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Integration and Consensus: A Tentative Exploration

Kent Warren Smith
Oberlin College

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INTEGRATION AND CONSENSUS: A TENTATIVE EXPLORATION

Kent W. Smith
Summer Honors College
Oberlin College
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The dimensions of the topic at hand are of a scope known on occasion to induce giddiness of mind and delusions of omniscience among those who treat with such words as consensus and "integration." Let us be warned; recognition of danger is the first stage of wisdom. It is necessary to severely limit our purview and to temper our aspirations. Established knowledge in this complex and elusive area of concern is scanty. Firm data are perhaps less conspicuous than firm opinions. Ideological convictions often are easier to come by than precise and valid evidence. The immediate moral is to expect something less than definitive knowledge, but to take the topic very seriously indeed, in the reasonable hope that some clarification may be achieved.

Robin M. Williams, Jr.
Oberlin Symposium, 1963
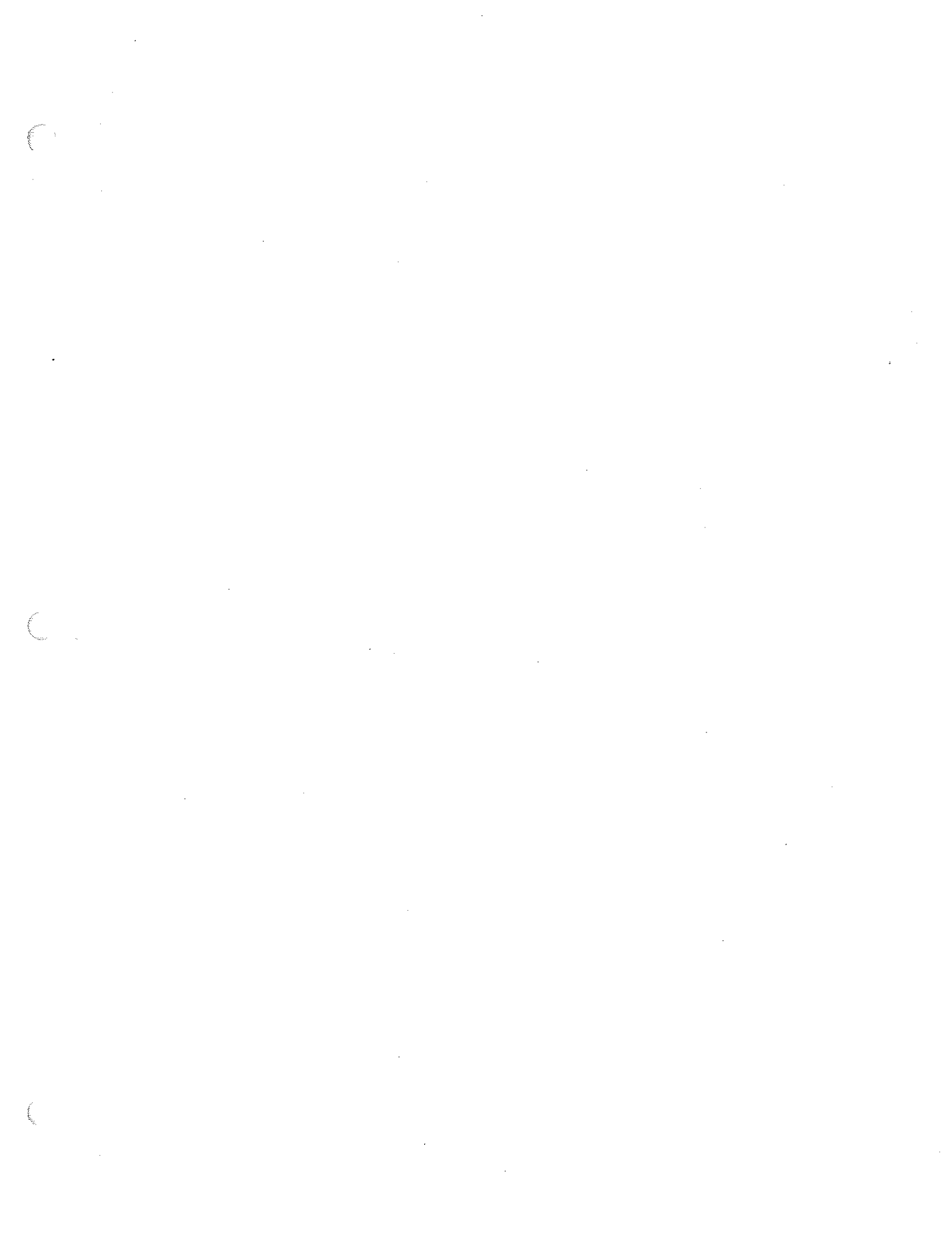
INTEGRATION AND CONSENSUS: A TENTATIVE EXPLORATION

I

One of the chief questions in sociology is the Hobbesian one, "How can there be social order?" or " What creates and continues that amount of social integration which does exist?" Almost all writers in sociology have dealt with the question at some point; the bulk of the writing of Talcott Parsons is an attempt to answer it. Many writers have made the assumption, often the ideological faith commitment, that consensus leads to integration and dissensus leads to disintegration. The major point of this paper is that consensus is only one of several mechanisms that can lead to integration.

The focal phenomenon of this paper is social integration. The second focal point is consensus. In one paper of this length it is impossible to develop a complete schema of integration: that longer road shall have to wait for another day. I shall concentrate on the effect, negative and positive, of various kinds of consensus on integration and only briefly suggest mechanisms other than consensus. Even with this narrowed purview, I cannot summarize, comment on, evaluate, nor even mention all of the writers who have broached the subject. My goal is to form an analytic schema of a limited nature and present tentative, albeit nondeductive, hypotheses.

What is needed now in the inquiry into integration is a series of "theories of the middle range" closely connected with empirical research. Unfortunately, like Parsons, I am an "incurable theorist." However, unlike Parsons, I am not married and have thus had to supply my own "balance-wheel" of "practical empiricism" [1] I may not have always succeeded.

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[1]Talcott Parsons, The Social System, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1951), p. v.;

II

"Integration" is one of the most frequently used words in sociological writing, but it is often not at all clear whether or not there is a reasonable explicit concept behind the word. Integration is a plastic, "slippery" word that can be conjured up when one is sloshing through muddy swamps. However, it is also one of the most important words in social theory, pointing as it does to the heart of what makes a "social system" a reasonable abstraction of a society. The difficulty of the term arises because it is both important and abstract. Lack of agreement on such central terms as integration is an indication of the young and struggling nature of basic sociological theory, not of the need to give up on the terms.

The first step toward agreement on a clear concept is to catalog the various ways in which "integration" is used. The Social Science Research Council organized two conferences on social integration. Out of these two conferences came a list of ten different meanings for "integration".[1] Ten distinct meanings is an indication of the confusion.

Landecker cleared the air to some extent by trying to logically derive four different types of integration.[2] He chose not to define "integration" per se. Rather he started with what he considered the smallest units of group life: (1) culture and (2) behavior of individuals. There is integration of each unit and integration between them. Cultural integration is the consistency among the standards of a culture. The conformity of the behavior to the cultural standards is normative integration. Upon examination he discovered that integration of behavior actually was composed of two distinct types of integration: communication

[1] Robin M. Williams, Jr., "Unity and Diversity in Modern America," Social Forces, 36 (October, 1957), p. 5.

[2] Werner S. Landecker, "Types of Integration and Their Measurements," American Journal of Sociology, 56 (January, 1951), pp. 332-340.

integration or the exchange of meeting throughout the group
and functional integration or independence among group mem-
bers trough, as Durkheim pointed out, the division of labor.

Communicative integration is important to the function-
ing of the group in two ways. First, barriers to communi-
cation may lead to the isolation of the individual and his
alienation from the group. Second, barriers may divide the
group into various sub-division. The communication within
each sub-group may be very good and the individual far from
isolated. However, between sub-groups "misunderstandings
and distortions restrictcommunication and, on their part,
are augmented by the very barriers to communication which
they thenselves foster. Thus prejudice bears a close rela-
tion to communicative integration." [1] Thus, Landecker main-
tains that barriers to communication and the resultant alie-
nation of individuals and sub-groups contributes to low
morale. However, inherent in this proposal is the assum-
ption that if there were "complete" communication, the
members of the groupwould discover that they enjoy being in
a group together. Underlying this assumption is the further
assumption that, since it is a group, there will be consen-
sus or agreement if only there is good communication. As
we shall see later, this is a highly debatable assumption.
Landecker's discussion of communicative integration is just
one example of how easy it is to combine consensus and inte-
gration into one conceptual block.

Landecker adds a very important refinement to Durkheim's
division of labor. Interdependence is not based merely upon
the existence of labor specialization. Two men is a so-
ciety may both fulfill specialized functions yet not be
independent because they do not need each other's products
or services. It would be hard to indicate any close inter-
dependence between a worker on the fish market who likes

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[1] Ibid., p. 337.

Try a multiple system however.

rock-and-roll music and the non-fish-eating symphony orchestra member. In other words, functional integration or interdependence has two facets: (1) the specialization of functions and (2) the interchange of functions based upon mutual fulfillment of needs or desires. [1]

Basic to all four types of integration developed by Landecker is the existence of units and the weaving of these units into some sort of consistent or observable network. Each cultural standard is a unit which is consistently related to other cultural standards. In normative integration, each unit of cultural standards is consistently, or at least not conflictfully, related to the various acts making up behavior. In both communicative and functional integration, individuals are related to other individuals in a systematic way, i.e., they comprise a system.

This linguistic analysis is the starting point for Williams in his definiton on integration:

> An integrated thing is a whole whose parts are necessary for completeness.... In mathematics, integration is the universe of differentiation. In neurology, says Funk and Wagnalls College Standard Dictionary, integration refers to the "combinations of different nervous processes or reflexes so that they co-operate in a larger activity and thus unite the bodily functions." In human societies, integration is the articulation of discernably different components into meaningful wholes—"vertical integration" in industry, "racial integration" in the public schools, " integration of new weapon systems in the military forces of the NATO forces," and so on. [2]

As Williams well demonstrates, such a usage of integration in sociology closely approximates that in normal English usage. Since so much of sociology is based upon the biological model, the neurological defenition is of particular interest. A paraphrase of it shall be useful later in

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[1] Ibid., p. 338

[2] Robin M. Williams, Jr., "Consensus and Integration in Urban Society," paper read at the symposium on trends and direction of the American social scene, Oberlin College, March 14-15, 1963, mimeo, p. 8.

our discussion of the measurment of integration: <u>integration
refers to the combination of different units so that they
co-operate in a larger activity and thus fulfill the functions
of the whole.</u>

Basic to this conception of integration is the fact
that an abserver can distinguish the figure of a system made
up of ingrated units standing out against the field of the
enviroment. In other words, there must be more order within
the system than between the system and the rest of the field.
This order must continue over time also, since we consider a
system a continuing organization of action.[1] In other words,
an integrated system (and, as indicated above, no system
would exist without some integration) maintains, relative
to the field, equilibrium, that controversy-ladden "fight-
ing word."

