acceptance, if only partial, of Simmel's thought.

This makes a definition of influence mandatory. Influence in this thesis means a positive constructive suggestion which serves or served as a stimulus to make use of or to expand the sociological thought of Georg Simmel in American sociology. However, this definition of influence includes influences which never became manifest. Such intangible influence does not contribute to the solution of the thesis problem. In other words, it is necessary to demonstrate the positive influence of Simmel wherever it is expressed. This limits the useful data to acknowledgements of, references to, and quotations from Simmel in the works of American sociologists.

It is an all too common fault of authors, and Simmel is no exception, to neglect references to the sources of their knowledge. Thus what can be factually demonstrated as Simmel's influence can be assumed to represent only a small portion of his total influence. To use an analogy, Simmel's influence is like floating ice with the bulk of its substance submerged and not visible.

In this chapter, Simmel's influence will be demonstrated by presentation of direct references to the three examples of Simmel's thought which have appeared in abstracted form in the previous chapter.

I. INFLUENCE OF SIMMEL'S ANALYSIS OF SUPERORDINATION

AND SUBORDINATION AS ACKNOWLEDGED

BY AMERICAN SOCIOLOGISTS

Action which affects the degree of equality of status between persons is in one respect akin to that affecting degree of intimacy, *viz.*, that both relate to 'distance between.' The latter, however, expressed in terms of approach-withdrawal corresponds to the physical conception of lateral distance; whereas the former expressed in terms of equalizing-disequalizing corresponds to vertical distance. In the one case distance is reduced to zero when the actors are together in the sense that their intimacy is complete; in the other, zero is reached when the actors are together in the sense that their equality of status is complete.

The opposite of equality is, of course, inequality. By its nature it takes some form of superordination-subordination, which Simmel declares to be the most important relationship in any society. These are reciprocal, each definable only in terms of the other. If A's position is described as superior to that of B, it follows of logical necessity that B's is inferior to that of A. What their actual position in the general scale may be is another question; their position with reference to each other is just now the point of issue. B may be vice-president of a great corporation of which A is president, or he may be sub-janitor under A as chief janitor in the building which the corporation offices occupy. In either case he is A's subordinate.

Human beings, whether created equal or not, begin early in life to fall into categories according to their status of inferiority or superiority to others. For the moment we are not concerned with the basis of their segregation. It may be birth, or knowledge, or wealth, or skill, or position, or race, or color, or occupation, or any other of the myriad criteria by which, justly or unjustly, men are separated into "higher" and "lower" social levels. Recognizing the fact that human beings do find themselves arranged upon this plan, we are endeavoring at this point to distinguish between actions which tend to eliminate or reduce these differences of status, and those which tend to create or increase them.

Disequalizing action expresses itself in every type of conquest, subjugation, oppression, enslavement, or any act by which one of the actors is elevated or lowered as compared with another. Equalizing action occurs in such forms as emancipation, enfranchise-

ment, democratization, or any other form wherein the net result is to bring those who are interacting upon the same into closer levels.

Equalization may be accomplished, as in the case of lateral approach and withdrawal, by any of the three combinations: (1) A or B, as the superior, may descend to the level of the other; (2) A or B as the inferior, may ascend to the level of the other; (3) or A or B as the inferior may move so rapidly as to overtake the other, moving more slowly in the same direction (whether ascending or descending); disequalization, of course, being the reverse process.¹¹³

Earle E. Eubank presents almost an abstract of Simmel's paper on Superordination and Subordination. The significance of Eubank's passage as a demonstration of Simmel's influence is obvious. What is more implicit, however, is the fact that Simmel's ideas are expressed in a frame of social mobility as is indicated in Eubank's concepts of "disequalizing" and "equalizing" action.

To be sure, Simmel's terms superordination and subordination are antiquated and awkward and do not appear often in modern sociological writings. The subject matter circumscribed by these terms, however, has been thoroughly investigated in the years since Simmel wrote this paper. A wealth of material is available to the students of "dominance and submission." This material may appear under a variety of headings such as social control, social class, class stratification, power, leadership, authority, status, role, and prestige. A first demonstration of this is the above quotation from Eubank. Of course, if one follows Simmel's proposition, all human association is

¹¹³Earle Edward Eubank, The Concepts of Sociology (New York: D. C. Heath and Company, 1932), pp. 297-298.

characterized by superordination and subordination. A quotation to this effect is supplied by Hayes.

. . . Wherever two human beings are in communication, the one is dispenser and the other recipient of ideas and influences. The superiority may alternate from one to the other, as the communication changes from a subject in which one associate reveals in his speech or conduct the greater clearness of ideas or positiveness of intention, or depth of feeling to a subject in respect to which the other associate has the preeminence. For these reasons Simmel says that the universal social fact is superiority and subordination, that wherever there is society such superiority and subordination exist.¹¹⁴

It should be recalled at this point that "society" in Simmel's definition exists wherever two or more people are in association.

In a first face to face contact, the interacting individuals will either assume certain roles in reference to the visible status of the other party involved (age, sex, race) or, if no visible status differentiations between the two parties exist, they will appraise each other's status in order to establish a reference for their behavior. As Simmel put it:

All relationships of people to each other rest, as a matter of course, upon the precondition that they know something about each other. . . The customary reciprocal presentation, in any somewhat protracted conversation, or in a first contact upon the same social plane, although at first sight an empty form, is an excellent symbol of that reciprocal apprehension which is the presumption of every social relationship. . . How much error and prejudice may lurk in . . . this, is immaterial.¹¹⁵

In other words, it is essential for the parties involved to

¹¹⁴Edward Cary Hayes, Introduction to the Study of Sociology (New York and London: D. Appleton and Company, 1926), p. 304.

¹¹⁵Simmel, Soziologie, p. 256; and trans. Small, "The Sociology of Secrecy and of the Secret Societies," Am. Jour. Soc., 11:441-443, 1906.

know about the other in order to determine, subjectively, where they stand in relation to each other. As long as they are not sure what "social rank" the other occupies, a certain uneasiness in behavior, usually concealed by highly formalized conduct, prevails. The most common way to remove this insecurity about the status of the other and one's own role in relation to it, is what Simmel has called "any somewhat protracted conversation." Here, by "taking an interest" in the other person, a process of classification takes place. The key leads in this query are occupation, residence, family background, and whatever qualities are important in the particular social environment. The result is a classification, mostly subconsciously, into "social categories" which provide a reference for the behavior of the interacting individuals. In their relationship from then on, they expect and request a certain behavior from each other. This, in essence, is one form of superordination and subordination as Simmel sees it.

Margaret M. Wood, paying tribute to Simmel, gives this illustration of the "categorization" of strangers:

... Among the Australian tribes the stranger is given one of two positions with reference to the group, he is either a tribal brother or he is not. In the first position, he has a definite place in the group and his behavior toward the members of the group and theirs toward him is already prescribed while, in the second case, he is regarded as an enemy and a person to be killed if possible. It must, however, be determined to which of these two categories the stranger belongs and the first stages of the process of establishing his relation to the group are those of evaluation. A position, tentative in most instances, is accorded to the stranger almost as soon as his existence has been noted and this forms a point of departure for the beginning of the relationship. As the contact continues and further characteristics of the stranger appear, the position

assigned to the stranger at first may be changed and the behavior toward him modified accordingly.¹¹⁶

Superordination and subordination exist on different "levels."¹¹⁶ Simmel classifies the forms of superordination and subordination into three categories. Kimball Young, presenting this classification, finds it suitable for his own interpretation of dominance and submission.

Georg Simmel has made an incisive analysis of dominance and submission, or superordination and subordination. . . . We shall follow this classification and deal with the matter under three headings: submission or domination exercised by a person, by a group, or by an impersonal ideal or 'principle' higher than individuals.¹¹⁷

The same classification will be, with few exceptions, followed in this treatise.

Simmel's influence on work done by R. M. MacIver, falling under the first heading, is demonstrated by the following quotation from MacIver's book, Society, Its Structures and Changes. He credits his thought on authority and leadership in a footnote to Simmel.

There is no doubt that personal authority is a strong determinant of the established order, though it is also of primary importance in the insurgent movements which attack it. Simmel calls the relation between the leaders and his followers the most important of all social relationships, authority takes a multitude of forms, and inheres in all organization. In its crudest and least socialized forms it rests merely on the power of enforcement. This is the authority of the master over the slave, of the despot over the subject, of the magistrate over the criminal - and, we may add, frequently that of the employer over the employee, though the enforcement

¹¹⁶Margaret Mary Wood, The Stranger (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), p. 263.

¹¹⁷Kimball Young, An Introduction to Sociology (New York: American Book Company, 1934), p. 465.

belongs to a different order. Here authority may depend solely on the sanction which it controls. But nearly all forms of authority involve more than this, an attitude of responsiveness and of deference, an admission of subordination on the part of the subject which in turn helps to create as well as to justify the authority itself. The grounds of this voluntary subordination are diverse. Acceptance of authority may be the tribute paid to age or wealth, to experience or to character or to reputed skill. . . . It [authority] reflects often the respect for office or station or class, conveyed to the holder or representative of it. Authority may appear as the personal embodiment of position, just as the majesty of kingship is personalized in a king, apart from whatever attributes of his own he may possess. Tradition and religion may weave a spell about the person who upholds the order to which they belong. More self-interested motives also play their part, and submission is fostered by the anticipation of the rewards which the leader can bestow on his friends and followers. . . . Authority arises out of conditions to which the wielder and the subject of it respond in complementary ways. In all except the extreme forms we have mentioned, it [authority] is the common product of their reciprocal attitudes. ¹¹⁸

Simmel asserts that dominance of one person over another has, in the majority of cases, a reflexive element without which no sociation exists.

Nobody, in general, wishes that his influence completely determine the other individual. He rather wants this influence, this determination of the other, to act back upon him. Even the abstract will-to-dominate, therefore, is a case of interaction. This will draw its satisfaction from the fact that the acting or suffering of the other, his positive or negative condition, offers itself to the dominator as the product of his will. . . . But still, even the desire for domination has some interest in the other person, who constitutes a value for it. Only when egoism does not even amount to a desire for domination; only when the other is absolutely indifferent and a mere means for purposes which lie beyond him, is the last shadow of any sociating process removed. ¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸MacIver, op. cit., p. 256-257.

¹¹⁹Simmel, Soziologie, p. 101; and trans Wolff, Sociology, p. 181.

This thought as it was developed by Simmel is in essence expressed by H. G. Adler in a recent article:

A certain personal relation between a tormenter and his victim is necessary, even if cruelty has become a habit. Even the bestiality practiced by the SS on the lowest, most vile level was charged with affect. But, where every human relation is dispassionate and of little appeal, the situation is different. The bestiality of Bolshevism was . . . not concerned with the individual and it remained free of the terrible satisfaction gained from the victim's capacity for suffering.¹²⁰

Adler gives no indication of a direct or indirect influence by Simmel. As such this quote may have little value in regard to the problem of this thesis. What it demonstrates, however, is that Simmel's analyses are not antiquities but can provide a valuable framework for modern sociological research and analysis.

Simmel's main emphasis on the absolute dominance - submission relationship appears in the following passage as translated by A. W. Small.

The decisive characteristic of the relation . . . is this, that the effect which the inferior actually exerts upon the superior is determined by the latter.¹²¹

Simmel maintains that within a relationship of superordination and subordination, the exclusion of all spontaneity is quite rare.

The seemingly wholly passive element is in reality even more active in relationships such as the relation between a speaker and his audience or between a teacher and his class. Speaker

¹²⁰H. G. Adler, "Ideas Toward a Sociology of the Concentration Camp," Am. Jour. Soc., 63(5):519, March 1958.

¹²¹Simmel, Soziologie, p. 101; and trans. Small, "Superiority and Subordination as Subject Matter for Sociology," Am. Jour. Soc., 2:170, 1896.

and teacher appear to be nothing but . . . superordinate. Yet, whoever finds himself in such or a similar situation feels the determining and controlling reaction on the part of what seems to be a purely receptive and guided mass. This applies not only to situations where the two parties confront one another physically. All leaders are also led; in innumerable cases, the master is the slave of his slaves.¹²²

Kimball Young expresses the same idea which he credits to Simmel.

When the domination is complete, as in the master-slave or absolute monarch and subject relationships, it might be imagined that the latter had no freedom of action in reference to the former. This is not true. The master is not uncontrolled by his slaves. The latter has at least a limited range of reciprocal relations. The master or monarch is himself bound by his commands to his slaves or subjects. In addition slaves or subjects set up whole areas of expectant attitudes toward the dominant person which he cannot very well ignore. As a Negro once remarked to R. E. Park, 'We colored people always want our white folks to be superior.'¹²³

Young continues to expand on Simmel's theory when he writes:

In all cases, therefore, of submission to an individual, there is interaction between him and his inferiors or followers. There is always a form of interaction and participation, even though it be circumscribed within the limits of political, economic, or religious despotism. As Simmel says, 'Authority is a sociological product requiring the spontaneous and active participation of the subordinates.'¹²⁴

The same idea is discussed at Eubank who credits Simmel in a footnote:

Now there are certain connotations which, in our common speech, are implicit in these four terms, 'domination-subjection, superordination-subordination,' which must be cleared away to

¹²²Simmel, Soziologie, p. 104; and trans. Wolff, Sociology, p. 185.

¹²³Young, op. cit., p. 466.

¹²⁴Ibid., pp. 466-467.

avoid confusion in their scientific usage. They tend to arouse a picture of a stern, inexorable demagogue grimly and inexorably wielding the mace of power over the reluctantly acquiescent form of an unwilling subject. Attitudes of hostility, open or veiled, seem implied in the very words. While occasional circumstances of control are so characterized, it should be clear . . . that the vast majority are of another sort, and that no such general meaning should be written into these concepts.¹²⁵

. . . Four points are singled out for particular emphasis in regard to relationships between the two. First, control is not necessarily a roughshod subjugation of one by the other. Second, control is not necessarily an influence that is imposed against the will. It may be gratefully accepted, . . . strongly desired or even deliberately sought. Third, between the same people the status of superordination and subordination may be alternative. . . . In our ordinary associations . . . there is a fairly satisfactory alternation of controls. . . to keep most situations from developing into a one-sided czarism. Fourth, and in some respect most important of all, is the fact that every situation of societary control is in reality a reciprocity of influence. . . . The master not only influences his slave; the slave also influences him. Control, in other words, when between persons, is not exclusively a one-way current, but is always characterized by a counter current.¹²⁵

The element of the "will to submission" that Simmel points out and on which Eubank elaborates is discussed at von Wiese and Becker as follows:

The motivating forces of domination must not be sought solely in the wish for recognition or for mastery; many persons are willing and eager to submit to any power that promises security or relief from responsibility.¹²⁶

And E. V. Walter, on the subject of power relationships, says:

Thus power relationships, expressed in the forms of superordination and subordination, are reciprocal relationships; and

¹²⁵Eubank, op. cit., pp. 250-251.

