

## FACTORS IN DISORGANIZATION AND REORGANIZATION

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It was only after experiencing all varieties of personal demoralization that Goethe's Faust finally emerged with a thoroughly and successfully reorganized personality. All keen students of the human personality have long recognized this intimate connection between organization and disorganization.

In the same way, students of human society are now pointing out, societies go through processes of organization, disorganization, and reorganization. The respective stages may of course be relatively long or short, and the extent and intensity of disorganization may be relatively great or small. But change there is bound to be.

Such an analysis has a profound twofold effect upon our attitude towards societies and their changes. In the first place, it keeps us from becoming too smug in any existing social organization and too exasperated about any period of social disorganization. In the second place, it defines our central social science problem as that of getting insight which will help the members of societies to avoid major catastrophes and to make possible more stable social organizations.

If we wish then to study social reorganization in any situation, let us say contemporary Hawaii, we will be repaid if we first focus our attention on the problem of social disorganization. What, in particular, do social scientists have to say to us about social disorganization? Now social scientists are notorious for their coining of new words for old meanings and their use of old words with new meanings. Nevertheless, through the maze of vocabulary, we can see a point of view towards the problem of social disorganization which we can usefully apply to any given situation.

In brief, this point of view is that social disorganization is essentially a conflict between human expectations and experiences. This is the terminology of Herbert Blumer in last year's issue of *Social Process In Hawaii*. Perhaps the best way to explain the point is in the terms used by others. Human beings have orientations to or perspectives upon their life situations. That is, they interpret their station in life, how people around them behave, what things happen to them, according to their *Weltanschauung*. In living, each person gradually acquires a picture of the world and of his role in it, a more or less integrated system of attitudes towards life and a conception of himself.

A person's picture seems to be acquired mainly by virtue of his being a member of a society. Furthermore, societies themselves have their cosmologies or pictures of the world, which they pass on from generation to generation through the family and the school. Societies also have their conceptions of themselves as collective entities. Carl Van Doren, in one of



his lectures last winter, attempted to trace the way the American people had built up a conception of themselves as a people and the way that conception had changed in the course of the crises in our history. In these Islands we sometimes speak of the Neo-Hawaiian people. Blood is relatively unessential in this conception. What is important is that people brought up here do feel that they have in common with all other *kamaainas* something which sets them off from the rest of the world, from all the *malihinis*.

The point is not whether these pictures are true in any absolute sense. In fact, it is possible for societies to have mutually conflicting pictures, and yet for each to continue successfully as a society, just as it is possible for the members of one society to be revolted by a food which is a delicacy in another. The central problem is whether the picture of a people harmonizes with the experiences of the people, and whether the pictures of the various parts making up a population mutually harmonize.

In Hawaii our population is composed of a large number of elements each with a different general picture of its world. In addition to the various ethnic groups or races we have the generations: first, second, and third generation immigrants, various occupational groups, religious groups, employers and employes, and so on. The multi-racial composition of the population has been particularly stressed by sociologists and is also the central interest of the writer. However, the other kinds of grouping may be increasing in importance. While the recent *Fortune* poll found that the vast majority of the American people conceive of themselves as belonging to the middle class, some sociologists are more and more applying the class concept to an analysis of American life, often with interesting results.

The actual situation in Hawaii which would affect the experiences of people here and therefore influence the pictures, has also been changing, as Andrew Lind so carefully describes in his *An Island Community*. His analysis is in terms of an economic frontier, which once wide open, is now relatively closed. The days of a young sugar and a young pineapple industry whose periods of greatest development lay ahead seem to be gone and thus far nothing of similar proportions seems to be in the offing.

It is possible, therefore, to restrict the analysis to the orientations or pictures as they react one upon the other. It is further possible to make an analysis, mainly economic, of the actual situation and to evaluate any possibilities for change. But no analysis would be complete unless it proceeded to trace the interaction between the changing orientations or pictures and the changing situation.

The first analysis, that between the orientations themselves, might be in terms of what Gregory Bateson calls *schismogenesis*. The process involved is really very simple and might be described as a conversation in attitudes making for an increasing gap between the participants in their attitudes towards each other.



Such a conversation of attitudes of suspicion sometimes constitutes for a once harmonious husband and wife the road to the divorce court. In our local situation, it seems to me that we are having this kind of a conversation of attitudes between those people on the Mainland and here who say that it would be dangerous to give Hawaii statehood because the large number of Japanese here will always remain primarily loyal to Japan. The answer of the local Japanese is to reaffirm their loyalty to America. But inwardly they naturally feel resentment that they, the Japanese, should be thus pointed out as a reason against statehood. From the other side comes the comment that the Japanese always cling to their institutions, their temples, their newspapers, their language schools; they will not be assimilated. The Japanese then say, "But why should we not continue our ancestral traditions if we are not really wanted?" You see, they are well on the road to becoming that which they were not at the beginning of the conversation, but only accused of by the other side.

How frequently I have engaged in similar conversations on the Mainland. Arguments were as fruitless in convincing the doubters as will always be the best arguments of our very excellent debating teams on the merits of statehood. Only when I was able to illustrate with the story of Masao, who had been my pupil in junior high school and who passionately loved America, and with the story of the two Hawaiian-born Japanese sisters whom I met in the Orient, and who were only too anxious to get back to our Hawaii, and who felt that in Japan "they" did things differently. We will advance our statehood argument considerably when we succeed in arousing within the Mainlander, as for instance, exemplified by our tourists, sympathetic appreciation of our Orientals. Can we not have a conversation leading not to schism, but assimilation?