By equilibrium I emphatically do not mean a steady,
i.e., motionless, state. There is never a steady, non-
dynamic state in a social system. There are continuing
processes and built-in sources of conflict within and cons-
tant flux in the external situation demanding new adaptations.
Rather, there is equilibrium in that there are mechanisms
that can return the system (as an analytic abstactation of
a group) to a <u>status quo ante</u> after a minor disturbance.[2]

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[1]The writer is well aware of the danger of misplaced
concreteness when speaking of a system. "System" is an abs-
traction used to order our observation of behavior. As with
all sciences, sociology must deal in abstractions of reality,
not reality directly. For instance, at no point do I mean
to equate society and system. A society is a particular
grouping of people; a social system, a model used to analyti-
cally describe the behavior and organization of the group.
Unlike Dahredorf, I believe that system is a useful and not
merely metaphysical abstraction. Cf. "Out of Utopia: Toward
a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis," <u>American Journal
of Society</u>, 64 (September, 1958), pp. 115-127.

[2]Edward C. Devereux, Jr. "Parsons' Sociological Theory,"
<u>The Social Theories of Talcott Parsons: A Critical Examination</u>,
edited by Max Black, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc.
1961, p. 53.

As Angell, following Homans, points out, in equilibrium, changes are self-limiting: the start processes in other sections of the system that decrease the effect of the change.[1] Angell, who uses the term steady state as a synonym for equilibrium as developed above rather than a synonym for static state, makes some other pertinent observations about equilibrium:

> The concept of a steady state does not imply, of course, that the social body can always resist successfully. When external pressures (or internal conflicts) pass beyond a threshold, defenses break down and readjustments of the system take place. Theoretically, only two results are possible: either the system, after appropriate reorganization, attains a new steady state, or else it disintegrates. Nor does a steady state mean that nothing new can be incorporated without breakdown and reorganization. In social wholes at least, traits can be added to an existing steady state so long as they are smoothly compatible with whatever is already there. There may even be a smooth replacement of one way of doing things by another.[2]

While equilibrium is basic to our being able to call something a system, it is not something to be assumed, taken for granted, not explained. To heighten this point, let me quote two contrasting views. First, Devereux's excellent and accurate analysis of Parsons:

> To this reviewer, it appears that Parsons' concern with equilibrium does not reflect the view that everything is automatically integrated and adjusted to everything else in this best of all possible worlds. It reflects instead the view that society represents a veritable powder keg of conflicting forces, pushing and hauling in all ways at once. That any sort of equilibrium is achieved at all as it evidently is in most societies most of the time,

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[1] Robert Cooley Angell, _Free Society and Moral Crisis_, (Ann Arbor: The University Of Michigan Press, 1958) p. 48. In this context, Angell mentions the principle of "equifinality" of Bertalanffy, "that the present state of a biological or social whole does not allow us to discover its previous history." (p. 48.) This principle, if it does hold true in social systems, creates a whole series of interesting questions about some of the present methods used to approximate a time study.

[2] _Ibid._, pp. 48f.

...thus represents for Parsons something both of miracle and challenge. Far from taking societal equilibrium for granted, he sees it as a central problem demanding detailed analysis and explanation.[1]

Second, Angell:

The tentative manner of societal evolution makes it inevitable that in times of comparative stability Sumner's strain for consistency will have worked itself out pretty well, so that in fact institutions will then be helping to maintain a steady state: this is indeed their "natural" function. There is no need to explain why or how it is maintained. We are concerned here only with the processes that get in the way, only with the obstacle to its successful maintenance.[2]

The former seems to me to be a much more profitable heuristic position to take.

As developed above, integration has to do with systems. The sociologists is interested in integration of the personality system, of the cultural system, and of the social system (interaction system). Since all three are analytic ways of looking at the same behavior by the same individuals, we can also speak of integration between systems, as between the cultural and social, i.e., Landecker's normative integration. In this paper we will be primarily concerned with social integration and will touch upon the other types only as they effect social integration.

It should be noted at this point that "social system" is a "model", in a broad sense of word, that can be applied at various levels to various sizes of groups. The simplest would be a relatively small group in which the basic units were individual people. However, we can also apply the model to a corporation or an association in which the units making up the system are smaller groups or divisions, each consisting of several people and comprising a system itself. It must be remembered, on the other hand, that at each higher level, all the lower systems must be included. The basic

[1] Devereux, op. cit., pp. 33f.

[2] Angell, op. cit., p. 88.

interaction, no matter how large and complex the system will still be between individuals. This is why social psychology may be the "root" behavioral science. At each level, the simplest system is naturally the dyas. In this tentative exploration, most of my discussion will concern dyatic relations between individuals. Nevertheless, the s same approach should theoretically be applicable to higher levels without too great additional complications.

Williams makes the necessary observation that integration is not necessarily in inverse relation to complexity; indeed, added complexity may at times be necessary to increase integration.

> There appears to be widespeared in anthropological and sociological writings the implicit assumption that more complex societies are less highly integrated than the more simple systems. This assumption must be challanged. It is entirely possible, indeed, that, at a certain level of complexity, further complexity is necessary to maintain a functioning system at that level...We have evidence from study of social organization that specialized coordinating organs play an increased part as complexity increases in other respects. [1]

We speak of more and less integration. We can say that system A is better integrated than system B or that A is better integrated now than it was or will be at time x or that M mechanism will increase the integration of system A. However, I do not think that we can accurately speak of integration as a continuum, for it is not at all clear that we are dealing with a uni-dimensional concept. Williams maintains that "'integration' is what Blumer would call a 'sensitizing' concept; it represents a complex connotative network rather than a precise denotation of a unique thing.[2]

This point leads us to the question of measurement. What sort of index of integration do we have? Quite simple, we have at this time no measurement even beginning to approach a quantitative measure. Such a measure is impossi-

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[1] Williams, "Unity and Diversity...," p. 6.

[2] Ibid., p. 4.

ble until we move beyond a "sensitizing" concept. At best we have descriptive comparative measures. How consisting and well-operating does a system appear to the outside, observing scientist? One criterion, and the chief one that is used by the members of a system, goes back to our paraphrasing of neurological integration. There we said that integration refers to the combination of different units so that they co-operate in a larger activity and thus fulfill the functions of the whole. Inherent in this is the assumptions that the functions of the whole (to be developed later) can only be met by some sort of co-operativeinteraction between units of the whole. Poor integration will lead to the failure to meet the functions of the whole. For instance, the cyclical anomie that Merton has noted results from the fact that there is poor integration between elements in the cultural system and elements in the social system which are necessary to meet the tension management functions for the individuals which are, because of the effect of dissociated individuals on the whole, also functions for the whole. This example shall become clearer as elements in it are more fully explained later. Unfortunately, the observe, i.e., that failure to meet the functions of the whole necessarily indicates lack of integration does not obtain, since such failure may also be caused by difficulties within the units. e.g., the personality system, or by changes in the environment that have not been adapted to. A more thorough analysis of the situation must occur before we can say that the failure is a result of poor integration.

Along this same line, Williams notes some important signs of the lack of perfect integration:
1. Interpersonal tension and conflict.
2. Conflicts among groups and collectivities.
3. Incapacity for coordinated action; lack of coordination; failure to concert.

4. Breakdown of goal-directed behavior, e.g., panic, apathy, "failure of nerve."
5. Social unpredictability.
6. Breakdown of normative control over overt behavior.
7. Various types of massive psychological disturbances manifest in neuroses, psychoses, suicide, and other types of retreat from "the terror, agony, and absurdity of existence."[1]

Thus, at this time, integration is an important and essential sensitizing and heuristic concept, but it cannot very easily be used as an explanatory variable.

Our second focal point, consensus, is a little less fraught with confusion; however, consensus is far from an easely indexed, precise concept. Horowitz reports on at least seven different shadings of meanings of consensus in sociology, ranging from the restraining of hedonistic impulses and instinct to accord between role behavior and role expectations.[2]

Newcomb defines consensus quite simply: "I mean by the term nothing more or less than the existence, on the part of two or more persons, of similar orientations toward something."[3] However, in its simplicity, this definition leaves a number of unanswered questions. How similar must the orientations be before there is consensus? Orientation is itself ambiguous; it has at least three component parts:

[1]Williams, "Consensus and Integration...," p. 23.

[2]Irving Louis Horowitz, Consensus, Conflict and Cooperation: A Sociological Inventory," Social Forces, 41 (December, 1962), pp. 177f.

[3]Theodore M. Newcomb, "The Study of Consensus," Sociology Today: Problems and Prospects, edited by Robert K. Merton, Leonard Broom, and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1959), p. 279.

cognitive, cathetic, and evaluative.

Williams' definition closely parallels that of Newcomb:
"Consensus, then refers to agreement. It exists to the degree
that there is agreement with regard to any object or to any
aspect of human experience."[1] Consensus may concern agree-
ment on an object, on another person, on each other, on the
state of an interaction, on the "modes of perception, the
meaning of symbols, affective states, knowledge, beliefs,
values, and social norms of many kinds."[2] In other words,
consensus refers to culture. It is the amount of agreement
between or among two or more people about some aspect of the
culture.

As stated above, there may be varying amounts of agree-
ment or similarity among the cognitive, cathetic, and eval-
uative orientations. Tow persons may agree about the facts
concerning something, yet disagree about the value or attrac-
tiveness of it. These three aspects were first developed by
Parsons. Max Black provides us with some excellent brief
explanations:

> At the crudest level of common sense I would try to trans-
> late "to cognize" as to perceive, believe, to think, in
> short to do anything with respect to which questions of
> truth or falsity may arise"; similarly, "to cathect" might
> be rendered as "to be attracted or repelled by, to like
> or dislike, to want or not to want, in short to do anything
> with respect to which questions of personal satisfac-
> tion or dissatisfaction can arise."[3]

And

> It is worth pointing out that Parsons repeatedly thinks
> of evaluation as a problem of "allocation" of scarce
> resources among conflicting demands and interests.[4]

[1] Williams, "Consensus and Integration...," p. 4

[2] Ibid.