¹²⁶von Wiese and Becker, op. cit., p. 308.

domination is not the exercise of will upon an inanimate object but a form of interaction.¹²⁷

In a somewhat different context, Ellwood uses the superordination-subordination concept as an illustration for the change in behavior which may come with the acquisition of superiority:

As Simmel . . . emphasized, the way in which people are associated together is frequently very influential in determining their behavior. Human nature is such a complex affair that the reactions which may be called forth in any one individual will vary indefinitely according to the way in which he happens to be associated with other individuals. Many a person, for example, who is a model member of society in a subordinate position may become an altogether dangerous individual in a position of superiority or authority. The reactions between the same individuals when they associate upon a basis of equality may be very different from when they associate, say, as masters and slaves. More and more students of society are discovering that what the forms of association are is a very important matter in human social life. One of the practical tasks of sociology must undoubtedly be to discover those forms of association which are most likely to call forth the highest and best development of individual personality.¹²⁸

Ellwood is building a case for his psychological aspects in sociology by using - as he has indicated in his footnotes and the text itself - Simmel's concept of the "forms of sociation." He seems to agree with Simmel by using superordination and subordination for his illustration that this "form of sociation" is a fundamental one in all human relationships.

Simmel distinguishes within the concept of superordination between authority and prestige.

¹²⁷E. V. Walter, "Simmel's Sociology of Power: The Architecture of Politics," Georg Simmel, Wolff (ed.), p. 155.

¹²⁸Ellwood, op. cit., pp. 342-343.

To call a human being an authority means to ascribe to his judgements and decisions a certainty and an infallibility which are otherwise ascribed only to universal postulates and logical deductions. . . . Authority can become established in two different ways. In the first instance, it results from the fact that a superior individual inspires in his group such faith and confidence in his opinions and decisions that they obtain for that group the character of objective validity. In the second instance, authority becomes established . . . when a superindividual organization like the state, the church or the school transfers to the individual a power of decision and a dignity which he could not inspire or obtain through his own personality. In the first instance, the authority develops out of the individual, in the second instance, it descends into the individual from the outside. But in neither case can authority be established without the active belief of those who submit to the authority. Authority is a sociological product requiring the spontaneous and active participation of the subordinates. The transformation of the value of the individual into a superpersonal value is brought about by the believers in the authority.

Prestige does not contain any superpersonal element. It lacks the identity of the personality with an objective power or norm. Leadership by means of prestige is determined entirely by the strength of the individual.¹²⁹

MacIver and Page, in a discourse on authority and leadership give credit to Simmel and present the following distinction between authority and leadership.

We draw a distinction here between authority and personal leadership. By authority we mean here the right of control attached to office, involving the respect, the submission, or the reverence accorded to those who represent the office or are invested with its rights. Here we are not concerned with the authority of a group or of an impersonal principle or ideal or legal code; but rather with authority as it is vested in or focused in a person, in his official capacity or field of knowledge or specialization. By leadership we mean the capacity to persuade or to direct men that comes from personal qualities

¹²⁹Simmel, Soziologie, p. 103; and trans. Spykman, op. cit., pp. 96-97; and trans. Wolff, Sociology, pp. 184-185.

apart from office. These two types of control are often combined in various degrees. Authority inheres in those who represent or embody the codes, such as the local clergyman or town clerk in the village community, or in those who possess rank or status or any prestige derived from position or wealth; but it is always enhanced if qualities of leadership go along with the prerogatives of station or office. Not infrequently a forceful personal leader consolidates his power by attaining official position. But the two sources of power are themselves distinct. A policeman represents authority, not leadership. So does a judge, and so does a king, in so far as his power depends on the reverence or prestige attached to his position. A leader, on the other hand, may be an insurgent against the established order.¹³⁰

The same authors discuss authority in its relation to order and credit Simmel in a footnote.

Acceptance of authority may be the tribute paid to age or to wealth. It reflects certainly the respect for order or status or class, conveyed to the holder or representative of it. Authority may appear as the impersonal embodiment of position, just as the majesty of kingship is personalised in a king apart from whatever attributes of his own he may possess. Tradition and religion may weave a spell about the person who upholds the order to which they belong. Indeed every system of authority, whether that of paterfamilias or of the religious priesthood or of the political order, is rooted in the "myth of authority" itself - a part of the social heritage of all peoples. Authority is also sustained by self-interested motives, submission often being fostered by the anticipation of the rewards which the authority, such as the political officeholder or party boss, can bestow on his friends and followers.¹³¹

One of the most basic elements in Simmel's thought on subordination is his concept of the different segments of personality which allows freedom of some segments while others may be dominated by authority. E. V. Walter appraises this concept when he writes:

¹³⁰Robert M. MacIver and Charles H. Page, Society, An Introductory Analysis (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1949), p. 146.

¹³¹Ibid., pp. 147-148.

Simmel internalizes and psychologizes freedom, moving it from the realm of external relations to the inner life. Power is inevitable as a structural necessity; and one cannot hope to modify the external forms of subordination and domination but can merely try to remove the degradation and bad psychological consequences which result. The ethical perspective is divorced from social relationships.¹³²

K. J. Newman asserts that "the tyrant" is far more involved in the dominance-submission relationship than his subjects:

Let us recall his [Simmel's] statement that under a tyranny the individual gives only a fragment of his individuality to the state-person relationship, whereas the tyrant gives his whole individuality.¹³³

And the same basic idea at Young:

The degree of identification of the individual to the dominant leader or master may touch only special areas of interaction, leaving him free for other forms of interaction elsewhere.¹³⁴

However, the degree to which an individual becomes dominated by the tyrant is, according to Simmel, dependent upon certain factors.

K. J. Newman brings these to attention when he writes:

According to Simmel there are two important limitations to tyranny: (a) the size of the dominated group and (b) the variety of the personalities included in it. . . . The wider the circle of domination, the smaller will be the sphere of thought, emotion, interests, and attributes which individuals have in common and which form them into a mass. In so far as domination is concerned with what the individuals have in common, the individuals' submission to domination is directly related to the size of the dominated circles.¹³⁵

¹³²Walter, op. cit., p. 162.

¹³³K. J. Newman, "Georg Simmel and Totalitarian Integration," Am. Jour. Soc., 56(4):349, January 1951.

¹³⁴Young, op. cit., p. 467.

¹³⁵Newman, op. cit., pp. 349-350.

And in his conclusion Newman says:

. . . The following principle is hereby demonstrated:
The larger the number of individuals ruled by one (the tyrant),
the smaller the part of the individual which he dominates.¹³⁶

Hubert Bonner, in his article, "Field Theory and Sociology,"ⁿ states that Simmel's sociology lends itself readily to field-dynamical analysis.¹³⁷ Discussing freedom, Bonner comes to the conclusion that the "bulk of thinking on the subject has singularly failed to yield a theory of leadership free from mysticism."¹³⁸ He considers Simmel's analysis of superordination and subordination the only scientifically acceptable theory on this subject.

It is a high tribute to Simmel's sociological insight that his theory has given us a scientifically plausible account of leadership. Since interaction means reciprocity, the leader and the led are parts of a single whole. Leadership, or superordination as Simmel calls it, is a reciprocal relationship. Influence does not take place in one direction, from the leader to the led. The led also influences the leader, so that without the former, the latter cannot function.¹³⁹

Turning to the second heading, dominance as exercised by a group, von Wiese and Becker, with reference to Simmel, give an excellent account of the hierarchy of dominance:

Large plurality patterns are always composed of numerous smaller plurality patterns which are not merely co-ordinate but are arranged in a hierarchy of superordination and subordination, domination and submission. This is an inevitable consequence of the well-nigh universal tendency already indicated in these words: 'Each layer in the pyramid dominates

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 350

¹³⁷Hubert Bonner, "Field Theory and Sociology," Sociology and Social Research, 33(3):176, 1949.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 177.

¹³⁹Ibid.

those below it, even though the upper are usually smaller than the lower; moreover, the lower the level, the more mechanical and menial the work.' Stratification is therefore inseparably linked with the common tendency to shift irksome burdens to others. A large plurality pattern can flourish, however, only if there is relative stability or equilibration of forces among the smaller plurality patterns it includes. Consequently, the restless rise and fall of conflicting, contravening, and competing groups is avoided wherever possible by imposing upon them rigid and constant relationships to each other and to the larger pattern; They are squeezed flat to form social strata which have a definite position within the pyramid that can be altered only with great difficulty.¹⁴⁰

H. G. Adler expresses the same idea when he talks of Nazi Germany:

Nationalist Socialist Germany . . . was a leadership state with hierarchical levels of authorized subleaders who were always powerless before their superordinates but had full authority over their subordinates.¹⁴¹

And Kimball Young expands the concept of submission to a group when he paraphrases Simmel's idea:

Submission to a group is found where there is a gradation of groups holding power in pyramid fashion, crowned by a ruler or small group at the top. Another is found in the subordination of the individual to the will of a majority. This finds its expression chiefly in primary or secondary communities, or in those special interest groups organized on the basis of individual voting power. This is the case where the individual is constrained to a line of action by the will of the majority which has outvoted him.¹⁴²

In reference to the last sentence in this quotation, Simmel has devoted a separate essay within the chapter on superordination and subordination in his Soziologie to the phenomenon of outvoting.

¹⁴⁰ von Wiese and Becker, op. cit., p. 308.

¹⁴¹ Adler, op. cit., p. 519.

¹⁴² Young, op. cit., p. 467.

He says:

. . . It is an attempt at saving the unity and totality of society from disruption by the autonomy of its parts. Every conflict among members of a collectivity makes the continuance of this collectivity dubious. The significance, therefore, of voting - of voting to the result of which the minority, too, agrees to yield - is the idea that the unity of the whole must, under all circumstances, remain master over the antagonism of convictions and interests. In its seeming simplicity, voting is one of the most outstanding means by which the conflict among individuals is eventually transformed into a uniform result.¹⁴³

MacIver, crediting Simmel, discusses decision making in groups through "dominance of authority," through "compromise," and through "voting." In regard to the latter he writes:

A third type of decision is expressed through voting. This differs from the former two in that there is not even formal unanimity in the registration of policy. It is determination by majority. The differences of the members remain in stark opposition. The necessary basis of agreement is not found on the level of the issue determined by voting but lies further back, perhaps merely in willingness of the members to abide by the result of the poll.¹⁴⁴

Simmel considers the motives for the subordination of the minority of great sociological significance. The overpowering of the minority can, first, derive from the fact that many are more powerful than few.¹⁴⁵ The function of voting then takes the place of the physical fight. In the group the "strength" is thus measured

¹⁴³Simmel, "Exkurs ueber die Ueberstimmung," Soziologie, pp. 142-147.

¹⁴⁴MacIver, op. cit., p. 177.

¹⁴⁵Wolff, Sociology, p. 241.

by numbers. However, in addition to this, an ethical motive is (usually) introduced. This does not merely mean that the minority should cooperate with the majority but that "the majority wants what is right."¹⁴⁶ The practical reason for cooperation is implicitly contained in this ethical motive. And finally, once a decision by voting has been achieved, the voice of the majority is no longer the voice of the greater power within the group, but the voice of the group which leads back to the requirement of unanimity for effective group functioning.

Group unity, which plays such an important part in Simmel's work, is discussed in Newman's article. He presents a quotation from Simmel which reads:

There is a degree of antagonism between groups which is replaced by unity if all the antagonistic groups are put under pressure from a third party. But should the original aversion transcend a certain limit, the common suppression will have the opposite effect. The reason for this phenomenon is not only an increase in general irritability but, first of all, the fact that the common experience presses the divergent elements together and brings them nearer; this enforced neighborhood throws into relief irreconcilable differences of all the suppressed elements. Where unification is unable to overcome antagonism, the latter is not left untouched, but is increased. . . . The negative side of this is the jealousy among the dominated groups. Common hatred does not increase opposition, but submission, if the one who is hated by all is the master.¹⁴⁷

Newman is trying to explain with these concepts why it was impossible for the democratic parties in certain European countries

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 242.

¹⁴⁷Simmel, as quoted by Newman, op. cit., p. 352.

to fight authoritarianism effectively. He again refers to Simmel when he talks about the balance between freedom and authority:

One of the totalitarian techniques which satisfies the need of balance between freedom and authority and thus facilitates totalitarian integration is, as Simmel knew well, the technique of pseudo toleration. The relatively considerable degree of criticism permitted to German citizens often astonished visitors from Western countries.¹⁴⁸

Kimball Young discusses the same phenomenon, also in recognition of Simmel, but he comes to a different conclusion:

Thus bureaucratic and militaristic Germany before the World War permitted a wide range of freedom in fields which did not touch upon political or military matters. In contrast today in Nazi-Germany the political state demands conformity and submission to a dictator who has set up a wide range of social objects toward which submission is demanded and enforced.¹⁴⁹

And again the same basic "form" at Newman:

There is an inherent tendency in any given society toward an equilibrium of liberty and constraint. In Great Britain, for example, the considerable political freedom has always been correlated with a proportionally greater degree of constraint in society.¹⁵⁰

Heberle introduces an additional variable which Simmel had discussed and which has appeared previously in this treatise in a quotation from Newman, who demonstrates that "the larger the number of individuals ruled by a tyrant, the smaller the part of the individual which he dominates." Here is the quotation from Heberle:

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Young, op. cit., p. 467.

¹⁵⁰ Newman, op. cit., p. 349.