The analysis of what there is in the present political, economic, and social situation pregnant with implications for further change is of course quite difficult. Not only must our internal situation be considered, but also, Hawaii's relationship to the nation and the world. Such questions as the following are at stake: To what extent can further technological and scientific developments be expected in the sugar industry? Will the number of laborers needed by sugar increase or decrease? To what extent will the type of labor needed by the plantations change? Can Hawaii become largely independent of outside sources for its food supply? What will be the nation's policy in the future in regard to sugar? Will Hawaii's military importance change? Can Hawaii develop an important "third industry"?

Such questions involve many imponderables. Here it is only necessary to recall their importance in any general discussion of reorganization in Hawaii.

To the sociologist, the most interesting task is to trace the interaction between human expectations and experiences in the actual situation. It seems demonstrable, for instance, that one's



whole approach to a situation is colored by one's expectations, and that what one gets out of it, that is, one's experiences, are therefore closely affected by the expectations. In Hawaii, the usual approach to the problem of the industrial future of the Islands and especially of the growing generation is entirely in terms of expectations associated with a flourishing economy of industrial agriculture. As a result, it is almost impossible to think about any possibilities except those of industrial agriculture, many of which have already been tried without success. Few people take the pains to discover and describe crucial elements in the present situation: agricultural industries whose best days *may* possibly be over, many other tropical areas with Hawaii's major industries and, in addition, access to a large and cheaper labor supply, a generation of local youth unwilling to repeat the experiences of their parents but eager for education and capable of skilled training. Should one also mention the large number of homeless refugees who possess highly useful skills which they could teach? We have been thinking only of new agricultural frontiers. Can we not, with the magazine, *Fortune*, define our frontiers with greater imagination?

Not only should we trace the influence of our expectations upon our manner of dealing with and experiencing a present situation, but we must look for an influence in the other direction of the elements in the present situation upon the expectations of our people. This becomes doubly important when we realize that these expectations will in turn affect the future course of events.

At present, the expectations of our rising generation are those developed in pioneer America. Education is for all and opportunities are boundless. These expectations have been naturally acquired in the public school system which was established for the children of Hawaii. Now, it is obvious that unless something will radically change in the actual situation, many of these young people will meet with bitter disappointments. Furthermore, it cannot be too much stressed that these disappointments will come not only to those who are preparing for the professions and other white collar positions, only to find, after a long and expensive preparation, that these fields are becoming over-crowded. These disappointments will come even to those whom our changing school curriculum is successfully re-orienting to the land, unless a proportion of the abler of these young people will experience here the full opportunities for advancement sometimes promised them, but which most of them now feel are the exclusive privilege of one racial group.

Our interracial situation is not unique. In other times and places, a number of races have lived together in relative stability. In considering some of these other places one is struck by the fact that a fairly stable interracial equilibrium can take a variety of forms. The traditional Hawaiian ideal of intimate interracial friendship and equal opportunities for all, or what the sociologist calls an open class situation, is not the only possible solution. It may be that the elements in our situation are such that in



order to attain equilibrium we must change the expectations of the various groups rather than the actual situation.

At any rate, the range of possibilities is from a rigid caste structure to a community in which, in spite of the existence of physical differences, no more importance is attached to "racial" differences than we attach to differences in stature. This almost complete indifference to race has in fact prevailed in most periods of history, as a number of sociological students of race are pointing out. In ancient Egypt, for instance, strangers were laughed at for their odd customs more than for their odd countenances. The modern French perhaps most closely approximate this attitude.

At the other extreme is the state of affairs in the American South. Here we have a strict caste definition of race. A person known to have Negro blood, no matter how light in color, is categorically classified with the inferior caste. Intermarriage between the castes is forbidden. Members of each caste learn and live up to a strict interracial etiquette. There is actually some evidence that the Negroes in the South are better adjusted, because their expectations conform with the actual state of affairs, than the Northern Negroes, whose expectations are changing so that they feel discrimination is a caste set-up.

In Brazil, we have an intermediate form. Robert Park and his student, Donald Pierson, have been interested in the conditions there, and the latter has completed an intensive research project. In Brazil there is a large amount of Negro blood. However, in the minds of the people, class is a more important distinction than race. It is true, most full-blooded Negroes belong to the lowest class, and most pure-blooded Portuguese belong to the highest class. But the important point is that there are exceptions and these exceptions are not frowned upon. It is a not too rare occurrence for a person with Negro blood to reach the highest rung of the social ladder. Likewise, light persons are at the bottom. The situation in Brazil is described as stable.

In summary, then, we may say that in order to analyze the elements in a given situation making for disorganization, one must study the interaction among the expectations of the various groups of the population, the potentialities for change in the actual industrial and political situation, and the interaction between the expectations and the actual situation. If such an analysis were carefully made for Hawaii, we might very plausibly discover a trend towards disorganization. The problem involved in stopping such a trend or in reorganization after complete disorganization is to bring expectations in harmony with the actual situation, either by changing the situation, or the expectations, or both.