[3] Max Black, "Some Questions About Parsons' Theories,"
The Social Theories of Talcott Parsons: A Critical Exami-
nation, edited by Max Black, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.:
Prentice Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 272.

Thus, cognitive refers to knowledge and perception, cathetic to liking and attractiveness, and evaluative to importance or desirability, both relative to that of other subjects or aspects of life and derived from generalized standards.

The opposite of consensus is dissensus. Dissensus is more limited in meaning than mere disagreement. In order for cognitive disagreement to be dissensus, the actors must have relatively strong cathetic and evaluative orientations, positive or negative. Further, the object or aspect of life must be seen as involved in the interaction between the actors in question. Angell refers to this as "common" values or or objects or concerns.[1] Angell points out the distinction quite well on the societal level: "Different people may without harm to society accept values and norms of subcultures that are inconsistant with one another, so long as they are not inconsistent with the overall societal moral order."[2] They may disagree as long as the subject is not of "joint relevance" to the interaction of the societal level.

In human society, any consensus that is observable and that is expressed in interaction is of a quite limited nature. We never have one hundred percent consensus, or at least never are in a position to find out whether or not we have one hundred percent consensus. We only communicate fragments which are teleologically selected, reduced, re-ordered. Georg Simmel makes the point as follows:

> We all communicate to another individual by means of words or pehaps in another fashion—even the most subjective, impulsive, intimate matters—is a selection from that psychological-real whole whose absolutely exact report (absolutely exact in terms of content and sequence) would drive everybody into insane asylum—is a paradoxical expression is permissible.[3]

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[1] Angell, op. cit., p. 20.

[2] Angell, op. cit., p 82.

[3] Georg Simmel, The Sociology of Geog Simmel, Translated and edited by Kurt H. Wolff, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1950), pp. 311f.

It appears that consensus on each of the three aspects
of an orientation is theoretically of a "continuum-like"
nature, although probably not a simple continuum since there
are several aspects to consensus. First, above the dyad
level, we are faced with the question of how many people
in a group have to agree before there is consensus. One
more than half, as in most parliamentary decisions? Two-
thirds? The total group, as in a Friends meeting? Further,
does everyone have equal importance? Leaders, opinion-
shapers, followers? Second, within the dyad even, there is
a continuum between consensus and dissensus. Both Horowitz
and Coser point out that the two are part of the same theory.
Horowitz maintains that the one implies the other, that
without one, we would not be aware of the other.[1] Coser,
referring to Gestalt psychology, points out that deviants
and dissensus provide the ground against which to see the
figure of consensus.[2] Of course, there are a whole range
of shades of gray between the field and the figure.

Nevertheless, we can in a "rough-and-ready" and yet
quite accurate way speak of more and less consensus at the
dyad level. In the cognitive area, we can measure with
some accuracy what people know and believe. Theoretically,
there could be measures of the strength of each actor's

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[1]Horowitz, op. cit., pp. 182f.

[2]Lewis A. Coser, "Some Functions of Deviant Behavior
and Normative Flexibility," American Journal of Sociology,
68 (September, 1962), p. 174.

cathetic and evaluative orientation. These individual
measures could then be compared. As we shall see later,
the importance of the consensus-dissensus and the amount
of strain produced by a given amount of low consensus depends
upon at least three other variables, all three of which
roughly fall in the cathetic-evaluative spheres.

III

Every individual has a multitude of needs and desires
that he seeks to fulfill. In that he strives to fulfill
his needs, we may call him goal-oriented. Groups also have
needs that, to varying degrees, must be fulfilled for the
maintenance of the group. At the group level we call these
functional necessities. Most of the individual needs can
only be met through interaction with other individuals. To
a large extent, the functions of the group are derived from
the needs of the individual. When some need or function is
not being met, tension is created. As Parsons has maintained
in all of his work, the seeking to attain goals is the
source and cause of action and dynamics in an interaction
system.

In this post-Freudian era, we cannot say that every
tension is necessarily consciously perceived by the individual.
He may repress or sublimate the need; he may attempt to
decrease the importance of the/through such mechanisms as
need
"sour-grapes." The tension exists and will initiate strivings
to overcome it; whether or not the tensions are perceived

and corrective mechanisms _purposively_ employed are other
matters.

One of the main cognitive needs of the individual is
what Gestalt psychologists refer to as the need for closure.
Man likes to live in an ordered and consistent universe,
even though the order may be man-produced. One of the more
important people working in this area is Heider. As New-
comb states:

> His central assumption (somewhat oversimplified) is that
> when an individual has attitudes toward two objects,
> cognitive imbalance exists for him if the two objects
> belong together (by any of several criteria) while his
> cathetic orientations toward them are opposed-- _e.g._, if
> he "likes" one of the two related objects and "dislikes"
> the other.[1]

Newcomb goes on to state that "hypothetically," the strain
of perceived nonconsensus, or discrepancy, serves as an
instigation to communication--the process by which, ordinarily
consensus is increased."[2] The instigation is predictable;
but whether or not there will be communication is less pre-
dictable, according to Newcomb. The instigation occurs
because it is the experience of the individual in the past
that such instigation has generally decreased the tension;
_i.e._, it has led to reward. Note that this mechanism
operates whether or not the tension is consciously perceived.
The tension exists even though the person may not be aware
of it to the extent of being able to verbalize it.

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[1] Newcomb, _op.cit._, p. 281.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 282.

One of the central hypotheses of this paper is a modification of this position of Newcomb. Hypothetically, the strain of discrepancy serves as an instigation to some mechanism to overcome that tension. There will necessarily be instigation of communication only on those elements on which consensus is necessary for the functions of that particular interaction.

Tension and inconsistency can occur in any one of the three systems, personality, cultural, and social, and between them. It should be noted that there is a strong relation between tension and lack of integration. Lack of integration prevents closure; lack of integration prevents the fulfilling of the functions.

One example of tension resulting from lack of integration between systems is anomie or normative inconsistency as developed by Merton.[1] There is a leakage of middle and upper class goals into the lower classes, while the social system does not allow the achievement of them by all members of the society, if they follow toe societal norms. Here is one example of where too great a consensus by too many persons may lead to tension. The anomie thus arises because the culture and social structure are not well integrated.

The "affluent anomie" of Merton is closely related to the source of anomie as developed by Durkheim in his

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[1]Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, revised and enlarged edition, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957), pp. 131-194.

classic and awe-inspiring monograph on suicide.[1] One need

of man is to have some sure sense of his place in society.

Under normal conditions each person is in s hierarchy of

functions whose distribution he knows and deems just--at

least he knows his and adjacent positions in it. When either

society or the individual is disturbed by crisis, beneficiency,

or other relatively rapid change, the individual loses this

support. Again, normlessness occurs because the old cul-

tural system is no longer integrated with the new social

syatem and/or the individual's position in it.

There are several inherent, built-in sources of con-

flict and dissensus in any social system. Since social

systems can be and are integrated, these sources of conflict

negate the assumption of consensus of the postulating of

consensus as the one necessary source of integration. Let

us look at some of these.

Williams cites some statistics that well demonstrate

the complexity of even elementary social acts and relation-

ships:

> Any simple unit can combine with other simple units to
> generate great complexity, e.g., elementary unit-to-unit
> relations increase with increases in the number of units,
> $\frac{N(N-1)}{2}$. The number of relationships between two people
> is--one; the number of one-to-one relationships in a
> family of five persons is 10; in a group of 50 persons

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[1]Emile Durkheim, Suicide: A Study in Sociology, trans-
lated by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson, (Glencoe, Ill.:
The Free Press, 1951), pp. 246-254.

there are already 1,225 relationships. We need go no farther just now.

Here are other examples. The possibilities for human diversity are suggested by Dunn and Dobzhansky's estimate that the number of theoretically possible gene combinations among human beings is approximately of the same order as that of the total number of electrons and protons in the known universe. Wallace's analysis of unique cognitive maps indicates that a bridge four-some may represent over a million unique combinations of even a very simple and limited set of cognitive expectations. Robert Dubin has calculated that the aspects of action caught up in Parson's basic classification of social acts (in terms of "pattern-variables" and major kinds of objects and modes of orientation to these objects) give us 1024 different basic ways of acting. Since in any interaction, each of the two persons may use any of these modes, any dyad may create at least 1,048,586 (1024X1024) distinctive patterns of interaction.

The cojunct operation of genes, cognitive maps, social acts, and group relationships—not to mention other factors —evidently generates substantial potential variation and diversity in human society. It is indeed drastic literary license if we ever permit ourselves to speak loosely of "simple societies" or, save the mark, of "simple peoples."[1]

Goode also presents a list of empirical facts that indicate the paucity of merely a theory of consensus:

1. Some individuals do not accept even supposedly central values of the society.
2. Individuals vary in their emotional commitment to both important and less important values.
3. This value commitment varies by class strata, and by other characteristics of social position...
4. Even when individuals accept a given value, some of them also have a strong or weak "latent commitment" to very different or contradictory values.
5. ...There may be value commitment without conformity or conformity without value commitment.
6. When individuals' social positions change, they may change both their behavior and their value orientations.
7. The values, ideals, and role obligations of every individual are at times in conflict.[2]

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[1] Williams, "Consensus and Integration...", pp. 13f.

[2] William J. Goode, "A Theory of Role Strain," American Sociological Review, 25 (August, 1960), p. 484.

We can anlyze such facts by seeing some of the causes
at various levels in the social system: the personality
systems, the interaction and role systems, and sub-groups.
First, as Wrong has so well pointed out, we tend to have an
"oversocialized" view of man.[1] "I think we must start with
the recognition that in the beginning there is the body."[2]

Man is a social animal, but he has not been completely
socialized. He still has drives and instincts that can be
asocial. We have forgotten about the existence of the "id"
and its conflict with the internalized norms. "Tendencies
to deviant behavior are not seen as dialectically related
to conformity. The presence in man of motivational forces
bucking against the hold social discipline has over him is
denied."[3] Sociological theory neglects both the angel and
the devil in the individual. "It neglects the other half of
the model of human nature presupposed by current theory: moral
man, guided by his built-in superego and beckoning ego ideal."
It also overlooks the "desire for material and sensual
satisfaction" and the quest for power in order to impose
one's own normative definition of reality.[4] Inkeles also

[1]Dennis H. Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of
Man in Modern Sociology," American Sociological Review,
26 (April, 1961), pp. 183-192.

[2]Ibid., p. 191.

[3]Ibid., pp. 187-88.

[4]Ibid., pp. 190-91.

calls for a greater awareness of the personality variable
in group behavior and dynamics.[1] In the quote from Williams
we saw the great inherited diversity between individuals.