Simmel assumes that an inverse relation exists between the extent to which each individual enters into the group with his personality and the extent to which a single ruler can dominate the group modified by the size and homogeneity of the group. While an absolutely rigid authoritarian rule is intolerable in a family group in which every member participates with almost his entire personality, it becomes possible and tolerable in a very large group into which every individual enters only with a small 'quantum' of his personality.¹⁵¹

In his description of mass behavior, Simmel follows essentially Taine, Sighele, Le Bon, and Tarde.¹⁵² He emphasizes the emotional character of crowd behavior, the loss of individuality in expression which creates anonymity and, immediately connected, a suspension of moral inhibitions. However, in Simmel's explanation of mass behavior, the idea of a regression to primitive mentality as expressed by the earlier "crowd-sociologists" is superseded by the idea of the "fragments of personality which enter into a mass or crowd relationship."¹⁵³

E. C. Hayes makes use of Simmel's concept of "personality segments" which enable an individual to be part of a crowd or mass without entering his whole personality into this relationship. Thus fragments of individuality are synthesized into a unit which operates according to its own logic.¹⁵⁴ This is even more explicit in Hayes' following statement:

The fraction of the personalities of its members which the excitement of the crowd cuts loose must be one that they have in common, as well as one that can be expressed by the signal-code of crowd interstimulation.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹Heberle, op. cit., p. 258.

¹⁵²Vide Walter, op. cit., p. 146.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 147.

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Hayes, op. cit., p. 81.

A last statement from Simmel as expressed by Hayes, which holds its significance in the light of recent racial riots and mob violence:

The individual in the crowd tends to lose his sense of responsibility and to accept the way of the crowd as sufficiently authorized by the numbers who back it, when it may be that the . . . total personality of no single member of the crowd, approves of the crowd action.¹⁵⁶

Under the third heading, subordination to an impersonal principle, falls this paragraph from the pen of Kimball Young:

Submission to an impersonal principle or ideal is the most objective form of accomodation. In theory these principles exist outside the person, and his absolute adherence to them is demanded by the logic of the situation. Yet the subordination to an objective principle influences the relations of persons who have this principle in common. Often power which at the outset grew out of everyday controls, such as the dominance of the father over the family, gets in time raised to a basic principle of social control, as in the doctrine of pater familias so common in classic times. The family patriarch himself becomes in time bound to this idea, or principle of domination, regardless of his personal feelings and attitudes toward his family members. Culture therefore acts on objective principle independent of personal wishes, settling the role and fixing the status of the individual or the group.

This type of arrangement is common throughout the whole societal structure. The process begins in those folkways which become the mores or moral codes. In more complex societies the law takes over many of these principles to control our economic, political, and familial relations: contract, property rights, citizenship, jury duty, taxation duties, inheritance, legitimacy, guardianship, etc. In addition, there still remain the moral codes which furnish us many imperatives outside the law.¹⁵⁷

Heberle presents the same thought in regard to the political ruler:

¹⁵⁶ibid.

¹⁵⁷Young, op. cit., p. 468.

Thus in the political field the ruler himself is finally subordinated to the objective principle of a social order by which his own will is bound.¹⁵⁸

MacIver and Page, writing on authority, emphasize how authority is "planned" in modern, formalized organizations. The mores which they refer to are in essence the impersonal principle which keeps the organization in function:

Each 'bureaucrat' - whether a head of a governmental department or petty official, whether a manager of a large industry or a foreman, whether a general or a sergeant - has his own group of clients whom he serves and for whom his authority seems essential in the whole scheme of daily procedure. A chief mark of our times is the degree to which the disposition of authority is carefully planned and diffused throughout the formalized social organizations. This is both a potent force in maintaining authority itself and a strong support of the mores that sustain the institutional order.¹⁵⁹

Heberle in a comment on the advantage of impersonality refers to Simmel:

Simmel, although he is aware of the possible advantages for the subordinated individuals of the personal elements in authority, thinks that, in general, depersonalization of authority relations makes subordination more tolerable and less humiliating.¹⁶⁰

In one of his illustrations, Simmel refers to the differences between northern and southern states in the United States. In the South, where settlement was carried on by highly individualistic adventurers, one finds political life centering in the more abstract, colorless structure of the states.¹⁶¹ To the Southerner, subordination to the state is more acceptable than subordination to a small

¹⁵⁸Heberle, loc. cit.

¹⁵⁹MacIver and Page, op. cit., p. 147.

¹⁶⁰Heberle, op. cit., p. 259.

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 271.

municipality like it developed in the more socially regulated North. However, these municipalities showed strong individual characteristics and enjoyed privileges of autonomy.¹⁶²

Subordination to a higher, impersonal principle occurs also in economic relationships:

In the relations between employer and employees the same . . . occurs to the extent that both parties become subordinated to the objective principle of contract, especially if the contract is based on a collective agreement between an employers' association and a labor union.¹⁶³

E. E. Eubank makes a profound statement on societary control and the relationship between human interaction and the impersonal principles, ideas or ideals:

All societary control is traceable ultimately, if not immediately, to human association; otherwise . . . it would not be societary. In many ways, however, the feelings and opinions of mankind may become embodied in certain external forms and symbols which to all practical intents, function as de facto sources of control. In the same way that human labor may be crystallized . . . into tangible, substantive forms of economic capital, so too, do the values which men hold become deposited in objectified forms, or else formulated in principles, ideals, and ideas which have in themselves a capacity to influence the minds of men.¹⁶⁴

E. V. Walter appraises the significance of Simmel's thought on dominance for political theory and the understanding of political power:

The significance of Simmel's sociology for political theory is more implicit than obvious. In his writing, the space given to the direct examination of power is not extensive: merely a sixth of his Soziologie takes up an analysis of domination, subordination, and related matters. .

¹⁶²Ibid., p. 272.

¹⁶³Ibid., pp. 258-259.

¹⁶⁴Eubank, op. cit., p. 230.

Yet his way of seeing society suggests an illuminating way of seeing and understanding power.¹⁶⁵

As a last illustration of Simmel's influence on the subject of superordination and subordination, the following quotation from "Systematic Sociology" is presented. It shows how a new concept, that of "ordination," was developed out of Simmel's subordination and superordination. It seems, however, that the newer concept of ordination has not had the same impact as Simmel's original concepts. In reality there is nothing new in von Wiese's "ordination" but it will serve as an obvious example of the stimulation of thought that sprang and springs from Simmel's writing. That Howard Becker had ever adapted this concept of von Wiese could not be empirically determined. Hence the following illustration may or may not be considered as influence upon American sociological thought.

. . . The sociologist is . . . interested in . . . the fact that human beings are almost always occupants of some niche in the social order, and are bound to others in definite although widely varying ways. In other words, they are subject to 'ordination;' This term is far more general than superordination or subordination, for it simply denotes the fact that persons are ordered, arranged, disposed, placed, located, or established in definite positions within a social system, and it does not imply anything whatever about relative status. This does not mean, however, that ordination is ever unaccompanied by superordination and subordination; whenever persons join or otherwise enter into a plurality pattern they almost invariably take their places in an implicit or explicit hierarchy, and must consciously or unconsciously accept the fact that there are ranks above and below them. It is precisely because of this latter circumstance that the concept of ordination is necessary. Superordination alone and subordination alone are virtually non-existent; any new group relationship almost always involves both, although in varying degrees.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵Walter, op.cit., p.140.

¹⁶⁶von Wiese and Becker, op.cit., p.355.

II. INFLUENCE OF SIMMEL'S ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT
AS ACKNOWLEDGED BY AMERICAN SOCIOLOGISTS

Social conflict has been defined in various ways. It has been the subject of much hypothesizing, and in the writings of early American sociologists social conflict frequently is the central category of a sociological system.¹⁶⁷ Small, influenced by Ratzschhofer, the Austrian field marshal who viewed conflict as a necessary social process for the achievement of progress, writes that,

. . . In form, the social process is incessant reaction of persons prompted by interests that in part conflict with the interests of their fellows, and in part comport with the interests of others.¹⁶⁸

Charles Horton Cooley states:

The more one thinks of it, the more he will see that conflict and cooperation are not separable things, but phases of one process which always involves something of both.¹⁶⁹

In the writings of Edward A. Ross appears this sentence:

In a way, open opposition preserves society . . . in any voluntary association the corking up of the protest and opposition of the rest . . . by the dominant element is likely to lead to the splitting of the group.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷Lewis A. Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1956), p. 18.

¹⁶⁸Small, General Sociology, p. 205.

¹⁶⁹Charles Horton Cooley, Social Process (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), p. 39.

¹⁷⁰Edward A. Ross, The Principles of Sociology (New York: The Century Company, 1920), p. 162.

And Robert E. Park writes in a rather familiar terminology:

Conflict tends to bring about an integration and a superordination and subordination of the conflict groups.¹⁷¹

There appear, however, no references to Simmel in conjunction with these statements on conflict. This may mean that the authors came independently to similar conclusions; it also may mean that they did not bother to define the source of their thought and that the problem of finding proof of Simmel's influence upon American sociology has not diminished on the subject of social conflict. The majority of the following quotations, with exceptions specifically identified, are supplied with references to Simmel, either in the text itself or in an accompanying footnote.

Before presenting the quotations, it seems relevant to point out the fact that Simmel's theory on conflict has gained enough attention to warrant three separate translations into English. The first, by Albion W. Small, appeared in 1904 in the American Journal of Sociology.¹⁷² The second, by Nicholas Spykman, was presented in 1925 under the heading "Opposition" in Spykman's book, The Social Theory of Georg Simmel.¹⁷³ The third, in book form, is the work of

¹⁷¹Robert E. Park, "The Social Function of War," Am. Jour. Soc., 46:551-570, 1941.

¹⁷²Simmel, "The Sociology of Conflict," trans. A. W. Small, Am. Jour. Soc., 9:490-525, 672-689, 798-811; 1904.

¹⁷³Spykman, op. cit., 112-127.

Kurt H. Wolff and appeared in 1955.¹⁷⁴ In 1956, an excellent study on conflict was written by Lewis A. Coser who uses primarily Simmel's propositions which he extends by relating them to other findings of theoretical or empirical nature.¹⁷⁵ Wolff's and Coser's books may serve as an indication for the renewed interest in Simmel's thought that came about in the years following World War II.

Simmel's contribution to a sociology of social conflict does not contain findings of empirical research but, by its theoretical propositions, it has stimulated such research in the past and continues to do so at present. Apart from research, Simmel's theories most likely stimulated the thought of those scientists who used his ideas, or part of them, as a platform for their own theoretical propositions. To demonstrate such stimulation by factual data is hardly possible. Nevertheless, whenever a striking conceptual similarity between Simmel's ideas and the propositions of a recent author appears, the possibility of influence by Simmel should not be ruled out.

One of the foremost proponents of the conflict theory is Jessie Bernard. In a review of the work of American scientists on conflict the following passage appears:

Research on conflict which is based on a systematic orientation assumes that all social life consists of interaction within and between social systems. The system may

¹⁷⁴Simmel, Conflict, trans. Kurt H. Wolff, and The Web of Group Affiliations, trans. Reinhard Bendix (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1955).

¹⁷⁵Coser, Functions of Social Conflict (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1956).

be a small group, even a pair, or it may be a nation or an empire, or anything between.¹⁷⁶

The principle of interaction is of the greatest importance in all of Simmel's thought. It is invoked by Simmel to explain a variety of phenomena, including social conflict. His definition of "society" expresses the same connotation as the term "social system" by Bernard. Yet, no inferences drawn from the relatedness of Bernard's quotation to Simmel's concepts can serve as proof of Simmel's influence.

A second demonstration of similarity of ideas without reference to where the author, Clark Kerr, received his stimulus is supplied by the following quotation:

This paper . . . advances the . . . thesis . . . that . . . conflict can be only temporarily suppressed [and] can serve important social functions. It [conflict] assists in the solution of controversies, it may reduce intergroup tensions.¹⁷⁷

Simmel's conflict cycle theory certainly fits the first part of this quotation. For the second part, two sentences from Simmel will suffice to show the existing similarity:

Conflict is designed to resolve divergent dualisms . . .¹⁷⁸

and

Conflict itself resolves the tension between contrasts. .¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶Jessie Bernard, "The Sociological Study of Conflict," The Nature of Conflict (The International Sociological Association, published by UNESCO, Paris, 1957), p. 63.

¹⁷⁷Clark Kerr, "Industrial Conflict and Its Mediation," Am. Jour. Soc., 55(3):230, 1954.

¹⁷⁸Simmel, Conflict, trans. Kurt H. Wolff, and The Web of Group Affiliations, trans. Reinhard Bendix, p. 13.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 14.

Turning to the works of those authors who credit Simmel, a number of most positive comments are expressed by Floyd N. House.

The most profound of all the general interpretations of social conflict which has so far been published is probably that of Georg Simmel. Simmel's fundamental hypothesis is that conflict is to be regarded and studied as a form of civilization.¹⁸⁰

Discussing competition, House praises Simmel's analysis:

Simmel has perhaps worked out a more refined analysis of the process of competition than has any other author, in a passage in his Soziologie in which he treats economic competition, together with other forms of rivalry, as a special type of conflict. He lays down the general principle that conflict is not only a process whereby sociation may be promoted, but is in itself a form of sociation.¹⁸¹

And once more, in his appraisal of the theories of assimilation, House refers to Simmel:

It can probably be safely asserted that the most successful attempt at the unification of the theory of conflict with the theory of assimilation . . . is that of Georg Simmel.¹⁸²

The high opinion which House had for Simmel's work on conflict may have been the result of the first critical interpretation and translation of Simmel's theory by Nicholas Spykman. Nevertheless, House can be credited to be one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Simmel in the era between the two world wars when, as Small said, ". . . the Americans who have given indubitable evidence of having considered Simmel thoroughly might be counted on the fingers of one hand."¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰Floyd N. House, The Range of Social Theory (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929), p. 406.

¹⁸¹Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁸²Ibid.

¹⁸³Albion W. Small, Review of Spykman "The Social Theory of Georg Simmel," Am. Jour. Soc., 31:84, July, 1925.