At the second, or interaction, level there are also
several sources of strain. Each person in a complex society
plays several different roles and holds several different
positions. Goode, after an analisis of a role system, comes
to the conclusion that, for the individual, role strain is
normal.[2] (1) Role demands are required at specific times
and places. "Virtually no role demand is such a spontaneous
pleasure that conformity with it is always automatic." How
often does a parent remain overjoyed about having to get ip
in the middle of the night to feed the baby? (2) Each in-
dividual is in many different role relations, often at the
same time. (3) "Each role relationship demands _several_
activities or responses." There are inconsistent, but "not
quite contradictory" norms. (4) Role relations are com-
bined in role _sets_. "In general, the individual's total
role obligations are overdemanding." There just isn't
enough time in one day to do everything I'm supposed to do!
Goode is concerned with the strain on the individual, but
it should also be pointed out that each role position views

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[1]Alex Inkeles, "Personality and Social Structure,"
Sociology Today: Problems and Prospects, edited by Robert K.
Merton, Leonard Broom, and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., (New
York: Basic Books, Inc., 1959), pp. 249-276.

[2]Goode, _op.cit._, p. 485. The rest of the quotes in
this paragraph are taken from the same page.

society and the environment from a different perspective.
Each person sees society from various angles and no two
persons see it in the same way. Can we wonder then that
there is at times a lack of cognitive consensus?

Also at the interaction level and related to role
conflict is the phenomenon of multiple references groups, each
with its own expectations and demands. At times they all
have legitimate authority and power. Angell gives the
examples of the family life of a young executive being
hurt by the demands of his corporate boss and of the farm
family putting demands on a child to do his chores to the
point that his school work is hindered. "Here the assertion
of power in one area makes impossible satisfactory parti-
cipation in another. Any complex society is bound to show
imbalances of this kind."[1]

Third, at the community and society level, we are
faced with a myriad of sub-groups. This is especially true
in a "melting pot" immigrant country such as the United
States. Williams presents a fairly accurate inventory of
these groups in the United States:[2] (1) We have six or
seven regional or local sub-cultures. (2) There is the
urban-rural continuum of differentiation. (3) There are
"lines of differentiation of interests and values associated

[1]Angell, op.cit., p. 100.
[2]Williams, "Unity and Diversity...," pp. 2-3.

with economic and power positions, status-rankings, and specific occupational subcultures."[1] (4) We have national and ethnic differences; there can be cultural assimilation without full social incorporation. (5) There is the large and complex diversity of organized religion. (6) We have so-called racial groupings, which are not necessarily groups nor even collectivities. "They 'exist' only if, and precisely to the extent that, they are treated as real."[2] Williams summarizes by saying:

> We are able to sense the grid of invisible compartments into which the society is divided; if we know a person's racial category, religious affiliation or background, social class, rural or urban residence, and region of residence, we can make rough but very useful predictions about other aspects of his life station and behavior. We are aware also that the lines or walls between social compartments become dimmer and thinner from 9:00 to 5:00 on weekdays and increase in definiteness and solidity on weekends and evenings as American life flows into the underlying in-group structure.[3]

If perception and cognition depend upon the role position, can we not expect even greater disagreement and conflict between sub-groups because of the limited perspective and biases of each? Various sub-groups will have different amounts and accuracy of perception of reality both within the society and between the society and the rest of the world. As Angell states:

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[1] Williams, "Unity and Diversity...," pp.2.
[2] Ibid., p. 3.
[3] Ibid., p. 4.

Moral consensus arises from similarity of experience, either first-hand or communicated. In modern societies the opportunities for different socio-economic groups to have the same experiences are very limited, so that most incompatibilities caused by social differentiation have to be cured by a symbolic sharing of experience. Thus it is that only those in the same communication networks can have much hope of seeing issues alike—and even then they do not necessarily do so.[1]

Newcomb with considerable cogency suggests that the very need for and existence of consensus among sub-groups create and maintain incomplete communication between groups. The individual needs the support of a group not filled with dissensus and inconsistency. However, as we have seen, such a group is virtually impossible at the society-wide level. "The one way in which it is possible for a population to satisfy both the individual-autistic demands and the demands of social reality is to sort itself into subgroups which are in fact characterized by this kind of consensus.[2] Such splitting into sub-groups is heightened by "the circular tendency to exaggerate existing consensus with persons toward whom attraction is strongly positive, and to increase attraction when perception is perceived to increase; and the converse tendency for underestimation of consensus and declining attraction to procede together."[3]

Finally, the division into sub-groups is directly related to the individual need for supportive groups and

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[1]Angell, op.cit., pp. 209f.

[2]Newcomb, op.cit., p. 288.

[3]Ibid., p. 289.

ego support and the social fact of class and opportunity
hierarchies.

> With regard to nonperson objects, it would be possible,
> of course, to develop consensus on the part of the entire
> population with no sub-group differentiation. (As we
> have seen, this is a highly questionable assertion but
> does not negate what follows.) But with regard to con-
> sensus about members themselves, this presumably becomes
> more and more unlikely as population becomes progressively
> larger than two. One of the basic reasons for this
> (which I have not time to develop here) is that consensus
> about members themselves can be achieved only by making
> no differentiations at all (an unlikely event) or by
> obtaining the agreement of the members who are ranked
> lowest that they should in fact be ranked lowest-also
> improbable. Sub-group differentiation, among other ad-
> vantages, makes possible a state of affairs in which
> each sub-group member can participate in consensus about
> himself.[1]

We stated above that "hypothetically, the strain of
discrepancy serves as an instigation to some mechanism to
overcome that tension." We indicated that consensus is
only one of several mechanisms, which both are instigated
and are built into the system to prevent tension. While
we cannot here provide a complete list, nor is that our
chief purpose, let us enumerate some of them that have
been observed by various sociologists.

First, Newcomb's argument that has just been presented
can be advanced a little farther into an argument for one
integrative function of conflict. As several political
theorists have pointed out, a society that is split into two

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[1]Newcomb, op.cit., p. 289.

well-delineated opposing camps is not a tenable society.
There must be cross-cutting membership and allegiance. In
the same way, stability is aided by several criss-crossing
conflicts that prevent the lining up into two hostile,
"consensus-ridden" and sharply divided camps.[1] Coser quotes
an example of Edward Alsworth . A body of water with two
opposing sources of waves (disturbance) may become quite
turbulent when the crests of the waves coincide. However,
the greater the number of sources, the greater the possibility
that the crests and troughs will cancel each other out.
"The interdependence of conflicting groups and the multiplicity
of noncumulative conflicts provide one, though not, of
course, the only check against basic consensual breakdown
in an open society."[2]

Goode was quoted above as indicating several sources
of role strain. He also indicates various means of reducing
these strains.[3] The actor may compartmentalize his role
obligations; he may delegate them, although the extent of
delegation is controlled by the societal hierarchy of values;
he may eliminate certain role relationships; he may extend
certain role obligations as an excuse not to meet other
demands or as a way to facilitate the meeting of other
demands; or he may set up barriers against intrusion, i.e.,

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[1] Lewis A. Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict,
(Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1956), pp. 76-81.

[2] Ibid., p. 79.

[3] Goode, op. cit., pp. 486-88.

insulate his activities from the view of others. Goode
points out that there are limits to the indefinite extension
of the number of role relationships. "After a possible
initial reduction, role strain begins to increase more
rapidly with a larger number of roles than do the corres-
ponding role rewards or counter-payments from alter."[1]
Rose Coser's concept of insulation from observability closely
parallels Goode's conception of barriers. As an extension
of Merton, she points out that different people expect
different types of conformity (attitudinal, behavioral, and
doctrinal). As a result, a person may reveal different as-
pects and expressions of role fulfillment to various people
and conceal others.[2] "These differences in types of ex-
pected conformity make it possible for the status-occupant
to maintain his reserve and to remain reasonably stable in
the face of contradictory expectations."[3]

Another sphere of mechanisms, perhaps the most im-
portant in a complex society, is that variously referred
to as cooperation,[4] symbiosis or the relation of interdepedence
pendence[5] and organic solidarity through devision of labor.[6]

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[1]Goode, op.cit., p. 487.

[2]Rose Coser, "Insulation from Observability and Types
of Social Conformity," American Sociological Review, 26
(February, 1961), pp. 29-33.

[3]Ibid., p. 30.

[4]Horowitz, op.cit., p. 187.

[5]Edward Gross, "Symbiosis and Consensus as Integrative
Factors in Small Groups," American Sociological Review,
21 (April, 1956), pp. 174-79.

[6]Emile Durkheim, The Devision of Labor in Society,
translated by George Simpson, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press,
1933), 70-229.

Perhaps the simplest form of solidarity through co-operation is that of a group unified because the member units all are in opposition to a common opponent. Both Simmel and Coser point to the unifying power of antagonism to an opponent. First, Simmel points out:

> Discord, in fact, perhaps even more stringently than harmony, forces the group to "pull itself together." In general, common enmity is one of the most powerful means for motivating a number of individuals or groups to cling together. This common enmity is intensified if the common adversary is at the same time the common ruler.[1]

Second, Coser goes on to delineate some of the results of such antagonism.

> Antagonism against a common enemy may be a binding element in two ways. It may either lead to the formation of new groups with distinct boundary lines, ideologies, loyalties and common values, or, stopping short of this, it may result only in instrumental associations in the face of a common threat. The emergence of such associations of otherwise isolated individuals represents a "minimum" of unification.[2]

As societies grow in size and complexity, it becomes more and more impossible for any one individual to meet all of his own needs. Further, as societies become more complex and industrialized with higher standards of living, the felt needs and desires of the members also increase in number and complexity. Need seems to fit the supply and even exceed it. At the same time, increased complexity means it is more and more impossible for there to be society-wide consensus and integration through common values.

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[1] Simmel, op. cit., p. 193.

[2] Lewis Coser, "The Functions...", p. 140.

Rather, as Durkheim shows, the source of integration becomes
the interdependence of the division of labor and the fulfill-
ment by members and units of each other's needs. Each unit
is an entity organically combined into the whole--hence the
term organic solidarity. Let me quote Durkheim at some
length.

> In sum, since mechanical solidarity progressively
> becomes enfeebled, life properly social must decrease
> or another solidarity must slowly come in to take the
> place of that which has gone... The more we advance,
> the more profoundly do societies reveal the sentiment
> of self and of unity. (A somewhat questionable and
> value laden assertion) There must, then, be some other
> social link which produces this result; this cannot
> be any other than that which comes from the division
> of labor.
> If, moreover, one recalls that even where it is most
> resistant, mechanical solidarity does not link men with
> the same force as the division of labor, and that, more-
> over, it leaves outside its scope the major part of
> phenomena actually social, it will become still more
> evident that social solidarity tends to become exclusively
> organic. It is the division of labor which, more and
> more, fills the role that was formerly filled by the
> common conscience. It is the principal bond of social
> aggregates of higher types.[1]

The integration of a society through the division of
labor is supported by several other factors. First, since
it is made up of various units, each of which has its own
task to perform, it is often the case that the more clearly
delineated these units are the better. Turk makes this
point in a study of the working relation between student
doctors and student nurses.[2] There were less dysfunctional

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[1]Durkheim, The Division of Labor..., p. 173.

[2]Herman Turk, "Social Cohesion Through Variant Values:
Evidence from Medical Role Relations," American Sociological
Review, 28 (February, 1963), pp. 28-37.

dispute and disorganization if the doctors and nurses had
different orientations toward the patients. If it had not
been for these variations in values, there would have
been a great increase in jurisdictional disputes. Lewis
Coser makes much the same point when he states that conflict
helps establish and maintain group boundaries and identities.[1]
However, he is probably over-stating the case for on-going,
well-integrated groups.

In order to call a system integrated, one must be
able to discern the smooth structuring and coordination
of the units as well as being able to discern the units.
Williams mentions the

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[1]L. Coser, _The Functions..._, pp. 33-38.

example of the chaos during the time of disasters. Common values
are not enough; common information is not enough. Just these can
often lead to a frantic call for aid and ten times as many beds
as needed appearing. What is needed is coordination to prevent
duplication of effort and to assure the highest possible efficiency.[1]

In almost any system composed of more than the dyad, there is
the need for some recognized and legitimate source of leadership.
Angell, in his discussion of the stages in arriving at general con-
sensus, mentions the need for prestigeful courts and legislatures.[2]
New norms of behavior usually must be enforced by some agency before
they will be internalized my the members of the society. The bargaining
on the interpersonal level may often reach compromises and solutions
that are dysfunctional for the larger system unless they are checked
by some third power. If this third party is recognized as a legi-
timate source of constraint, all the better. Goode notes that "third
parties interact with an individual and his alter to keep their bar-
gain within institutional limits."[3] Dahrendorf even sees the con-
straint of some by others as the main glue that holds a society
together.[4]

One of the strengths of the symbiotic relationship is that it
continues to meet the needs of the individual members.

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[1] Williams, "Consensus and Integration . . .," pp. 34f.

[2] Angell, op.cit., pp. 215-219.

[3] Goode, op. cit., p. 483.

[4] Dahrendorf, op.cit., p. 127.

Williams points out that "Often the most important basis for con-
tinuing interaction among individuals and other social units may
not be generalized consensus but rather <u>the fact that each party</u>
<u>to the interaction facilitates the satisfaction of important</u>
<u>needs of the other.</u>"[1]   The gratitude for the fulfillment of needs
by others is generalized into feelings of gratitude for the entire
system. Morton Grodzins has argued that loyalty to a country is
really made up of a persons total satisfaction with life as he has
experienced it in that country.[2]   However, this loyalty to the
system has a gyroscopic nature.   It does not depend upon a continued
<u>quid pro quo</u> exchange nor upon the fulfillment of all needs--an
impossibility anyway. Morse writes:

> The identity (or integrity) of a system of action is embodied in
> the sense of solidarity that binds its members together, that
> gives them a sense of collective belonging, of mutual interde-
> pendence, so that they do not require an explicit <u>quid</u> for every
> <u>quo</u> but are prepared to accept a diffuse assurance of the general
> benefits of membership and to make their contributions accordingly.[3]

Simmel makes a similar point in his discussion of "gratitude."

> Gratitude, as it were, is the moral memory of mankind. In this
> respect, it differs from faithfulness by being more practical
> and impulsive: although it may remain, of course, something
> purely internal, it may yet engender new actions. It is an ideal
> bridge which the soul comes across again and again, so to speak,
> and which, upon provocations too slight to throw a <u>new</u> bridge to
> the other person, it uses to come closer to him.[4]

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[1] Williams, "Consensus and Integration . . . ," p. 28.

[2] Angell, <u>op.cit.</u>, pp. 65f.

[3] Chandler Morse, "The Functional Imperative," <u>The Social Theories</u>
<u>of Talcott Parsons: A Critical Examination</u>, edited by Max Black,
(Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 118

[4] Simmel, <u>op.cit.</u>, p. 388.

As mentioned before, an individual has a desire to live in a consistent world. Even though mechanisms other than consensus support integration, the individual still prefers a system in which there is consensus. For one thing, the appearance of agreement does not place in question his own views. However, as we have also seen, the possibility for such consensus on any wide scale is slight. The broader and more indefinite the values, the greater the possibility of wide acceptance. As Angell states:

> The common values of a society are likely to be intangibles such as democracy and humanitarianism. It is in terms of them that responsible courses of action are justified. Societal members do not so much envision specific future events to work toward, as attributes of the good life as they see it.[1]

Political parties base their pleas upon such general values. They must have society-wide support for their candidates. Too specific and strong stands tend to alienate some necessary voters. The very indefiniteness of these values is functional. We should be thankful that we can often complain, "But they just don't mean anything!" They can mean something different for each person without bringing to the surface all the various underlying disagreements. In a mass society there is great value in the "hollow, ringing phrase."

"Common values, whether sacred or secular, are strengthened by processes of symbolization, through ritual, myth or folklore, and heroic figures."[2] The concrete and personal quality of symbols and heroes strengths the group's unity. At the same time, the fact

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[1] Angell, op.cit., p. 18.

[2] Ibid., p. 26

that they are symbols rather than explicit statements allows for

individual interpretation. The group can quickly become identified

with its ritual. Attack the ritual symbol used in a church and"all

hell will break loose," even though the majority of members probably

do not know the official significance of the ritual or the symbol.

The final mechanism that I would like to mention in this

brief survey is the "norm of reciprocity." Gouldner has written

an excellent exploratory paper into what may very well be a major

aspect of social relations. I can only hit a few of the relevant

highlights and would refer the reader to his article.[1] Gouldner

posits that the norm of receprocity is universal but not uncon-

ditional. While it is found in every society, its exact nature and

strength depends both upon the status of the persons interacting

and upon the culture of the society.

> Specifically, I suggest that a norm of reciprocity, in its uni-
> versal form, makes two interrelated, minimal demands: (1) people
> should help those who have helped them, and (2) people should not
> injure those who have helped them.[2]

If one wants to be helped by others, one has to support the norm of

reciprocity by helping others. Further, until one is repaid, it is

not very strategic to harm the person in debt. In both ways egoistic

motivation help support the norm. Outstanding obligations contribute

as much or more to stability as do those obligations already met.

Once interaction is seen as taking place over time, we may note

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[1] Alvin W. Gouldner, "The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary
Statement," American Sociological Review, 25 (April, 1960), pp. 161-178.

[2] Ibid., p. 171.

that the norm of reciprocity so structures social relations that, between the time of Ego's provision of a gratification and the time of Alter's repayment, falls the shadow of indebtedness.[1]

Gouldner suggests that since indebtedness leads to stability, a rewarding situation, we should expect to find mechanisms that induce people to remain in debt or at least to confuse when repayment has been made. (Anyone familiar with the operation of loans and buying on credit in our society can quite easily agree with Gouldner.) For instance, since everyone is in a vast net of interactions, each of which at some time or another includes indebtedness, a network or cross obligations is set up that is very hard to unravel. Also, society provides no measure of when a debt of a noneconomic nature is repaid. Because of differences in situation, difference in status between ego and alter, etc. there can only be a rough equivalence between two acts. Over time there is considerable ambiguity concerning who is in debt to whom.[2]

Simmel, in certain sections of his discussion of gratitude makes many of the same points. He observes that indebtedness is often created by the presence of another person rather than by any specific act. We are grateful because the other person exists and we experience him.[3] Simmel also points out that in one respect it is never possible to repay a debt.

Once we have received something good from another person, once

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[1] _Ibid._, p..174.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 175.

[3] Simmel, _op.cit._, p. 389.

he has preceded us with his action ["vorgeleistet"], we no longer can make up for it completely, no matter how much our own return gift or service may objectively or legally surpass his own. The reason is that his gift, because it was first, has a voluntary character which no return gift can have. For, to return the benefit we are obliged ethically; we operate under a coercion which, though neither social nor legal but moral, is still a coercion.[1]

Because of the indeterminancy of the norm of reciprocity, it can step into many interaction situations in which there are few prescribed role rights and obligations. Also, it is a second line of defense in those situations where there are norms accepted by well-socialized actors. In this case, repayment is not only a role obligation but also a norm, a correct action, in and of itself. "The norm in this respect, is a kind of plastic filler, capable of being poured into the shifting crevices of social structures, and serving as a kind of all-purpose moral cement."[2]

The indefiniteness and continuation of indebtedness also looms large for Simmel.

> This irredeemable nature of gratitude shows it as a bond between men which is as subtle as it is firm. Every human relationship of any duration produces a thousand occasions for it, and even the most ephemeral ones do not allow their increment to the reciprocal obligation to be lost. In fortunate cases, but sometimes even in cases abundantly provided with counter-instances, the sum of these increments produces an atmosphere of generalized obligation (the saying that one is "obliged" ["verbunden"] to somebody who has earned our thanks is quite apt), which can be redeemed by no accomplishments whatever. This atmosphere of obligation belongs among those "microscopic," but infinitely tough, threads which tie one element of society to another, and thus eventually all of them toghether in a stable collective life.[3]

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 392.

[2] Gouldner, _op.cit._, p. 175.

[3] Simmel, _op.cit._, p. 395.

Earlier we said that, when there is tension, "there will neces-
sarily be instigation of communication only on those elements on which
consensus is necessary for the functions of that particular inter-
action." Just what are these? It is interesting to note that
almost every writer in the field, no matter how much conflict he
likes, recognizes a need for a "core culture" on which there is
relative consensus. Note for example the following range of quotes,
ordered roughly by degree of consensus in their orientations.
First, Angell:

> "[Moral integration] merely assumes that whatever conflict there
> is goes forward in terms of well-defined rules that the parties
> to the conflicts accept.[1]

Williams:

> Given some minimal consensus and interdependence, the modern nation
> is enabled to function as a system--to the extent it does--by the
> vast network of communication and organization, so familiar and
> so essential and so little to be taken for granted in sociological
> study.[2] (italics not in original)

Lewis Coser:

> Conflicts arising within the same consensual framework are likely
> to have a very different impact upon the relationship than those
> which put the basic consensus in question.[3]

And Horowitz: Conflict, as well as consensus, operates within a
social structure, "within the system of mutually established laws,
norms, and values."[4]

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[1] Angell, op.cit., pp. 8f.