Spykman's book, The Social Theory of Georg Simmel, published in 1925, brought a profound interpretation of Simmel's sociological works and with it an excellent appraisal of his conflict theory. It stresses Simmel's hypothesis that "unity" arises from conflict. In a summary on the synthesis between elements of conflict and unity, Spykman says:

Struggles and conflicts have a positive sociological significance in contrast with dissolutions and repudiations of sociation, which are both negative. An antagonism between elements may arise from different subjective impulses, wants, desires, envies, or hatreds. But once the antagonism has arisen, the function of the actual struggle or conflict is to overcome the existing dualism and to arrive at some form of unity, even if it involves the destruction of one of the parties. The conflict itself is but the resolution of the tension between the two elements. That a conflict eventually terminates in a peace, either in the form of coordination or in the form of subordination, is only the obvious expression of the fact that it is a special form of synthesis between elements. It is a higher concept which contains and implies both union and opposition.¹⁸⁴

A comment on the positive factors of conflict with a bibliographical reference to Simmel's "Conflict" is supplied by A. W. Green:

Corporate conflict - within and between societies - has its positive as well as its negative side. Within societies, the in group is more often than not strengthened by opposing the out group. Nothing is quite so effective in drawing the members of a family together as a quarrel with another family. Even rejecting an offer of tolerance and acceptance, in some cases, strengthens the in group. Religious sects and national minorities often resist overtures from the majority, because social acceptance might weaken the character of the smaller group and tempt its members to attach themselves to the majority. The Amish parents who refused to send their children to the public schools provided by the state of Pennsylvania were motivated in this way. The Amish experience has been similar to that of the Jews. During periods of tolerance and acceptance, Jewish customs and religious practices have waned and marriages

¹⁸⁴Spykman, op. cit., p. 113.

outside the Jewish sacred society have increased. On the other hand, Jewish loyalty and identification, as well as Jewish religious practices, have been strong and secure during most periods of persecution.

Like corporate conflict, personal conflict has its positive side. The opposition of one individual to another is frequently the only way in which the continued relationship can be made personally tolerable.¹⁸⁵

Emory S. Bogardus appraises Simmel's sociology and says in regard to conflict:

The effects of conflict are subtle. They may even include unification; certainly they produce concentration of each of the conflicting elements. Opposition from without causes sociation within.¹⁸⁶

One of the most favorable comments is supplied by Everett Cherrington Hughes, who wrote the foreword to the above mentioned translation of Simmel's Conflict by Wolff.¹⁸⁷

Simmel sees conflict as part of the dynamic by which some men are drawn together, and others, by the same token, driven away from each other into those uneasy combinations which we call groups. The inter-weaving or, better, the entangling of social circles . . . is viewed in the same way, as part of the dynamic both of groups and of individual personalities who compose them. Simmel is thus the Freud of the study of society. Instead of seeing change as disturbance of a naturally stable thing called society, he sees stability itself as some temporary . . . balance among forces in interaction; and forces are by definition capable of being described only in terms of change. This is strikingly similar to what Freud did for the study of human personality. Like Freud, he has many intellectual children. Not all of them have the wisdom which makes them know their own father.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵Arnold W. Green, Sociology (second edition; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956), pp. 54-56.

¹⁸⁶Emory S. Bogardus, The Development of Social Thought (New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1940), p. 463.

¹⁸⁷Simmel, Conflict, trans. Wolff, and The Web of Group Affiliations, trans. Bendix.

¹⁸⁸E. C. Hughes, ibid., p. 9.

Hubert Bonner summarizes Simmel's conception of conflict and emphasizes in his article the timelessness of Simmel's concepts and their applicability in modern field theory:

According to Simmel, all human interactions are forms of sociation. As a process going on between individuals and groups, conflict itself is a form of sociation. It is one of many forms of human interaction which can be ordered to the wider, more inclusive construct of sociation.¹⁸⁹

George Simpson gives outright credit to Simmel as being the first who conceived of conflict as not only "bad." Whether Simpson is right in this claim is a matter of dispute since, as demonstrated above, the conceptions of conflict at early American sociologists are not lacking the positive aspect which Simpson refers to when he says:

In the social theory of Georg Simmel we find the first realization of conflict as a binding, rather than a disruptive force.¹⁹⁰

However, that Simpson is not unaware of the conflict-theories of the early American sociologists is demonstrated by his quotation of Cooley which has been, in part, mentioned before. Simpson's references have been taken over as they appeared:

Charles Horton Cooley has set forth a theory much like Simmel's.¹⁹¹ 'The more one thinks of it the more he will see that conflict and cooperation are not separable things, but

¹⁸⁹Bonner, op. cit., p. 177

¹⁹⁰George Simpson, "Conflict and Community; A Study in Social Theory," (Published Doctoral Dissertation; New York: Columbia University, 1937), p. 25.

¹⁹¹W. B. Bodenhafer, "Cooley's Theories of Competition and Conflict," Publications of the Am. Soc. Society, 25(2):

phases of one process which always involves something of both.¹⁹² . . . Conflict,¹⁹³ of some sort, is the life of society and progress emerges from a struggle in which each individual, class, or institution, seeks to realize its own idea of good.¹⁹⁴

A. W. Small, whose process concept of conflict has been quoted above, credits Simmel in a later passage in the same book:

The fact which we have now to emphasize is that . . . struggle itself deposits elements of civilization. That is, selfish, individualistic impulses perform a function in the interest of civilization, partly in spite of themselves and partly through the merging of selfish impulses into socializing impulses.¹⁹⁵

George Simpson, elaborating on Simmel's claim that conflict and cooperation are two aspects of one process, writes:

Society, as it is given in fact, is the result of both categories of reactions, and in so far both act in a completely positive way. The misconception that the one factor tears down what the other builds up, and that what at last remains is the result of subtracting the one from the other (while in reality it is much rather to be regarded as the addition of one to the other), doubtless springs from the equivocal concept of unity. We describe as unity the agreement and the conjunction of social elements, in contrast with their disjunctions, separations, disharmonies.¹⁹⁶

As already indicated, the most explicit attention to Simmel's theory of conflict is given by Lewis A. Coser who says in his introduction:

¹⁹²Coeley, Social Process, p. Social Organization
p. 199.

¹⁹³Charles Horton Cooley, Social Organization (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), p. 199.

¹⁹⁴Simpson, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

¹⁹⁵Small, General Sociology, pp. 361-362.

¹⁹⁶Simpson, op. cit., p. 25.

Simmel's essay on conflict, rooted as it is in his general commitment to the analysis of social phenomena in terms of inter-active processes, is the most fruitful among general discussions of social conflict.¹⁹⁷

Arthur F. Bentley in his Inquiry into Inquiries talks of the "unity" which is necessary for conflict to arise. He uses the analogy of the wolf, fighting with the pack over the too-limited quarry and points out that this is as much a symbiotic relationship "as when previously with the pack it was running down the prey." He says:

As Georg Simmel brilliantly has shown, there is no conflict without an underlying unity. Only in a common matrix can conflict arise.¹⁹⁸

Ernest T. Hiller, discussing the cause of conflict, refers to Simmel in the following paragraph:

Like all social behavior, conflict must be viewed as containing whatever native attributes the subjects possess, their physical and mental qualities, including the tensional and emotional reinforcements discussed, and the discerned objectives, defense, acquisitiveness, resistance to aggression, desire for status, aid to a third party, or gaining some supernatural merit or advantage. The group conflict involves all of these individual elements and, in addition, supplies justifications, incentives, organized strength, and opportunities for altruistic conduct or, at least, for acting in crucial situations with one's fellows. This, according to Simmel, has been a most potent cause of wars as well as of other conflicts. Whatever the factors involved in conflict, they must be viewed not as separate entities but as aids in functioning.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷Coser, Functions, p. 30.

¹⁹⁸Arthur F. Bentley, Inquiry into Inquiries: Essays in Social Theory (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1954), p. 18.

¹⁹⁹Ernest T. Hiller, Principles of Sociology (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1933), p. 286.

John Lewis Gillin and John Philip Gillin take up a concept of Simmel that has had little attention in American sociology. This concept, contravention, is more than competition but less than conflict. It is lodged between competition and conflict.

A dissociative process intermediate between competition and conflict is contravention. It is a special type of opposition. This process has been largely ignored by American sociologists, but has been investigated by such European sociologists as Simmel and Wiese.²⁰⁰

Gillin and Gillin spent the major portion of a chapter on contravention, drawing heavily on Howard Becker's interpretation of this process. Becker received his stimulus indirectly from Simmel and directly from von Wiese who did expand Simmel's original theory on the process of contravention.²⁰¹

Coser, drawing on Simmel, asserts that conflict with an out group defines the boundaries of the in group. "Conversely," he states, "renegadism threatens to break down the boundary lines of the established group."²⁰² Robert K. Merton, referring in a footnote to Simmel, says this on the topic:

When myths of rebellion and of conservatism both work toward a 'monopoly of the imagination' . . . it is above all the renegade who, though himself successful, renounces the prevailing values that become the target of greatest hostility among those in rebellion. For he not only puts the values in question, as does the out group, but he signifies that the

²⁰⁰John Lewis Gillin and John Philip Gillin, Cultural Sociology (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 611.

²⁰¹vide Simmel, Soziologie, p. 252; von Wiese and Becker, op. cit., chapter 19; Gillin and Gillin, op. cit., chapter 25.

²⁰²Coser, Functions, p. 69.

unity of the group is broken. Yet, as has so often been noted, it is typically members of a rising class rather than the most depressed strata who organize the resentful and the rebellious into a revolutionary group.²⁰³

Simmel expressed the idea that the closer the relationship between two elements, the more intense is the conflict between them when it arises.

The more we have in common with another as whole persons, . . . the more easily will our totality be involved in every single relation to him. . . . Therefore, if a quarrel arises between persons in such an intimate relationship, it is often so passionately expansive. . . . People who have many common features often do one another worse or 'worse' wrong than complete strangers do. . . . We confront the stranger with whom we share neither characteristics nor broader interests, objectively; we hold our personalities in reserve.²⁰⁴

Green, in his Sociology, refers to this part of Simmel's

Conflict when he writes:

With reference to the stranger with whom one shares neither qualities nor other interests, one stands in objective contrast, and one preserves the proper personality. On that account a difference in a single particular does not so easily carry the whole person with it. In the case of a person quite unlike ourselves, we come into contact only at the point of a single transaction or coincidence of interests. The accommodation of a conflict will consequently limit itself to this single issue. The more we have, however, in common with another, the easier will our whole personality become involved in each separate contact with him. Hence the quite disproportionate intensity with which otherwise quite self-contained persons frequently allow themselves to become moved in their conduct toward their most intimate associates.

²⁰³Robert King Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1957), p. 157.

²⁰⁴Simmel, as quoted by Coser, Functions, p. 67.

Close emotional attachment to another can, under certain circumstances, be a cause of personal conflict. To the extent that we come to need a favorable emotional response from another, to that extent do we become personally helpless in the face of betrayal of trust.²⁰⁵

In Simmel's "conflict cycle" the motives for continuing and ending the conflict are discussed. In reference to this, Hiller writes:

Attrition continues as long as the issue is of primary significance to one or both subjects, but when the two contradictory motives - to continue and to end the conflict - reach an approximate equilibrium the conflict is ready to break. Thus peace comes into being 'at first in the form of the wish immediately parallel with the struggle' and the willingness to forego victory and perchance to assume a humble position thereafter. This subjective change is called conciliation by Simmel, and a change in attitudes by Park and Burgess.²⁰⁶

And in Becker and Boskoff, the following comment likewise refers to the conflict cycle:

. . . The work of Simmel on the conflict cycle . . . demonstrates the effectiveness of the method (case studies of social phenomena) in establishing beyond question the existence of rhythms, trends, sequence patterns, cycles, or periodicities in social change.²⁰⁷

And a final reference to Simmel comes once more from Hiller who paraphrases Simmel's thought on victory via surrender of the opponents:

Victory may also go to one party because of the other's voluntary resignation rather than because of exhaustion. Such a concession may be prompted in a peace-group by

²⁰⁵Green, op. cit., p. 55.

²⁰⁶Hiller, Principles, pp. 314-315.

²⁰⁷Howard E. Jensen, "Developments in Analysis of Social Thought," Modern Sociological Theory, Howard Becker and Alvin Boskoff (ed.), (New York: The Dryden Press, 1957), p. 54.

deference to a moral principle or by the desire of the subject to demonstrate his ability to act on his own initiative and, as it were, to make a gift to the victor.²⁰⁸

Several pages of quotations referring to Simmel could be compiled from Coser's book. However, the influence that Simmel had on Coser has been established by Coser's statement that his book deals mainly with basic propositions from the theories of social conflict, in particular those of Georg Simmel. Coser, in examining Simmel's propositions under the light of recent research findings and in reformulating these propositions for future research, demonstrates the basic applicability of Simmel's thought in a modern theory of social conflict. How influential Coser's book is, in American sociology, goes beyond this study. Through Coser's work on the foundations of conflict a secondary or indirect influence of Simmel upon American sociology exists. Support for this can be found in the references to Coser's book. As an example, Raymond W. Mack and Richard C. Snyder in their recent article appearing in Conflict Resolution²⁰⁹ use several of Coser's propositions for their analysis. One of these reads:

Far from being necessarily dysfunctional, a certain degree of conflict is an essential element in group formation and the persistence of group life.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Hiller, Principles, p. 331.

²⁰⁹ Raymond W. Mack and Richard C. Snyder, "The Analysis of Social Conflict - Toward an Overview and Synthesis," Conflict Resolution (Evanston, Illinois: The Graduate School Department of Political Science, Northwestern University) 1(2):212-248, June, 1957.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 215.

It need not be further demonstrated that this is, rephrased, one of Simmel's basic propositions which has found its way into modern American sociology without being overtly linked with Simmel.

My legacy will be as it were in cash, distributed to many heirs, each transforming his part into use conforming to his own nature; A use that will no longer reveal its indebtedness to this heritage.²¹¹

III. INFLUENCE OF SIMMEL'S STUDY ON THE QUANTITATIVE DETERMINATION OF THE GROUP AS ACKNOWLEDGED BY AMERICAN SOCIOLOGISTS

Simmel's essay on the Quantitative Determination of the Group deals with the influences exerted by the numerical composition of the group upon group structure.

The forms which are characteristic of large groups result from the fact that they are forced to build special structures to take over the function which the immediate reciprocity between elements fulfills in small circles. The social unity in the large group can no longer be produced and preserved by the immediate relationships between individuals, and the large group must, therefore, build special organs in which the reciprocal activities and relationships of its elements can crystallize. Out of that necessity are born objective structures and norms, official and representative bodies as means to preserve the social unity which small circles can dispense with.²¹² E. F. Hiller says

²¹¹Simmel, as quoted by Coser, Functions, p. 30.

²¹²Vide. Spykman, op. cit., pp. 128-142.

in this connection:

The increasing scope of . . . integration enables a society to grow; and growth requires an increase in the scope of integration. Accordingly, the larger the society the more extensive must be the linking of functions and the more elaborate . . . must be the degree of specialization.²¹³

Hiller then presents a quotation from Simmel, supporting his statement. Simmel rightly emphasizes that the terms "large" and "small" groups are extremely crude scientific designations. They are indeterminate and vague.²¹⁴ And yet, Simmel concludes, they are useful as a suggestion that the sociological form of the group depends on quantitative aspects.

Simmel's study of the effect of numerical size upon group structure and the forms of sociation is an early attempt of scientific group analysis. That the "small group" part of his work has gained primary attention among American sociologists can be explained by the relatively great interest which this particular aspect of group theory has gained in this country. It should, therefore, be no surprise that the majority of references to Simmel come from those sociologists who concern themselves with small group theory.

Albion W. Small, referring to Simmel's "Essay on the Quantitative Determination of the Group" in a footnote, poses a basic question and supplies the answer which shows that he sensed the coming emphasis upon quantitative research:

²¹³ Ernest T. Hiller, Social Relations and Structures (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 154.

²¹⁴ vide Wolff, Sociology, p. 105.

The query arises: Do associations take on varying qualities with varying numerousness of the associated individuals? This query at once makes the axiom and truism of statistical science a datum that demands a whole system of inquiries which belong in wider reaches of sociological science.²¹⁵

Simmel's answer to this question would have been in the affirmative and research since then supported a considerable number of Simmel's propositions. Robert E. L. Faris says:

Although Georg Simmel contributed no objective research findings he formulated a number of propositions relative to group size. Some of these may furnish hypotheses for testing in the contemporary effort.²¹⁶

Allan Ester voices the following opinion and points at the applicability of Simmel's observations to modern research projects:

Promising - even impressive - beginnings were made in the direction of small-group analysis early in the history of sociology. In general, however, as Shils has pointed out, sociologists in the late nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century were more interested in processes and characteristics of total societies than they were in small groups as such. As a consequence, suggestive leads in the work of LePlay and Durkheim, for example, were not followed up. Of the sociological writings before World War I only those of Simmel and Cooley are cited with any degree of frequency today for contributions to small-group analysis.

Simmel's interest in small groups was directed primarily to the formal properties of dyads and triads and to the kinds (and consequences) of relationships that might logically be expected to occur in them. One of his observations, utilized

²¹⁵Small, General Sociology, p. 503.

²¹⁶Robert E. L. Faris, "Development of the Small Group Research Movement," Group Relations at the Cross-Roads, (Muxafer Sherif and M. O. Wilson, editors, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 169 - footnote.

recently, for example, by T. M. Mills²¹⁷ and also by F. L. Strodbeck,²¹⁸ was that a majority becomes possible in a triad but is non-existent in a dyad²¹⁹ and that this has important consequences for the functioning of the group. Another, selected at random, is that

' . . . The larger the group is, the more easily does it form an objective unit up and above its members. . . (participants) in a given (pair) relationship see only one another, and do not see, at the same time, an objective, superindividual structure which they feel exists and operates on its own.²²⁰

One of the most striking demonstrations for the relevance of Simmel's ideas in modern sociological thought is supplied by Merton in his book, Social Theory and Structure, which appeared in 1957.²²¹ Merton set to the task of compiling a list of group properties for the classification of types of membership groups. He lists altogether twenty-six group properties which, more often than not, show Simmel's influence. Merton, in several footnotes, acknowledges Simmel's influence:

I make no effort to cite the sociological materials which furnished the points of departure for this list of group properties; it should be said, however, that Georg Simmel's writings were, beyond comparison, the most fruitful for the purpose.²²²

²¹⁷Theodore M. Mills, "Power Relations in Three-Person Groups," Am. Soc. Rev., 18:351-357, August, 1953.

²¹⁸F. L. Strodbeck, "The Family as a Three-Person Group," Am. Soc. Rev., 19:23-29, February, 1954.

²¹⁹Simmel, Soziologie, pp. 127-128, 136.

²²⁰Allan Elster, "Basic Continuities in the Study of Small Groups," Becker and Boskoff, op. cit., p. 310.

²²¹Merton, op. cit.,

²²²Ibid., p. 310.

Judging by the number of references to Simmel in Merton's work, it can be concluded that he has been influenced considerably by Simmel's thought. This can be demonstrated by quoting a footnote of Merton which refers to a discussion of absolute and relative size of a group.

The concepts of absolute and relative size have been distilled from the following passage in Simmel's Sociology, and have been given a somewhat different denotation. "The structural differences among groups, that are produced by mere numerical differences, become even more evident in the roles played by certain prominent and effective members. It is obvious that a given number of such members has a different significance in a large group than in a small one. As the group changes quantitatively, the effectiveness of these members also changes. But it must be noted that this effectiveness is modified even if the number of outstanding members rises or falls in exact proportions to that of the whole group. The role of one millionaire who lives in a city of ten thousand middle-class people, and the general physiognomy which that city receives from his presence, are totally different from the significance which fifty millionaires, or, rather, each of them, have for a city of 500,000 population - in spite of the fact that the numerical relation between the millionaire and his fellow citizens, which alone (it would seem) should determine that significance, has remained unchanged. . . The peculiar feature is that the absolute numbers of the total group and of its prominent elements so remarkably determine the relations within the group - in spite of the fact that their numerical ratio remains the same,"²²³

Further support for the claim that Simmel has influenced Merton is derived from the following passages, all referring to Simmel's Quantitative Determination of the Group.

For the category of 'non-membership', if defined only in negative terms to comprise those who do not meet the criteria of membership, serves to obscure basic distinctions in kinds of non-membership; distinctions which have particular relevance for reference group theory. That this is so can be seen by

²²³Ibid., p. 313; vide Simmel, Soziologie, pp. 39-40.

drawing certain implications from the important and long-neglected concept of 'completeness' of a group as introduced by Simmel. The concept of completeness refers to a group property measured by the proportion of potential members - those who satisfy the requirements for membership as established by the group - who are actual members. Trade unions, professional associations, alumni groups are only the most conspicuous kinds of examples of organizations with varying degrees of completeness.

The group property of completeness, as Simmel properly emphasizes, must be clearly distinguished from the group property of size. In effect, this means that groups of the same absolute size (as measured by the number of members) may have quite different degrees of completeness (as measured by the proportion of potential members who are actually members). And correlatively, this means that groups of the same absolute size may have markedly different degrees of social power, according to whether they encompass all potential members or varying proportions of them. Recognition of the relation between completeness and power is, of course, one of the major reasons why associations of men in particular statuses will seek to enlarge their membership to include as large as possible a proportion of the potential membership. The more complete the group, the greater the power and influence it can exercise.

This short formulation of the concept of completeness is only a seeming digression from the re-examination of the concepts of members and non-members of a group. For, as Simmel apparently sensed, the concept of completeness implies that there are distinct and structurally different kinds of non-members of a group. Non-members do not constitute a single, homogeneous social category. They differ in their patterned relations to the group of which they are not members. This is evidently implicit in the observation by Simmel that 'the person who ideally, as it were, belongs in the group but remains outside it, by his mere indifference, his non-affiliation, positively harms the group. This non-membership may take the form of competition, as in the case of workers' coalitions; or it may show the outsider the limits of the power which the group wields; or it may damage the group because it cannot even be constituted unless all potential candidates join as members, as is the case in certain industrial cartels.'

The non-members who actively avoid the membership for which they are eligible are, in the words of Simmel, those to whom 'the axiom applies, "Who is not for me is against me."' And as Simmel has also implied, the eligible individuals who

expressly reject membership pose more of a threat to the group in certain respects than the antagonists, who could not in any case become members. Rejection by eligibles symbolizes the relative weakness of the group by emphasizing its incompleteness of membership just as it symbolizes the relative dubiety of its norms and values which are not accepted by those to whom they should in principle apply. For both these motivated non-affiliates, the group is (or may readily become) a negative reference group, as we shall see in the section dealing with this type of group.²²⁴

In a discussion on open and closed groups, Merton points out:

Just as individuals differ in aspirations to affiliate themselves with particular groups, so do groups differ in their concern to enlarge or to restrict their membership. This is to say that groups, and social structures generally, may be relatively open or closed, as has long since been noted in sociological theory.

Here again, a point of departure is provided by Simmel. Groups do not uniformly seek to enlarge their membership; some, on the contrary, are so organized as to restrict membership, even to the extent of excluding those who are formally eligible for membership. This is particularly the case for elites, either self-constituted or socially recognized. Nor is this policy of exclusion entirely a matter of preserving the prestige and the power of the group, although these considerations may concretely enter into the policy. As Simmel says in effect, it may also be a structural requirement for an elite to remain relatively small, if its distinctive social relations are to be maintained. Ready extension of membership may also depreciate the symbolic worth of group affiliation by extending it to numerous others. For these various structural and self-interested reasons, certain groups remain relatively closed.

For the same formal reasons, other types of groups seek to be relatively open in an effort to enlarge their membership. Political parties in democratic political systems, industrial unions and certain religious bodies, for example, are structurally and functionally so constituted that they seek to enlarge their membership to the fullest.²²⁵

²²⁴Ibid., pp. 288-291.

²²⁵Ibid., pp. 292-293.

Merton then supplies a quotation from Simmel, showing the point of departure which he, Simmel, supplied for Merton's elaboration: 226

Simmel's observations read as follows: "Thus the tendency of extreme numerical limitation . . . is not only due to the egoistic disinclination to share a ruling position but also to the instinct - [sic., read: tacit understanding] that the vital conditions of an aristocracy can be maintained only if the number of its members is small, relatively and absolutely. . . [under certain conditions] there is nothing left but to draw at a certain point a hard line against expansion, and to stem the quantitatively closed group against whatever outside elements may want to enter it, no matter how much they may be entitled to do so. The aristocratic nature often becomes conscious of itself only in this situation, in this increased solidarity in the face of a tendency to expand."²²⁷

It is, however, not Merton alone who acknowledges Simmel. George C. Homans in his classic The Human Group refers to Simmel as he discusses "relations between three or more persons." Homans says that the earliest statements of the principle of inter-relationship of behavior between persons within a group were those of Simmel and Radcliffe Brown. From Homans' general rule of behavior determinants, a parallel to Simmel's proposition on this subject can easily be drawn:

The relationship between two persons, A and B, is partly determined by the relationships between A and a third person, C, and between B and C.²²⁸

Theodore N. Mills refers to Simmel's discussion on the three person group or "triad" as has been termed, when he writes:

²²⁶Ibid.

²²⁷Simmel, Soziologie, pp. 90-91.

²²⁸George C. Homans, The Human Group (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950), p. 248.

In drawing his fundamental distinction between two-person groups and all groups of larger size, Simmel called attention to certain characteristics of the three-person situation.²²⁹

Simmel described how a conflict between two could bring satisfaction and strength to a third, and how the sense of unity within a pair could be threatened by the mere presence of another. He analysed how a third person impinges upon the other two and the way such a position might manifest itself: as a mediator, as a holder of the balance of power, or as a constant disturber of the solidarity enjoyed by the other two. Mills, in examining some of Simmel's hypotheses, proceeds:

Simmel's principle of segregation (of the triad into a 'pair' and an 'other') is the first of three questions examined in this paper. The second is the extent to which relationships are interdependent. The problem is whether the nature of one relationship determines . . . the nature of the other relationships. The third follows naturally from these: when is it found that interdependence develops into a sharply differentiated and rigidly set power structure, and when is it found that relationships are in a state of fluctuation?²³⁰

Mills applied a research model of "Selected Quantitative Techniques" to the testing of the above proposals.²³¹ He says in his summary of findings:

Medians of support rates exchanged between three members in a series of forty-eight problem-solving sessions confirm Simmel's proposition that the primary tendency in the threesome is segregation into a pair and an other; the more active members form the solidary bond and the least active member is isolated.

²²⁹Mills, "Power Relations," Am. Soc. Rev., 18:351.

²³⁰Ibid., p. 352.

²³¹Ibid., footnote 5, p. 354.

Tests for more detailed structural characteristics show that when this initial tendency is accentuated, there forms a genuine power structure, with internal differentiation, interdependence of relationships between members, stability of activity position, steady trends in receipts of support that are congruent with the initial differentiation, and, finally, stability of the pattern itself. This structure, in its ideal form of one positive relationship and two hostile relationships is called the 'true coalition structure.'

Mills, who points at some limitations in his own study, concludes:

It is in the light of these subsequent steps that the above findings are presented. They were not predicted, nor are they tests of a body of general theory. They are, however, relevant to Simmel's insights and it is hoped they will lend economy to the small groups researcher.²³²

Strodtbeck, who states that one of the primary objectives of his paper is a comparison of his results with the results reported by Mills in a previous paper,²³³ notes that Mills' observations support Simmel's theoretical statements on the patterns of triads, while his own findings only partially conform with Mills' observations. Without explicit reference to Simmel, Strodtbeck does nevertheless test Simmel's ideas by his comparative approach to Mills' work, who uses Simmel's propositions on the "triad" as basic questions to be studied. This is another example of the indirect influence of Simmel that prevails in present sociological research.²³⁴

²³²Ibid., p. 357.

²³³Ibid., pp. 351-357.

²³⁴Strodtbeck, op. cit., pp. 23-29.

Arnold M. Rose discusses Simmel's triadic relationship in a context which would be applicable to two other of Simmel's essays: "Conflict" and "The Stranger." However, the emphasis in the present context is on the "Triad":

The role of the mediator as a 'third' person needs to be investigated. He may be regarded as a 'stranger' who has wisdom and objectivity. He may be regarded as a friend who is trying to help out, or as a benevolent father figure who is to show the quarreling boys how to make peace, or as a stern father figure who has no business entering a private quarrel. He may be regarded as an expert who may be relied on to give relevant and reliable advice, as a representative of a third interest who is in opposition to both of the contending parties, and so on. Some of these perceived roles may provide the mediator with certain assets in an effort to resolve the conflict.²³⁵

Simmel has investigated the various roles to which Rose refers. In a general context, Simmel says this before he analyzes the group formations which result from the addition of the third to a dyad:

What has been said indicates to a great extent the role of the third element, as well as the configurations that operate among three social elements. The dyad represents both the first social synthesis and unification, and the first separation and antithesis. The appearance of the third party indicates transition, conciliation, and abandonment of absolute contrast.²³⁶

George C. Homans relates that what is really studied in small groups is elementary behavior. . . .