[2] Williams, "Unity and Diversity . . .," p. 7.

[3] L. Coser, The Functions . . ., p. 73.

[4] Horowitz, op.cit., p. 184.

What constitutes this "core culture"? First, I would definitely
include the norm of reciprocity as a necessary "all-purpose moral
cement." Beyond this, the one necessary item of consensus that
all writers recognize is consensus on the rules and norms of
procedure and interaction.

>   [is]
> The dominant national pattern/of fluid and overlapping allegiances
> and competing memberships and interests out of which emerge poli-
> tical decisions <u>within</u> a framework of agreement on procedure.
> The depth and significance of procedural agreement is not obvious
> in the ordered routine of those situations which are taken for
> granted, but is sharply brought out when it is lacking.[1]

People can do things for different reasons, hidden and stated, without
greatly disrupting the system, as long as they agree on how they
should and do go about their normal interactions. Probably the only
time in which one, as a general rule, does not want the other to
know what to expect from him is when they are in open conflict or
battle with each trying to defeat the other. However, even in warfare
there have been up to now, at least, rules of the game, e.g., the use
of white flags, the Geneva Treaties, etc. In fact, if it weren't
for some agreement on procedure, one would not known when the other
were defeated except by complete annihilation of the other. In
other words, daily interaction depends upon the possibility of the
majority of times being able to predict and interpret the behavior
of other individuals. In the concluding section of this paper we
shall present some qualifications. Again, a quote from Williams
will serve to summarize the importance of consensus on norms of

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[1]Williams, "Unity and Diversity . . .," p. 7.

behavior:

> The social structures of modern urban societies are possible
> only by the articulation of <u>congruent expectations</u> in the
> interactions of <u>diversely motivated</u> actors, organized into
> linkages among a very large number of diverse subsystems.
> During the past six months as a householder, citizen, father,
> and so on, I have paid taxes, bought goods, secured licesnses,
> boted, petitioned, taught, been taufht, consulted, been con-
> sulted--in relations with numbrous individuals about whom I
> know little, and with whom in many cases probably share very
> little. For most of these interactions, it is enough if we
> know enough to synchronize actions in time and space, and to
> perform specific acts upon proper signals. But it is crucial
> that the coordination does take place.[1]

In every interaction there are certain basic assumptions of

a bread nature which are the very basis of the interaction and

which allow it to continue. On these core values there must be

consensus. Questioning of them brings into question the very

existence of the interaction. Such questioning usually brings

immediate, blind rejection, as Weber's ethic of ultimate demands

points out.[2] For example, essential to an academic community is

the value of truth and the necessity of never falsifying information.

There can never be any discussion of whether or not one should

create false "facts" to support an argument. Similarly, today

in labor-management disputes there is a basic assumption of the

value of collective bargaining. Woe be to the government official

who suggests that government intervention would be more efficient:

the coalition of labor and management is a tough opponent! Before

two people can argue over the possession of a tract of land, there

must be agreement on the existence and inherent good of property

rights. Basic to any democratic process is the right of the majority

to prevail. This is one aspect of structure that can never be voted

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[1] Williams, "Consensus and Integration . . .," p. 35.

out of existence and the system as a whole still remain. Even
in international relations such basics exist. The U.S/ and the
U.S.S.R. must agree upon the basic need to prevent nuclear war-
fare. If they did not, there would be little to prevent the
negotiations from coming to a quite fiery end. An idea of the
centrality of the issue can be seen by the horror of both at the
nuclear threatening of the People's Republic of China.

Another essential of an integrated system is agreement on
the legitimacy of that system. Without the acceptance by the
vast majority, that generalized allegiance Morse mentions could
not exist. We would be faced with a situation in which the system
was supported only to the extent that for every _quo_ there was an
equal or greater _quid_. One of the main difficulties standing in
the way of the formation of an integrated nation is such countries
as Nigeria and the Congo is that the people have not yet recognized
it as a legitimate structure.

Closely related to the need to accept the legitimacy of the
system is the need to accept the legitimacy of authority in any
system above the very small group. This point was previously
developed in our discussion of the mechanisms of integration.

Beyond this core culture, the amount and type of consensus
on what will be determined by the nature of the interaction, the
functions it is meeting, the cathetic and evaluative relation between
the actors, the environmental situation, and the duration and exten-
siveness of the interaction. In the next section I shall propose
an outline or skeleton for theory and research and try to provide

some flesh for some sections of it.

IV

Talcott Parsons has been the most influential sociologist in the formation of a systematic typology of the functions of an interaction.[1] While I am indebted to his writing and to Morse discussion of it,[2] I am not necessarily following exactly Parsons' ideas-- or rather what I think they are.

An interactional system has both an inside and an outside. The system must relate to the outside world. First, it must adapt to it in order to exist. Second, the system exists to a great extent in order to meet the needs of the individuals and units within it. It must relate to the outside world in order to achieve the goals set forth by the members. In addition, as an entity in itself the system also has certain goals that it must meet. Both the adaptation to the environment and the interaction with the environment to meet or attain goals can be termed instrumental functions of the system.

The system must also concern itself with its internal order. The conditions inside are as important to the continuation or dissolution of the system as whether or not it can meet its instrumental functions. Whether or not the units of the system operate smoothly is the problem of integration, the central subject of this paper. But before the units can be integrated, they must be members of the system and remain members. The members must be kept relatively.

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[1] Parsons, The Social System, pp. 24-112.

[2] Morse, op.cit., pp. 100-152.

satisfied with being members. Part of this comes from fulfilling

the needs of the individual, i.e., success in goal attainment.

But also the member must be psychologically supported by the

other members. The problem is one of the individual and of the

various small group units within a larger system (since great

emotional dissatisfaction by members of a small group is likely

to destroy the affective bonds of the unit). However, since the

larger system depends upon the membership of the individual, these

individual problems are also problems for the system. Parsons

terms these activities supporting the individual as"expressive."

Within the expressive category, there are two main functions that

must be met: pattern-maintenance and tension management.

> The problem of pattern maintenance is essentially that faced by
> an actor in reconciling the various norms and demands imposed by
> his participation in any particular social system with those of
> other systems in which he also participates, or with the more
> general norms of the broader culture. . . . Tension management
> is defined as the problem of maintaining within the unit a level
> of motivational commitment sufficient for required role perfor-
> mances. The notion here is that there are continuous changes of
> state within the units, with rise and fall of tension, and unless
> suitable measures are taken, these changes may potentially serve
> as instigation to deviance from the patterns established for the
> system.[1]

Out of the study of roles has come the concept of role segment.[2]

A person lives a segmented life, playing various roles. He reveals

various aspects of his personality in various roles. A doctor will

not appear the same to a patient and his wife, for example. The

more of himself he commits to a particular role relationship, the

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[1]Devereux, op.cit., p. 57

[2]Neal Gross, Ward S. Mason, and Alexander W. McEachern,
Explorations in Role Analysis: Studies of the School Superintendency
Role, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1958), pp. 48-69.

the more emotionally involved in that relationship he is and the more concerned he is about the personality and nature of the other person. Those groups in which there is high emotional involvement and affectivity are those groups which can fulfill the expressive functions for the individual. The size of the group does not necessarily correlate with the amount of involvement. A religious sect may consist of several members, each with much involvement.

The interaction system between the tourist and the farmer at a road-side stand, on the other hand, only involves two individuals and yet little involvement. The question of what sort of group, i.e., what functions does it meet, is more important than size. It must be admitted in the same breath, however, than generally expressive groups will be of a faily small size and, with few exceptions, the larger the group is, the less well it can fulfill the expressive function.

A starting point for the development of our skeleton is one suggested by Newcomb.[1] Newcomb extends Heider's views into the quite standard A-B-X"formula." A and B, two actors, are in communication about object X. The object may be an actual object, another person, a value, concept, opinion, symbol, etc. A views B and X as belonging together, i.e., A "co-orients to B and X. B views A and X as belonging together, i.e., B co-orients to A and X. If there is a discrepancy between A's orientation (cognitive, cathetic, or evaluative) and A's perception of B's orientation to X, tension will arise. The important addition of Newcomb is the observation that there are three variables that determine the degree of tension:

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[1]Newcomb, op.cit., p. 281.

1. The strength of the attraction between A and B.

2. The degree of importance of X to A or B.

3. The degree of joint relevance of X to A and B, of the

    degree of importance to A and B.[1]

I would add a fourth:

4. The degree of importance of X to the relation between A and B.

Keeping in mind these four variables, let us move on to a further extension of the scheme: one proposed by Williams, with the basic idea coming from John MacGregor.[2] First, he points out the three areas of possible consensus between A and B concerning X.

I. Orientations to any object, X--when X is something other than the direct affective response of person B to person A:

[A].Cognitive similarity or dissimilarity (perception/ conceptions of existential character of the object).

[B].Affective similarity or dissimilarity (positive or negative emotional attitudes of varying kinds and intensities).

[C]. Evaluative similarity or dissimilarity (judgements [sic.] of the desirability of the object, made on the basis of some generalized standards).[3]

See section II of this paper for my own slight modifications of these three categories. Also, the same three variables can relate to X when X is the affective response of person B to person A. This I shall deal with in III B below.

Williams goes on to examine various types of X which B is instrumental to A in achieving.

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[1]Ibid., pp. 282f.

[2]Williams, "Consensus and Integration . . .," pp. 45f.

[3]Ibid., p. 45.

II. Orientations of A to B in terms of B's instrumentality in helping A to attain <u>valued states</u>--when the valued states are something other than the direct affective response of person B to person A.

 [A]. B helps A to attain generalized means to goals, e.g., money, power.

 [B] B helps A to attain valued affective responses from third parties, e.g., approval from the boss, affection from a spouse, esteem from professional colleagues.[1]

One of the questions we will be dealing with below is which of

I A,B, and C is of importance in II A and B.

 Finally, Williams turns to the affective response of A and

B to each other.

 III. Orientations of A and B directly to the valued affective responses of the other.

 [A]. Expressive <u>aspects</u> of I[A,B, C] and II [A and B]--any of these taken as "symbolic of A's basic attitude toward B, or vice versa.

 [B]. Direct expressions of affect of A toward B (and B toward A).