. . . . what happens when two or three persons are in a position to influence one another. . . . [and] because Simmel,

²³⁵Arnold M. Rose, Theory and Method in the Social Sciences (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1954), pp. 147-148.

²³⁶Simmel, as translated by Wolff, Sociology, p. 145.

in essays such as those on sociability, games, coquetry and conversation, was an analyst of elementary social behavior, we call him an ancestor of what is known today as small-group research.²³⁷

Becker and Useem undertook a sociological analysis of the dyad,²³⁸ drawing heavily on Simmel:

Many of the ideas of this section stem from the pioneer work of Georg Simmel.²³⁹

In this article, Becker and Useem analyze the general characteristics of two person groups and, as indicated in the quotation, they utilize Simmel's theories on dyadic relationships.

A last demonstration of Simmel's influence upon group theory is taken from Hubert Bonner, who uses Simmel's work as a demonstration for his, Simmel's, relevance in modern field theory:

Sociological Boundary is another of Simmel's special forms. It is essential to a better understanding of group attitudes. 'Boundary is not a spatial reality with sociological activities but a sociological reality manifesting itself in spatial form.' Its function is that of separating one group from another, particularly the in-group from the out-group. Ethnocentrism might thus be defined topologically as a sociological boundary to which the behavior of a group can be ordered with respect to groups lying outside. Social life is full of the boundaries of circles that do not intersect, boundaries that either seriously limit or entirely prevent free locomotion. Within the native group itself, moreover, they establish barriers to locomotion in the form of mores, customs, laws, and institutions. Nor does Simmel stop here: Like the field theorists he notes the existence of boundaries within the individual's own private personality - that deeply isolated region of intimate experience the boundary

²³⁷George C. Homans, "Social Behavior as Exchange," Am. Jour. Soc., 58(6):597, 1958.

²³⁸Howard Becker and Ruth Hill Useem, "Sociological Analysis of the Dyad," Am. Soc. Rev., 7(1):13-26, 1942.

²³⁹Ibid., p. 14.

of which no one can cross. It is the plane of reality of the individual's life-space to which the multitude of his unfulfilled drives and inarticulate longings may be ordered.²⁴⁰

In regard to membership-character, the same author says:

Another topological concept to demand our attention is membership-character, or to use Simmel's terminology, 'group-belongingness.' It is basic to the understanding of such important sociological facts as social contact and social isolation. A person with a low degree of membership-character has few contacts. He has few localisations in sociological space. The stranger, as described by Simmel, serves as a good illustration of negative membership-character, or isolation. He is not an integral part of sociological space and unlike the 'normal' person he is not materially determined by it. The boundaries of his space are extremely fluid, and his social locomotions are correspondingly numerous but detached.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Bonner, op. cit., pp. 175-176.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

FURTHER EVIDENCES OF SIMMEL'S INFLUENCE UPON AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

It has become evident by the presentation of direct references and acknowledgements of American sociologists to Georg Simmel that American sociology has received influences and stimuli from Georg Simmel. However, the material gathered above has given relevant data solely in connection with the three topics selected from Simmel's work. The extent of his influence, however, can be conceived with greater accuracy when the following appraisals of his work and influence by American sociologists are taken into account. Likewise, obvious manifestations and acknowledgements of Simmel's influence on American sociological thought and methods beyond the topics discussed above will demonstrate that the range of Simmel's influence is not limited to these subjects. His contributions to science differ as widely as his interests. His proclivity of relating hitherto unconnected yet perceptive insights often has been noted. José Ortega y Gasset well characterized the peculiarity of Simmel's thought when he wrote of him:

That acute mind - a sort of philosophical squirrel - never considered his subject a problem in itself, but instead took it as a platform upon which to execute his marvelous analytical exercises.²⁴²

²⁴²José Ortega y Gasset as quoted by Coser, Functions, p. 31.

It is his work in sociology which is of interest in this treatise, and it is his sociological analyses which brought him recognition in the United States. In their books and articles, many American sociologists have paid tribute to Simmel. The following quotations will be demonstrative of the high regard for Simmel and his work among American sociologists.

I. THE OPINIONS OF SOME AMERICAN SOCIOLOGISTS
ABOUT SIMMEL AND HIS WORK

Floyd N. House in his Development of Sociology appraises Simmel as follows:

The earliest important and influential contribution to sociological theory . . . was that made by Georg Simmel, in his Soziologie and other publications. The sociological theories of Simmel were made accessible to American students, in fragments, through the publication of translations of the more important of his early scattered writings in the American Journal of Sociology, beginning in 1895. They were probably the most subtle and searching discussions of sociological methodology that attracted the attention of American sociologists in the nineties or for some time thereafter.²⁴³

Arthur F. Bentley in Relativity in Man and Society perceives Simmel as "the keenest and most searching investigator society has yet had, undoubtedly the one with the greatest yield of permanently applicable knowledge."²⁴⁴

²⁴³Floyd N. House, The Development of Sociology (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1936), p. 386.

²⁴⁴Bentley, Relativity in Man and Society, p. 163.

Everett C. Hughes calls Simmel, as already quoted above, "the Freud of the study of society,"²⁴⁵ and Lewis A. Coser refers to Simmel as the "founder of scientific sociology," and assigns to him the most potent European influence on American sociology before the first world war.²⁴⁶ In the eyes of Talcott Parsons, Simmel's sociology was "perhaps the first serious attempt to gain a basis for sociology as a special science."²⁴⁷ F. H. Tenbruck relates that "Simmel was the first or among the first, to uncover for sociology a specific 'layer' of reality, its 'social dimension.'"²⁴⁸ Robert A. Nisbet is sure that "of all the pioneers, Simmel is the most relevant at the present time,"²⁴⁹ and Theodore Abel asserts "Simmel's accomplishment far surpasses that of the ordinarily creative scholar . . ." and as "a total output by a single person, the wealth of original contributions made by Simmel has yet to find its equal."²⁵⁰ Hugh D. Duncan writes: "Few sociologists were more aware of the need for careful consideration of

²⁴⁵Hughes, Foreword to Conflict, Wolff's translation of Simmel, "Der Streit," p. 9.

²⁴⁶Lewis A. Coser, "The Founder of Scientific Sociology," A Review of Wolff's translation "The Sociology of Georg Simmel," The New Leader, 33(32):23-24, August, 1950.

²⁴⁷Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action (second edition; Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1949), p. 773.

²⁴⁸Tenbruck, op. cit., p. 65.

²⁴⁹Nisbet, op. cit., p. 480.

²⁵⁰Abel, "Contribution," Am. Soc. Rev., 24:473-479.

models of sociation than Simmel."²⁵¹ And, an indirect opinion by Robert K. Merton who, while appraising Homans' The Human Group, writes:

Not since Simmel's pioneering analyses of almost half a century ago has any single work contributed so much to a sociological theory of the structure, processes, and functions of small groups as George Homans' The Human Group.²⁵²

Howard Becker's opening sentence in his article "On Simmel's Philosophy of Money" reads:

If asked to list a dozen of the thinkers who during the past fifty years have most influenced the development of sociology as a discipline, sociologists the world over would in all probability include . . . the name of Georg Simmel.²⁵³

K. J. Newman writes of Simmel:

The general principles and character of his writings are well known . . . (in) the United States, where they so greatly stimulated later sociological research.²⁵⁴

Rudolf Heberle says of Simmel's analysis of form and content of sociation:

Even his most severe critics acknowledge the significance of Simmel's idea of sociology as a systematic analysis of social forms.²⁵⁵

George C. Homans calls him an ancestor of small group research

²⁵¹Hugh D. Duncan, "Simmel's Image of Society," Georg Simmel, Wolff (ed.), p. 100.

²⁵²Robert K. Merton, Introduction to Homans, The Human Group, p. XXIII.

²⁵³Howard Becker, "On Simmel's Philosophy of Money," Georg Simmel, Wolff (ed.), p. 216.

²⁵⁴Newman, op. cit., p. 348.

²⁵⁵Heberle, op. cit., p. 268.

and analyst of elementary social behavior.²⁵⁶ Spykman values Simmel's contributions to social theory as of "the utmost importance."²⁵⁷ Preston and Bonita Valien refer to Simmel as being considered the "founder of sociology as an independent academic discipline in Germany."²⁵⁸ And Nicholas Timasheff writes, "Simmel initiated the study of types of social processes as revealed in the interaction of individuals, and many of his formulations have not yet been surpassed."²⁵⁹ Alvin Boskoff asserts that "Simmel illustrated in numerous capsulated analyses of social phenomena the possibilities of a sociology organized about a series of distinctive concepts."²⁶⁰ Allan W. Rister, says about Simmel, "His propositions were formulated at a level sufficiently abstract for sociologists to be able to make use of them in a variety of contexts."²⁶¹ Kingsley Davis, referring to Simmel's superiority and subordination says of it, "Perhaps the most penetrating essay on this subject ever written," and his comment on Simmel's "Conflict" (Small's translation) reads: "A masterpiece of theoretical formulation.

²⁵⁶ Homans, Social Behavior, p. 597.

²⁵⁷ Spykman, op. cit., p. 273.

²⁵⁸ Preston Valien and Bonita Valien, "General Sociological Theories of Current Reference," Modern Sociological Theory, Becker and Boskoff (eds.), p. 82.

²⁵⁹ Timasheff, op. cit., p. 105.

²⁶⁰ Alvin Boskoff, Modern Sociological Theory, "Modern Sociological Theory," Becker and Boskoff (eds.), p. 25.

²⁶¹ Rister, op. cit., p. 310.

Translated from parts of the author's great German treatise on sociology.²⁶² Adolph S. Tomars refers to Simmel as a "key figure" in the reformulation of the subject matter of sociology about the turn of the century.²⁶³ And Ellwood says of Simmel:

Among the earliest writers to define society as essentially an interaction of individuals (and so as a process) was Simmel. . Professor Small has especially developed and emphasized this idea in his "General Sociology", Chap. I.²⁶⁴

Park and Burgess repeatedly refer to Simmel as having made brilliant, outstanding contributions to sociology.²⁶⁵ And the final reference from Albion W. Small, the scientist who introduced Simmel's writing to the English speaking world through his translation in the American Journal of Sociology. Small, in his General Sociology, calls Simmel "one of the keenest thinkers in Europe."²⁶⁶

II. SOME STATEMENTS BY AMERICAN SOCIOLOGISTS AS TO SIMMEL'S INFLUENCE UPON CERTAIN AMERICAN SOCIOLOGISTS

One of the strongest arguments for a positive answer as to Simmel's influence is presented by American sociologists themselves.

²⁶²Kingsley Davis, Human Society (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 119, 170.

²⁶³Adolph S. Tomars, "Sociology and Interdisciplinary Developments," Modern Sociological Theory, Becker and Boskoff (eds.), p. 505.

²⁶⁴Ellwood, op. cit., p. 345.

²⁶⁵Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921), p. 286, 331, 559, 639, 720.

²⁶⁶Small, General Sociology, p. 498.

The sources for these datae are the books, articles, and reviews written by American sociologists about their colleagues. Among the most frequently appearing references is to Park and Burgess' Introduction to the Science of Sociology, which was, in the twenties, the most popular sociology text in America.²⁶⁷ The number of references to Simmel in this work exceed any other author. Through this book, Simmel's work was introduced to most of the students who, following World War I, enrolled in increasing numbers in sociology courses. How far this indirect influence of Simmel reached and reaches is even beyond guessing. Nevertheless, a few concrete examples of the indirect influence of Simmel can be demonstrated .

Edward A. Shils, in his paper on "The Study of the Primary Group,"²⁶⁸ credits Simmel as one of the few sociologists which were not blind to the significance of primary groups. Simmel's keen eye for intimate relationships created a tremendous number of brilliantly, aphoristically formulated hypotheses, i.e. the "Quantitative Determination of the Group; The Secret and the Secret Society; The Intersection of Social Circles; and The Self-Maintenance of the Group." "These hypotheses," states Shils, "have never been taken up in empirical sociological theory."²⁶⁹ However, Robert E. Park did adopt, at least

²⁶⁷Park and Burgess, op. cit.

²⁶⁸Edward A. Shils, "The Study of the Primary Group," The Policy Sciences, Daniel Lerner and Harold D. Lasswell (eds.), (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1951), pp. 44-69.

²⁶⁹Ibid., p. 45.

partially, some of Simmel's thought on primary relationships. Shils says:

He [Park] was a student of Simmel, but of the two facets of Simmel's interests in primary groups - their internal dynamics and the processes of their formation, maintenance, and change on the one hand, and the historical trend toward the disintegration of the rural and village Gemeinschaft and the weakening of Gemeinschaft-like structures on the other - Park was more fascinated by the latter, i.e., by the disintegration of the primary group attending the growth of the great urban society. Hence he . . . devoted more attention to the areas of behavior unregulated by primary-group rules than to those activities in urban society which were influenced by primary-group membership.²⁷⁰

However, one of his [Park's] students, Frederick Thrasher, in his study of "The Gang,"²⁷¹ which still remains the most extensive first hand field study of primary groups, examined the inner working of over one thousand informal boys' gangs in Chicago and showed in concrete terms the influence of primary group membership on the facilitation of delinquent and criminal actions.²⁷²

Returning to a direct influence, Kurt H. Wolff, in his introduction to The Sociology of Georg Simmel asserts that Small . . . "admittedly used some of Simmel's concepts, as did Park and Burgess."²⁷³ Preston and Bonita Valien say of Simmel and his influence:

. . . His formulations of the forms of social interaction greatly influenced sociological research in his lifetime and continues to influence it through the influence and work of such sociologists as Wiese, Becker, and Park and Burgess.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰Ibid., p. 46.

²⁷¹Frederick M. Thrasher, The Gang: A Study of 1313 Gangs in Chicago (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927).