 1. Symetrical, e.g.
    a. Love-love
    b. Esteem-esteem
    c. Approval-approval
    d. Responsiveness-receptiveness and vice versa.

 2. Non-symetrical: any combination not wanted by either party.[2]

In III A it does not particularly matter whether or not B is instrumental to A, although different variables may enter in. The object may be anything on which both A and B are oriented, as in I above. Also, as stated before, important in any analysis of III B is the fact that A and B may be non-symetrical, not just on the aathetic implied by Williams in III B 2, but also on the cognitive and evalua-

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[1] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 46.

[2] <u>Ibid.</u>,

tive orientation to the affective state.

From this scheme it is possible to develop the following rather simple basic component:

$$A \longrightarrow X_1 \longleftarrow B \longrightarrow X_2$$

where X_1 is the affective relation between A and B and X_2 is any other valued state of object, for A. B may or may not be instrumental to A in achieving X_2. If the relationship between A and B fulfills expressive functions, then the emphasis is upon X_1, and X_2 may be any object (in its boread sense defined above) of value to A or B. If B is instrumental to A in achieving X_2 and the relation is instrumental, then the center of analysis is X_2. Needless to say, a relation may be both expressive and instrumental, in fact, most are. It is only for analytic purposes that we can separate them as much as we do.

A complication of this component arises from Newcomb's concept of joint relevance. If X_2 is a desired state for both A and B and A is instrumental to B and vice versa, then the following scheme evolves:

$$\text{diagram with } A, B, X_1, X_2$$
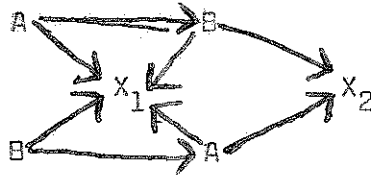
where X_1 and X_2 are defined as above.

Finally, in instrumental relation, there may be extraneous objects that enter in. If some object, not of relevance to the instrumentality of B in achieving X_2 for A, but of such ultimate importance to A or B in other relations, they may bring it into

this instrumental relation. We shall define this extraneous object
of concern as X_3. An example of this phenomena might be our issistence
in bringing into discussions aimed at preventing war the fact that
the U.S.S.R. is not a democracy. In this case the diagram would be

$$A \longrightarrow X_1 \longleftarrow B \longrightarrow X_2$$
$$\searrow X_3 \nwarrow$$
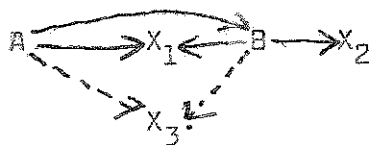
I should make some further observations about the nature of
the joint relevance diagram above. First, X_2 may be of three
different natures:

1. It may be something that can only be obtained by A if it is
also obtained by B.

2. It may be something limited so that if A obtains it, B cannot.

3. It may be of an over-supply nature so that both A and B may
obtain it, but they both do not have to obtain it in order for one
of them to. (1) is the type that has most often been studied.
Within this category I would place those cases where X_2 is not the
same for A as it is for B, but they both must obtain their own X_2
in order for the other to obtain his. For example, ignoring the
possibility of forced labor, A's labor so that B, as his employer, can
sell his product is dependent upon B paying A his wages, and B's
paying A wages is dependent upon A laboring to produce the product.
Most corporate and bureaucratic structures are of this nature.

The first type of joint relevance is the one that I will discuss
below. I would suggest that the mechanisms involved in the second
and third type would be similar to those in the case where B's instru-

mentality is not reciprocal. Further, the second type is the type
of interaction perhaps most open to dysfunctional conflict, subterfuge, and
        Keeping this scheme in mind, let us turn to the expressive   violence.

relationships, those in which the emphasis in upon X_1 and X_2 may

be any object of concern to A. Of course, the diagram works both

ways by exchangéing A and B: X_2 may be of concern to B as the

starting point of analysis. Since one of the variables we are

interested in is the degree of importance of X_2 to A or B and

since we are speaking of a continuum, is is merely for convenience

that one normally uses the persons for whom X_2 is of greatest

importance as the focus of the analysis.

A group or interaction that meets the expressive functions

must of necessity have high affectivity and consensus. In order

for a group to overcome the conflicting norms and demands placed

upon a person and achieve pattern-maintenance, that group must be

in agreement about the norms that it is upholding. Further,

motivation and commitment are supported by the affection and mutual

attraction between individuals. Thus of the two, expressive and

instrumental, the expressive requires more consensus.

Edward Gross did a study of the informal groupings among

airmen based on a pardicular site.[1] He discovered both consensual

and symbiotic groups. He discovered that the consensual groups

were composed öf men of like characteristics, especially those related

to adjæstment to the Air Force as a whole and its group goals.[2]

In our terminology, the consensual groups were expressive oréénted.

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[1]Ed Gross, op.cit., pp. 174-179.

[2]Ibid., p. 177.

Men find the Air Force and its goals touch more significant
matters of values and long-range plans. On these matters, they
do not seek help--they are not "gripe" or problem areas which
can be handled by going to a buddy. Instead dissatisfaction
or concern in these areas was handled by individual decision .
. . On these matters, then, men were likely to find congenial
others who had made similar decisions reflecting values similar
to those held by themselves, and these were usually persons of
similar background and personality characteristics to themselves.
The neophyte who can scarcely wait to conclude his out-year
"hitch" does not find the company of the old-soldier congenial.[1]

Newcomb's study of the processes of aquaintanceship among

initial strangers in four college housing units points up the same

relationship between expressive groups and consensus.[2] Although

Newcomb does not provide information for a firm conclusion, it is

probably fairly safe to assume that most friendships developed within

the same housing unit (on a college campus) would be of an expressive

rather than symbiotic or instrumental nature. Newcomb measured

three different types of consensus: (1) about other persons, (2)

about a number of wid-ranging subjects, and (3) about highly

generalized values.[3] The results showed that "only pairs of persons

who showed very ghigh preacquaintance agreement were likely to have

very high indices of association and reciprocal preference much

later."[4] This was significant beyond the .801 level.

However, even in expressive relationships, there is evidence

of considerable purposive ignorance and avoidance. If X_2 is not

of great importance to A, while his affective relation to B is of

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[1] Ibid., p. 177.

[2] Newcomb, op.cit., pp. 283-292.

[3] Ibid., pp. 285f.

[4] Ibid., p. 286.

importance and A is aware of the fact that there may be dissensus between himself and B on X_2, he may never broach the subject. Probably in the vast majority of friendships there are certain subjects that are simply never discussed because both parties recognize the possible existence of dissensus.

Coser points out that, since in an expressive relationship the amount of personal involvement is quite high--a great deal of the personality is involved, such relations are more likely to produce both love and hate.[1] Another factor is the fact that the high importance of B to A means that B is a very "significant other" whose judgments, good and bad, are of high importance to A.

If we return to our discussion of the organization of a system based upon the division of labor, we will remember that various units fulfill functions for other units. If one of the functions that must be filled by an integrated system is the expressive, then it seems reasonable to posit the possibility that some highly consensual and affective group may overcome low consensus and high conflict elsewhere in the system. Williams makes just this point.[2] Goode recognizes the expressive functions of the family. The support of the family stays with the individual in his other activities. It is a "secure center" for gaining perspective on one's total role complex. One can relax in the well established

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[1]L. Coser, The Functions . . ., p. 62.

[2]Williams, "Consensus and Integration . . .," pp. 29f.

roles within the family.[1]   Probably most people who find comfort

and support from a loved one that gives them new vigor in their

other roles and duties will recognize the phenomena being described

by Williams and Goode.

It would be good to bear in mind that the expressive group

is a relative term: there are groups that meet the function more

fully than others. The greater the involvement of the personality,

the greater the consensus on the greater number of objects, the

greater the fulfilling of the expressive function. Simmel presents

various points along the range, starting with the less expressive

and moving to the more expressive: interest groups, confidence under

more and less complex conditions, "acquaintance," XXXXXXXXXX

friendship and love, and marriage.[2]

Thus far we have been speaking of symetrical expressive

and affective relationships. What of the asymetrical in which there

is high dissensus on the valuation and/or evaluation of the relation?

Perhaps the most extreme case is that in which there is an imbalance

in the cognitive sphere also. If B is not even aware of the high

affective attitude of A, then A will probably initiate communication

in order to increase commensus. On the other hand, if the affective

relation is of a strong nature and is coupled with high insecurity,

A may choose to try to repress or sublimate the affectivity. This

problem of unrequited love has concerned the writer, poet, and songster

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[1]Goode, op.cit., pp. 493f.

[2]Simmel, op.cit., pp. 317-329.

for centuries, yet there has been very little systematic scientific
study.

Let us now turn to the non-reciprocal instrumental relation,
perhaps in number the most prevalent in modern society. It is
this type of interaction that requires the least amount of con-
sensus for integration and successful meeting of the function.
First, there probably must be cognitive consensus on the importance
of X_2 to A--at least enough so that B will concern himself with the
problem. There need be little cognitive consensus on the actual
nature of X_2 unless the particular circumstances of the relation
demand it. The veterinarian need not see the dog in the same way
that the master does. In fact, cognitive consensus might reduce
the properly meeting of each one's role. A may try to set up
barriers to consensus on the valuation and cathetic response to
X_2 for fear that B may sease to help him attain it if B finds it
of equal worth to himself.

Joint relevance instrumental relations of the first type are
of a multitude of types. The actual amount of consensus of what
type on what depends to a great deal upon the particular circum-
stances. I can here only hope to demonstrate some of the range.

One type of joint relevance relation that requires very little
consensus is that between underworld leaders and certain police
and political officials. That such groups were very successful at
achieving their goals is attested to by the wealth of some of the
people involved. That they were very adaptible is apparent from the
great difficulty in trying to crush the "rings." However, some of

major sources of the success lay in insulation and ignorance. No
one was aware of the nature of the entire organization. Perhaps
the chief thing that there had to be a fair amount of consensus
on was cognition of the external world, both what should be aquired
and what should be avoided. The cathetic, evaluative and motiva-
tional certainly varied from one person to another. If ever there
were a symbiotic relation and nothing else, this is it.

        The conditions and situation in a bureaucratic organization
are considerably different. Here one thing that there must be
consensus on is the nature of the organization and its hierarchy,
at least that part of the hierarchy close to one's own level.
Angell points out two functions of considerable consensus and com-
munication: First, leaders can become aware of red-tape and bottle-
necks and, second, the lower levels can act as a check on the leader-
ship.[1] However, it is interesting to note that often the possibility
for subordinates to correct errors made by supervisors depends upon
the supervisors ignorance of what actually is being done. Rose
Coser points out some other functions of insulation.[2] Too great an
awareness by a supervisor of the fine details of the work of his
subordinates may make the subordinates so concerned with pleasing
him that their efficiency decreases. Also, insulation prevents the
supervisor from becoming bogged-down in individualistic affective
relations that would decrease his ability to supervise the bureaucratic
whole in an efficient way. Insulation of the higher authorities also

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[1] Angell, op.cit., pp. 93f.