²⁷²Shils, loc. cit.

²⁷³Wolff, Sociology, p. XLV.

²⁷⁴Valien and Valien, op. cit., pp. 81-82.

And further in the same paper:

Simmel is generally considered to be the founder of sociology as an independent academic discipline in Germany and, in his capacity as teacher, he influenced many of the leading American sociologists of his time.²⁷⁵

Referring to Park and Burgess, Floyd N. House states:

The medium through which the 'formal sociology' has probably exercised the most influence upon sociological thought in the United States has been the Park and Burgess Introduction to the Science of Sociology in which several extensive translations from Simmel are included, with appreciative comments, as readings.²⁷⁶

Kimball Young and Linton Freeman likewise refer to Park and Burgess:

Earlier sociologists and social psychologists dealt with various forms of interaction. This is amply clear in the writings of Ward, Small, and Giddings, to mention only three earlier American writers. Yet it remained for Park and Burgess in their Introduction to the Science of Sociology (1921) to give us a more systematic statement of social processes. Drawing heavily upon the German philosopher and sociologist Simmel, they extended the analysis and stimulated various studies which used such concepts.²⁷⁷

Nicholas S. Timasheff mentions in addition to the sociologists already referred to, E. A. Ross and Florian Znaniecki:

Simmel's influence on sociology has been considerable; in some measure it continues to the present day. Early in the twentieth century his views, especially on conflict and social stratification, were reflected in the writings of the American sociologists E. A. Ross and Albion W. Small and, somewhat later, in those of . . . Florian Znaniecki and Howard Becker. Becker has played an important role in bringing some of Simmel's

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ House, Development, p. 392.

²⁷⁷ Kimball Young and Linton Freeman, "Social Psychology and Sociology," Modern Sociological Theory, Becker and Boskoff (eds.), pp. 550-551.

conceptions to the attention of American students in recent years, through the work of Leopold von Wiese, who in Germany succeeded Simmel . . . ²⁷⁸

A reference to J. L. Moreno, who introduced the sociodrama and the technique of sociometric analysis,²⁷⁹ is made by Kilzer and Ross. However, Simmel's influence on Moreno, if it exists, is rather hypothetical:

Moreno's theories and methods were elaborated largely without knowledge of the work of sociologists and psychologists before him, although he admits reading Simmel, Scheler, and Marx.²⁸⁰

Harry Elmer Barnes maintains that Stuckenberg, who was at the same time as Small and Park a member of the Chicago sociology department, had been influenced by Simmel.

Another distinctive characteristic of Stuckenberg's writings is the extensive acquaintance with German psychological and political literature, which came from his prolonged residence in Germany. He was especially impressed and influenced by Wundt and Simmel.²⁸¹

The concluding reference as to Simmel's influence comes from Sidney Ratner who writes on the work of A. F. Bentley:

He [Bentley] received a much broader basis for work from those with whom he studied: Adolph Wagner, Gustav Schmoller, Georg Simmel, Wilhelm Dilthey and Hermann Grimm. Although

²⁷⁸ Timasheff, op. cit., p. 102.

²⁷⁹ J. L. Moreno, Who Shall Survive (Washington, D. C.: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1934).

²⁸⁰ E. Kilzer and E. J. Ross, Western Social Thought (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1954), p. 472.

²⁸¹ Barnes (ed.), Introduction, p. 806.

Dilthey offered some sharp intellectual stimuli, Simmel was the professor who gave the greatest impetus to Bentley's development. Bentley later characterized Simmel as 'the keenest and most searching investigator society has yet had.' Three great points that Bentley states he derived from Simmel were: (1) that you cannot have a conflict except on common grounds to stand on (culturally as well as physically); (2) that society can be analyzed into groups that cross one another in a thousand directions and hence nullify any sweeping classification of society into fixed and sharply divided 'basic' elements or groups; (3) that almost as a rule in the Geisteswissenschaften what scholars call the Fundament (foundations) is much weaker than the Oberbau (the structure built on top).

The first sketch and outline for "The Process of Government" has an inscription: 'To John Dewey, Georg Simmel, Ludwig Gumplowicz, Walt Whitman, and the many other joint makers of this book.' The Finis reads: 'To Any Reader - I am no more the slave of this book than are you.'²⁸²

From the references and quotations presented so far, one could construct a list of men who had received influences from Simmel and his work. However, with the days of great system builders also vanished the clear-cut proponents of specific schools of thought. As sociology began to be a cumulative science, gathering pertinent data from all sources, the influence of one man or one school began to be blurred. Today, the contributions of the great thinkers are integrated into a common frame of knowledge which is part of the basic equipment of any sociologist. Hence neither Marton nor Wolff nor Bendix nor Spykman are mentioned here. Sociology has grown into too broad a field to attach the label of a school or all absorbing influence to any of these men.

²⁸²Sidney Ratner, "A. F. Bentley's Inquiries into the Behavioral Sciences and the Theory of Scientific Inquiry," Life, Language, Law, Richard W. Taylor, ed. (Yellow Springs, Ohio: The Antioch Press, 1957), pp. 29-32.

Slowly, the emphasis has shifted from the search for an over-all explanatory principle of social life to a conception of multiple cause and effect relationships which have to be and are studied by the sociologist with all the methods available to the modern researcher. In such a setting the theories of the system builders are subjected to rigorous testing and it is there where the relevance of their hypotheses is either established or denied. The question whether or not Simmel's countless analytical propositions and observations hold up under such scrutiny is at least partially answered by a selection of references to Simmel in modern research projects.

III. ARE SIMMEL'S PROPOSITIONS STILL INFLUENTIAL IN MODERN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH ?

A number of indications which are relevant to this query have been given in the chapters above. However, some general and later some specific references to the pertinence of Simmel's thought in modern research shall be supplied.

Simmel's contribution to the establishment of sociology as an independent science is well recognized. However, for the sake of completeness a few references to his importance in the development of sociology as a science are presented first.

Schermerhorn and Beskoff state:

Georg Simmel, who has been widely criticised for what appear to be overly 'formalistic' features in his work, has generally been appraised as a pioneer in constructing a distinctive conceptual scheme for a scientific sociology and thus granting it

independent status.²⁸³

Floyd N. House, in a critical note on the vagueness of Simmel's distinction between forms and content nevertheless attaches high value to the principle that was expressed thereby.

. . . In Simmel's treatment of various topics there is much that is suggested and revealing, and one is inclined to feel that, while his distinction between the form and the content of sociation is neither entirely intelligible nor tenable in the formulation that he was able to give to it, it nevertheless expresses a principle that the social science of the future will have to take into account. In spite of its rather vague and abstruse character, the concept of the form of a certain type of social interaction has served to guide sociological research into fruitful channels, even in the case of students who have not been consciously influenced by it.²⁸⁴

On the same subject is the quotation taken from Alvin Boskoff who defends Simmel's distinction between form and content.

Therefore, the forms of sociation cannot be justly characterized as unreal, empty, or non-empirical, for they are derived from analysis of empirical phenomena and their utility can be continually tested in terms of their assistance in clarifying and organizing theoretically relevant aspects of diverse social phenomena.²⁸⁵

And likewise on the subject of form and content is a footnote taken from A. F. Bentley's Inquiry into Inquiries:

Simmel's distinction of form and content is in contrast with the suggestion in this paper that content may best be considered as sociological, with process as psychological;

²⁸³Richard A. Schermerhorn and Alvin Boskoff, "Recent Analyses of Sociological Theory," Modern Sociological Theory, Becker and Boskoff (eds.), pp. 73-74.

²⁸⁴House, Development, p. 390.

²⁸⁵Alvin Boskoff, "From Social Thought to Social Theory," Modern Sociological Theory, Becker and Boskoff (eds.), p. 26.

but either construction is a permissible postulation for experimental development under semantic approach.²⁸⁶

From Kilzer and Ross comes this appraisal of Simmel's work:

Although much of Simmel's work was philosophical rather than sociological within the usual meaning of the term, he has been very influential in the development of sociology. Not only did he furnish some useful insights, for example, the discussion in his Soziologie of the secret society and of the stranger, but he also directed interest toward the sociology of knowledge with his discussion of philosophical sociology; he foreshadowed the 'ideal type or construct' sociology of Max Weber; he developed the idea of 'social distance;' and he initiated the 'formal school' of sociology of Vierkandt and von Wiese.²⁸⁷

Lewis A. Coser, in his review of Kurt Wolff's translation

The Sociology of Georg Simmel, says:

. . . Before the first world war Simmel was perhaps the most potent European influence on American sociology, his work suffered an eclipse in the interwar years. Simmel was relegated to courses on history of sociological thought, and if the textbooks alluded to him at all they generally tended to treat him as the exponent of a now happily surpassed program of formal sociology. . . It is only now with the general increase in theoretical sophistication that has taken place in American sociology that . . . we are finally given the first substantial translation in book form of the work of Georg Simmel, who died in 1918, and is among the ten or twenty first-rate minds that sociology can boast of so far.²⁸⁸

And Coser's opinion on the importance of Wolff's translation:

Suffice it to say here that we are convinced that the present translation - a very competent one indeed - though by no means encompassing all or even all of the most important of Simmel's writings in the field, can serve immeasurably to stimulate and enrich research and theoretical thought not only in sociology but in the social sciences generally.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁶Bentley, Inquiry, pp. 85-86.

²⁸⁷Kilzer and Ross, op. cit., p. 377.

²⁸⁸Coser, "The Founder of Scientific Sociology," p. 23.

²⁸⁹Ibid., p. 24.

K. J. Newman evaluates Simmel's profound analysis on superordination and subordination when he writes:

The general principles and character of his writings are well known on the European Continent and the United States, where they so greatly stimulated later sociological research; yet the startling insight into contemporary political problems of this analytical genius has so far been less realized. Among his numerous contributions, his allusion to the integration of individuals and groups within a tyrannical society is essential for a real understanding of totalitarian structure and techniques.²⁹⁰

And from the pen of the same author, making an exception to the applicability of Simmel's hypothesis on superordination and subordination:

Simmel's hypothesis can be said to have applied most tyrannies in history. . . . No state, except Germany, achieved a full totalitarianism. . . . Channels of various types were prepared to catch all those parts of the individual personality that might wish to escape domination.²⁹¹

Simmel's abstraction of the form from the content of sociation is discussed by Alvin Boskoff in relation to the study of social change:

Social change refers to the intelligible process in which we can discover significant alterations in the structure and functioning of determinate social systems. The implications of this definition can be explored by focusing attention on the key terms: Social system, structure, function, and significant alteration.

The crucial aspect of this definition is an analytic separation of the 'social' and the 'cultural' and of social and cultural systems. This is a relatively new distinction - less than fifty years old - and some sociologists find it difficult to accept, principally because the social and cultural aspects are so obviously interrelated. But close relationship should not blind one to the distinct identity of each of the related parts. A father and his son, for example, are related physically and socially, yet it would

²⁹⁰Newman, op. cit., p. 349.

²⁹¹Ibid., p. 350.

be an error to confuse one with the other. This principle applies to the whole realm of human behavior. The basic facts are observable interactions among persons; from these facts we can distinguish: (1) patterns of association and relations through which persons influence or motivate one another; and (2) certain products of these regularities in the form of communicable values, norms and standards. The former we designate as the 'social' aspect, the latter as the 'cultural', recognizing that these are not antithetical but merely reflect differing though complementary facts of human experience.

This abstraction of a distinctively social dimension can be traced to Simmel, who argued that sociology as a special science was primarily concerned with the forms of reciprocal relations among persons rather than with the content (the interests, goals, or values underlying specific associations); and to Cozzies, who classified what we now call social systems into social relations, social circles, social collectives, and social corporations. 292

Simmel's analysis of the spatial relationships of human in his treatise on "Space and the Spatial Order in Sociology,"²⁹³ is akin to the modern field theorist's conception of sociological spatial structure.

The most obvious topological form in Simmel's sociology is that of space. One cannot read chapter 9 of Simmel's Soziologie without being struck by the emphasis on the spatial significance of social forms. In the first place, every individual occupies space. In knowing the locations of individuals in space, we learn something about their mobility, for only by knowing the position of each in a spatial region can we determine their mobility. Localization of such groups as the family is made possible in terms of spatial relations. Every family occupies a region called the 'home.' The topological distribution of individuals, families, and other groups offers a sociological mechanism of individual and group differentiation. This mode of analysis discloses, too, the persistence of social groups such as the city or other locality. A group persists by virtue

²⁹²Alvin Boskoff, "Social Change: Major Problems in the Emergence of Theoretical and Research Foci," Modern Sociological Theory, Becker and Boskoff (eds.), pp. 263-264.

²⁹³Simmel, Soziologie, chapter 9.

of the fact that its energies, through spatial fixation, are integrated and preserved. Space is thus an integrating element in the social process.

An important property of organized wholes is differentiation or expansion. The parts derive their properties from the whole by a process of individuation. In his chapter, Die Kreuzung Sozialer Kreise (The Intersection of Social Circles), Simmel makes clear the spatial nature of differentiation.²⁹⁴ The expansion of an organism takes place in space. Every phase of this expansion may be designated by a circle. Frequently these circles will intersect, as when an individual is localized in more than one region of space or has membership character in more than one group. Thus an individual may belong to a church, a club, and a body of college alumni. The topological boundaries of the different groups are sufficiently fluid to make membership in them possible. Thus, the more numerous the intersections of the social circles, the wider is the area of social participation. The spatial character of the intersections thus reveals not only the topological structure of society but also its dynamic character; for in so far as the boundaries can be crossed the locomotion of the individual is increased.²⁹⁵

Bentley likewise comments on Simmel's concept of space:

Simmel used the term space (Raum) expressly for 'fact' in three Euclidean dimensions, and regarded space as a non-active form under which all social process was before us. Nevertheless, it was just this non-active space (with its peculiar characteristics that each particular locality within it is so fully set off by itself that it cannot be called 'the same as' any other locality, and that it cannot be grouped in a collection for which a plural noun-form can be used) that made possible for other objects the presentation of a plurality of fully identical samples.²⁹⁶ He set up as criterion for the establishment of a science of sociology as distinct from the special social sciences the practicability of the identification of common forms of sociation, recurring in all departments of social life, and consequently recurring in each of the separate social sciences.

²⁹⁴Simmel, Soziologie, chapter 6, "Die Kreuzung sozialer Kreise," trans. Reinhard Bendix, The Web of Group Affiliations (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1955).

²⁹⁵Bonner, op. cit., pp. 174-175.

²⁹⁶Simmel, Soziologie, pp. 460-462.

He distinguished thus, sociological form from the psychological contents of the special social sciences, as an abstraction justifying separate and peculiarly sociological study. Under the expansion which the term 'space' has taken since the date of Simmel's writing, it is clear that his whole presentation of social activity and process is itself spatial in this wider sense, so that his many brilliant interpretations of social phenomena are ready for use in full social spatial organization. So for him it was not the geographical boundaries or the area in square miles that identified an empire, but the nexus of social interactions by means of which the area and the boundaries took form.²⁹⁷

How far Simmel's thought on the spatial relationships of humans has been influential in the formulation of Park's and Burgess' concept of human ecology cannot be determined. Kilzer and Ross name Small and Simmel as the influential theorists for the study of city life.

Added to the prevalent psychological trend in sociology was a desire to understand urban organization and processes, which had its origin partly in Park's journalistic background, as well as in the theories of Small and Simmel. Eventually the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago developed specialized urban research, built around a theory which came to be known as the University of Chicago's ecological approach. This specialized method and approach was inspired by Park and his colleague Ernest W. Burgess, and furthered by a group of students who, receiving their doctorates in the field, have done notable work as sociologists. For about twenty years, the study of 'human ecology' as pursued by Park, Burgess, and their associates dominated not only the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago but almost the whole of American sociological teaching and interest.²⁹⁸

Reinhard Bendix and Bennet Berger name Toennies and Simmel as influential in Park's studies:

The multiple group affiliations characteristic of modern society may have a double effect according to Simmel. Under

²⁹⁷Bentley, Inquiry, pp. 85-86.

²⁹⁸Kilzer and Ross, op. cit., p. 452.

certain conditions they may strengthen an individual personality and give it the capacity to sustain great internal tensions; but they may also, under other conditions, threaten the integration of the personality, far more than would be the case in a simpler society with little differentiation between groups. In carrying this idea of his teacher, Simmel, further, Robert Park combined it with the related concepts of Ferdinand Toennies. In his studies of the city, of newspapers, of the interaction between racial groups, and other topics, Park distinguished between interactions in terms of their individualizing and socializing repercussions.²⁹⁹

And Arthur Hillman, referring to Simmel in a footnote, relates Simmel's theory of superordination and subordination and the necessary division of labor for the formation of a unity in large groups to urban life:

Since the city offers the most striking contrasts between riches and poverty, education and ignorance, cultivation and crudity, the range of corresponding interest groups is enormous. There are as many groups as there are human interests. Effective collective action by the city as a whole is possible only through collaboration between substantial numbers of these voluntary associations. Those who manipulate the leaders and the symbols of these groups are the effective governors of the city.³⁰⁰

Bonner talks about the same concept when he says:

Society, according to Simmel, is form or configuration, or a pattern of all the functional relationships that bind individuals into an integral whole. This is also the point of view of modern field theory. Pervading the views of both Simmel and the field theorists is the basic proposition that the proper study of the sociologists and the social psychologists is social relationships -

²⁹⁹Reinhard Bendix and Bennett Berger, "Images of Society and Problems of Concept Formation in Sociology," Symposium on Sociological Theory, 1. Gross (ed.), (Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Company, 1959), p. 96.

³⁰⁰Arthur Hillman, Community Organization and Planning (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 29.

the forms of interaction by Simmel and social fields by the field theorists.³⁰¹

A reference with an indirect indication of Simmel's influence on Park and the concept of the marginal man is given by A. M. Rose:

Park and Stonequist have defined the 'Marginal Man' as 'one whom fate has condemned to live in two societies and in two, not merely different but antagonistic, cultures.'³⁰² Park and Stonequist, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly, often indicate that the marginal man is disorganized. However, Simmel defines the 'stranger' in substantially the same way,³⁰³ and for him the stranger is not disorganized.³⁰⁴

A call for the testing of Simmel's hypotheses comes from Rosenthal and Oberlaender:

A high level of sensitivity and insight combined with a thorough knowledge of the structure of modern society created many hypotheses that merit being tested by the use of methods which have been developed since Simmel's death.³⁰⁵

Bentley, in an appraisal of Simmel, gives emphasis to many facets of Simmel's ideas which would merit research:

What Simmel has accomplished primarily in his little book, Ueber soziale Differenzierung (On Social Stratification), and then in the brilliant studies that have followed it, is the analysis of the groups which cross one another in a thousand

³⁰¹Bonner, op. cit., p. 174.

³⁰²Robert E. Park, Introduction to Everett V. Stonequist, The Marginal Man: A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. XV.

³⁰³Simmel, Sociologie, pp. 685-691.

³⁰⁴Rose, op. cit., p. 11.

³⁰⁵Erich Rosenthal and Kurt Oberlaender, "Books, Papers, and Essays by Georg Simmel," Am. Jour. Soc., 51(3):238-247, November, 1945.

directions in the social mass, and at whose intersections 'personality' and 'individuality', he holds, are to be found. Taking the facts wherever he finds them most suitable for his purpose, Simmel has traced the group lines, and endeavored to make clear many of the typical forms in which group relations occur.³⁰⁶

As an outright statement as to the importance of Simmel as a theorist and contributor to experimental hypotheses appears:

The present position of Simmel among sociologists is perhaps reliably illustrated by the fact that, in addition to his prominence among theorists, his writings have been a source of experimental hypotheses for extremely empirically oriented practitioners of 'small-group' research.³⁰⁷

Alvin Boskoff makes not only use of Simmel's theories but finds the functional-process approach which he credits among others to Simmel, helpful in the study of social change.

Following a basic tradition established principally by Cooley, Park, Simmel, von Wiese, and MacIver, the functional-process approach serves to reduce the multiform phenomena of social change to a manageable complexity by conceptualizing the approach to any social change (regardless of content, location, or direction) as an analytic process composed of separable but consecutive research problems or phases.³⁰⁸

In an article by N. Spykman on urbanization many of Simmel's theories are used as foundations for Spykman's thought. In a footnote, Spykman acknowledges his indebtedness to Simmel.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ Arthur F. Bentley, The Process of Government (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1908), p. 472..

³⁰⁷ Schermerhorn and Boskoff, op. cit., p. 74.

³⁰⁸ Alvin Boskoff, "Social Change: Major Problems in the Emergence of Theoretical and Research Foci," Modern Sociological Theory, Becker and Boskoff (eds.), p. 286.

³⁰⁹ Nicholas J. Spykman, "A Social Philosophy of the City," Publications of the American Sociological Society, 20:47, 1925.

A similar reference, also in footnote form, is found in H. Becker's and R. H. Useem's article, "Sociological Analysis of the Dyad,"³¹⁰ (it is worth-while to note that Becker and Useem relate many of Simmel's propositions in this article to recent research, especially J. L. Moreno's).

A footnote in Bonner's article refers to the usefulness of Simmel's conception of conflict as being a form of sociation:

In ordering conflict, which empirically seems to be a form of de-sociation to the concept of sociation, Simmel shows once again the value of general concepts in the study of social relations.³¹¹

In a recent test of some of Simmel's theories on secrecy and secret societies, H. B. Hawthorn used Simmel's purely deductive propositions as a point of departure and found that many of Simmel's hypotheses could be verified in empirical testing:

Essentially, Simmel's treatment of the secret society is a series of notes, brilliant and penetrating but without any pretense to major substantiation. It would be unjustifiable to take the data from a single secret society and rework his notes too elaborately, yet in some ways this single instance furnishes a number of useful exemplifications and allows the possibility of suggesting some revisions. During their earlier history the Doukhobors seem to have illustrated aptly some of Simmel's conclusions, although there are a few significant departures from his exposition. Additional facts are provided by the period of decline of the Doukhobor communities, and their recent history allows the formulation of some limiting conditions and of some minor extensions to his hypothesis.³¹²

³¹⁰Becker and Useem, op. cit., p. 14.

³¹¹Bonner, op. cit., p. 177.

³¹²H. B. Hawthorn, "A Test of Simmel on the Secret Society: The Doukhobors of British Columbia," Am. Jour. Soc., 57(1):1-2, July, 1956.

Arnold M. Rose finds Simmel's theory of the stranger an important briefing guidance material for the public researcher:

One other sociological theory may be called on for guidance to the public researcher. This is Simmel's theory of the 'stranger'. The public opinion interviewer, even though he identifies his purpose and indicates the organization for which he works, is a stranger to practically all his respondents. It is by virtue of his role as a stranger . . . that the interviewer can secure some of his most confidential and honest answers.³¹³

The final reference is taken from Bonner, the proponent of the relevance of Simmel for topological and dynamical field sociology:

What Simmel was seeking was what field theorists in social science are seeking to-day, *viz.*, the dynamic situation underlying the occurrence of specific human relationships. In his emphasis on the universality of scientific laws Simmel was trying to make sociology into a more strict science of general sociological laws. He has made no less than a good beginning. At all events, he has helped to point the way. The topological and dynamic analysis of his social forms is an extension of his germ ideas. If the method in this paper had been more rigorously developed than is possible in a paper of this scope, we should have found that his ideas go far toward satisfying the criteria of methodological adequacy and scientific validity. They suggest that sociology might lead, as physics has led, to the formulation of a set of topologically exact, ahistorical laws. Simmel's construct of social form, particularly, is suggestive along these lines, for it is mathematical, i.e. topological in nature. Although it has never been explicitly recognized before, we can say that Simmel has furnished us under another name the rudiments of a topological and dynamical field sociology.³¹⁴

Simmel's influence and relevance in modern American sociology can be well comprehended by studying the list of recent publications in the attached bibliography. However, it is not only the number of publications that concern Simmel which is impressive but note should also be taken of the names of the authors.

³¹³Rose, op. cit., p. 218.

³¹⁴Bonner, op. cit., p. 179.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Considering the problem of this thesis, it is demonstrated by the material presented that Georg Simmel has had and continues to have influence upon American sociology. The full extent of this influence, however, cannot be objectively determined, but the number of references to, and acknowledgements of, Simmel indicate that his influence is significant. The above material, arranged in a time order, reveals a fluctuating concern with Simmel's work in American sociology.

The first influx of Simmel's thought came about by Albion W. Small's efforts of translation and publishing of articles by Simmel in the American Journal of Sociology in the years between 1896 and 1910. During this period, Simmel gained considerable attention in America which, however, did not result in a general sweeping acceptance of his propositions. Simmel's vague key concepts, which became even more blurred in translation, caused the unfortunate misinterpretation of his theory as being "formalistic," static, a "shell without content." Nevertheless, his brilliant analyses of social phenomena and his delineation of the scientific subject matter of sociology were read and, most likely, taken into account by the American social scientists who themselves were involved in the quest to make sociology scientific.

World War I severed all ties between Simmel and his American colleagues. Simmel's death in 1918 was unnoticed in America. It was

not until 1921 that some of Simmel's writings appeared again in English translations. It was Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess who, in their textbook Introduction to the Science of Sociology, paid considerable attention to Simmel's analyses of social phenomena. Through this book, labeled the most popular text of its time, Simmel probably gained the most widespread indirect influence to this date.

The first attempt of an interpretative presentation of Simmel's sociological theory appeared in 1925, by Nicholas J. Spykman, under the title The Social Theory of Georg Simmel. Notwithstanding the many favorable comments on this interpretation, including A. W. Small's, the issue of Simmel's formalism once again was brought to the foreground, especially by Pitrim Sorokin. This limited Simmel's direct influence on American sociology greatly. However, there is another explanatory factor for the relatively little attention that was paid to Simmel. At a time when American sociologists were preoccupied with developing methods for quantitative research, when the focus was almost entirely on empiricism, there was little concern about "arm-chair theory," especially when it carried the label of "formalism."

Nevertheless, there were a few sociologists who did not lose sight of Simmel. Among them was Arthur F. Bentley who, of all American sociologists, was most influenced by Simmel. There were E. C. Hayes, president of the American Sociological Society in 1921, F. N. House, N. J. Spykman, R. E. Park, E. W. Burgess, Theodore Abel and Howard Becker, who expanded together with von Wiese some of Simmel's concepts.

These men, did, to varying degrees, recognize the validity of

Simmel's propositions and incorporated his thought into their own frame of reference. Through them Simmel had his most positive theoretical influence.

And yet, it took until the late nineteen-forties before a real general concern about Simmel's thought emerged in American sociology. This new interest in Simmel's theories is linked to two factors. First was the increasing awareness of the interdependency of systematic sociological theory and scientific research and the resulting reappraisal of early theoretical propositions. Secondly, as a result of the threat of Nazism, a considerable number of German speaking intellectuals sought refuge in this country. They brought with them not only a more pronounced concern with European sociological theory but also the abilities and facilities for the translation of European authors.

Thus the empirically orientated American sociologist now has at his disposal excellent translations of European theorists. Their various hypotheses can be subjected to empirical testing and it is here where the relevance and validity of the "armchair theories" are either established or denied. It has become evident from the references to Simmel by modern, empirically orientated sociologists that many of Simmel's theoretical propositions have been validated and have served as models in the formulations of theoretical concepts within the framework of specified sociological theories, i.e. in small-group theory or in field theory.

The growing interest in Simmel's thought is manifest in the

number of recent publications which either present or interpret Simmel's thought or are concerned with the actual testing of his propositions. A further indication of Simmel's relevance is the increase in references to his work in recently published textbooks.

Thus it is apparent that Simmel, although he wrote his sociological analyses at a time when no scientific techniques for testing his hypotheses were available, has passed on to modern sociology a wealth of theoretical data which, subjected to empirical methods of testing, proves to be valid to a surprising extent. However, his most important contributions to modern sociology are not his theories and propositions, but they are inherent in his aspect of what is "social." Simmel, being concerned with the minute, almost "microscopic" relationships between people, cast away the sweeping generalities of many of his contemporaries and forerunners. In doing so, he introduced a new perspective in the study of human society. By focussing on the patterns of intimate, seemingly unimportant, forms of sociation he laid the ground work for the study of the socio-psychological processes that characterizes much of modern American sociological research.

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