[2] R. Coser, op.cit., pp. 34-39.

protects him from rumor, hostilites of a personal nature, etc.
The variables and fine distinctions concerning consensus in bureau-
cratic structures have just barely been toughed upon. Both high
theory and empirical work are desparately needed. Rose Coser's
article is an excellent start.

Edward Gross' study of symbiotic groups referred to earlier
indicates that such relations are not dependent upon consensus on
a wide variety of subjects or basic values, as was the case with
the expressive groups studied by Newcomb. "When men became upset
about their jobs or air site living conditions, they needed and
sought help from others. The persons sought out were likely to be
men who had solved those problems ar could help the men in trouble
solve the problems (e.g., the single man seeking out the married
man), and as such were likely to be men unlike those who were seeking
help."[1] However, probably on a small group level such as that Gross
studied there was considerable cognitive, cathetic, and evaluative
consensus on the X_2 of the man in need. I am placing this example
under reciprocal relations since the person sought out probably had
needs of his met by the seeker, e.g., father-son surrogates. Whether
this be true or not, Gross was studying groups that were groups over
time to the extent that they comprised various types of informal
groups. Thus, in terms of the extensiveness and stability of the
system, these symbiotic groups were closer to joint relevance groups
(the median of them) than to most one-way instrumental relations, the
majority of which are probably of a very brief nature and to a great

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[1] E. Gross, op.cit., p. 177.

extent act as temporary integrating links for the larger system.

Finally, let me turn to an ecolggical instrumental group:
the neighborhood. In all of urban sociology there is probably no
other area filled with as many biases and opinions and as little
honest research and observation. I have explored these difficulties
elsewhere. An inner-city neighborhood today is made up of a very
heterogeneous group of people with diverse backgrounds, occupations,
interests, values, etc. However, as Jane Jacobs has pointed out in
her excellent book, many neighborhoods are highly integrated systems.[1]
There is consensus on the cathetic and evaluative orientation to
certain aspects of the neighborhood, such as the need for safety,
community support, etc. There are multiple chains of communication
to insure high cognitive consensus on facts about the neighborhood.
Twenty-four people can be concerned about the safety of one girl.
A store owner will do upwards of one hundred different services not
connected with the profit making operation of his store in one day.
There is enough consensus of all three types about these aspects of
a neighborhood that there is a purposéive building of barriers to
prevent too complete comtact between people that would involve too
much of their personalities and bring in extraneous issues that might
distrupt the ø̷t̷h̷e̷r̷ instrumental functioning. In many housing devel-
opments one has to become completely involved with other people or
not at all: most people chose the latter and the instrumental function
is not met.

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[1]Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities,
(New York: Random House, Inc., 1961), pp. 29-140.

The disruptive result of too great a knowledge about the other members of the neighborhood is one example of our X_3 diagram. Knowledge about the other persons private life, religion, values and attitudes on things other than the smooth integration of the neighborhood can be dysfunctional. And yet, unless there are special, quite severe, mechanisms set up, these extraneous issues of high importance to someone in the interaction are bound to enter in over time. Perhaps it is that desire for closure and the comfort of knowing that others think they way oneself does; perhaps it is just the natural curiosity; perhaps it is in the nature of inter-actions that there will be a tendency to s̸p̸e̸a̸d̸ spread into new areas of conversation over time--whatever the cause, X_3 is bound to enter in eventually.

The recent racial history of the United States provides a case in point. As long as the North and South were essentially different worlds only economically connected through impersonal chains, the two opposing racial systems continued. However, with increased travel and communication the inherent conflict between the views became apparent and of importance to each. Further, the increased inter-change met that the Negroes of the South could become more aware of the deprivations they were living under. Such factors are admitedly only partial explanations for the present interest, but they are factors.

On the other hand, one of the best ways to bring about increased consensus is to include the actors in the same perceptual and communi-cative network, as we have seen. Hence, the very cause of the friction

is, over a longer time span, one of the chief ways of overcoming the
tension. This analysis raises interesting procedural questions.
Should one attempt to increase communication before it increases of
its own accord and thereby attempt to speed up the process of arriving
at consensus?

As the reader may have noticed, the above developed skeleton
better fits goal-attainment instrumental activity that it does
adaptive. How much consensus is needed in a rapidly changing envir-
onment? First, the solidarity of the group must be assured. There
can be no question of loyalty in a time of crises. The number of
values basic to a system increases under stress: more issues are
ruled out of bounds. They are ruled out, not because of any intrinsic
aspect, but because the group must be assured of loyalty. The Jesuits
are completely dedicated to faithful obedience to the Pope. There
is no questioning of their loyalty. Because of this certainty, the
Jesuits have probably had more free range of thought and criticism
of the Church than any other group within the Church.

Once loyalty is assured, deviance may be tolerated, in fact,
prescribed for certain roles such as "star," "stranger," or "fool."
Such deviance is allowed because the individuals in the system have
in the past been rewarded for wide searching to come up with new ways
of meeting changed conditions.[1] The more lax the society, chances
are the greater its adaptibility. Leaders must be given certain
amounts of laxity, whether by consensus on the value or by mechanisms
of insulation or ritual (the latter especially among non-literate
groups),if they are going to be able to see the changed circumstances

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[1]L. Coser, "Some Functions . . .," pp. 176-81.

with enough accuracy to be able to lead the people in their adap-
tation. Further, a society that allows deviance will be in a
better position to accept any changes that are demanded by the
changed circumstances. Even Angell says:

> A loosely-structured society is marked by alternatives, by
> toleration, and by indeterminate associations. On the theory
> that ambiguity should make for easy entry of new traits, one
> would expect loosely structured societies to be less closed-
> minded than tightly structured ones.[1]

V

In this last section I would like to briefly mention some
other observations on consensus and conflict which, while they
do not necessarily fit the scheme proposed above and in fact help
show some of its limitation and "middle-range" nature, do provide
interesting "food for thought."

First, several writers have pointed to the fact that too
much consensus and mutual predictability may destroy a system
through ennei. Homans refers to satiation; Yrjö Littunen, to
social fatigue; Gouldner, to entropy because of habituation of con-
forming responses.[2] Lewis Coser quotes Yrjö Littunen as saying:

> "Persons who have to maintain a monotonous interaction pattern
> for a long period of time tend to become bored with each other.
> This phenomenon of social fatigue may be understood as a situ-
> ation where there is no excitement in the interaction to main-
> tain the cohesiveness, to increase liking."[3]

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[1] Angell, op.cit., p. 141.

[2] L. Coser, "Some Functions . . .," pp. 178f.

[3] Ibid., p. 179.

Simmel makes the same point as follows:

> Concord, harmony, co-efficacy, which are unquestionably
> held to be socializing forces, must nevertheless be interspersed
> with distance, competition, repulsion, on order to yield the
> actual configuration of society. The solid, organizational
> forms which seem to constitute or create society, must constantly
> be disturbed, disbalanced, gnawed-at by individualistic, irre-
> gular oorces, in order to gain their vital reaction and devel-
> opment through submission and resistance. Intimate relations,
> whose formal medium is physical and psychological nearness,
> lose their attractiveness, even the content of their intimacy,
> as soon as the close relationship does not also contain, simul-
> taneously and alternatingly, distances and intermissions. Finally,
> and this is the decisive point: although reciprocal knowledge
> conditions relationships positively, after all, it does not do
> this by itself alone. Relationships being what they are, they
> also presuppose a certain ignorance and a measure of mutual
> concealment, even though this measure varies immensely to be
> sure.[1]

Also, the lack of conflict may reflect an awareness of the

basic instability of the system and of the fact that little is

keeping it integrated. In reformulating and advancing an idea of

Simmel's, Lewis Coser writes:

> The absence of conflict cannot be taken as an index of the strength
> and stability of a relationship. Stable relationships may be
> characterized by conflicting behavior. Closeness gives rise
> to frequent occasions for conflict, but if the participants feel
> that their relationships are tenuous, they will avoid conflict,
> fearing that it might endanger the continuance of the relation.
> When close relationships are characterized by frequent conflicts
> rather than by the accumulation of hostile and ambivalent feelings,
> we may be justified, given that such conflicts are not likely to
> concern basic consensus, in taking these frequent conflicts as an
> index of the stability of these relationships.
> In secondary relationships, where we are initially justified
> in expecting relatively less intense conflicts owing to the seg-
> mental involvement of the participants, the presence of conflict
> may be taken as an index of the operation of a balancing mechan-
> ism.[2]

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[1] Simmel, op.cit., pp. 315f.

[2] L. Coser, The Functions . . ., p. 85.

Coser also points out that conflict is one way of acquiring knowledge about an initial stranger. The conflict provides a "test" of the other person and an opportunity to "know" him in a rather intimate way.[1] How many fights does a new boy to a school have to engage in or avoid in the process of getting acquainted?

In conclusion I would like to quote an observation of Edward Gross. In his study of the Air Force men, he measured the degree of group cohesion: how well the members liked the informal small groups that they belonged to. He discovered that four out of the five highly cohesive groups were symbiotic and four out of five of the moderately cohesive were consensual.[2] Gross concludes:

> In terms of the family of concepts of which they are members, symbiosis is probably generally stronger than consensus. What distinguishes symbiosis most clearly is that it implies a segmented relation and is least dependent for its operation on positive feelings. The relation between the shoemaker and the customer is symbiotic: each has something that the other needs-- service, on the one hand, and money, on the other. As long as those needs persist, and as long as each has no easy alternative way of satisfying those needs, then the two will be linked. This does not mean that they will necessarily like each other; it does mean that they will remain united whether they like each other or not. And therein lies the strength of the symbiotic tie. Con sensus, by contrast, depends wholly on the strength of positive feelings. Anything, therefore, which produces disharmony or a conflict of views is likely to break up a consensual group. It is, potentially, more unstable.[3]

Except for groups with very high cathetic and evaluative orientations toward each other that are in high consensus and are associated with consensus on broad issues and basic values, e.g., successful family life, I think Gross is close to the truth.

[1] _Ibid._, pp. 122f

[2] E. Gross, _op.cit._, p. 178.

[3] _Ibid._, p. 179.

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