

RANK EQUILIBRATION AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

by

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### 1. Introduction

The term "status politics" refers to a way of conceptualizing some aspects of political behavior, which at present enjoys a certain vogue among sociologists and political scientists. Briefly stated, this theory says that people vote the way they do, support certain organizations or political figures or express beliefs about and attitudes toward other groups or people because they are trying either to improve some rank(s) or defend some rank advantage(s) they see themselves as having over groups or people. "Rank" in this context refers to positively evaluated characteristics (achieved or ascribed) which people can possess to a greater or less extent. Education, Income, Authority (relative to some group), Seniority (in some work group for instance), Ethnicity (in some societies) are examples of ranks

In this paper we shall examine some of the research using the status politics conception in order to clarify some of the theoretical problems that arise when we try to use these conceptions in a systematic and consistent fashion. Our approach is quite critical, partly because the present paper has been written originally as a working paper parallel with a theoretical paper formulating a systematic theory of ranking processes (Zelditch and Anderson, 1963). We believe that a formal theory of considerable explanatory power can eventually be developed to account for phenomena we have called rank equilibration and which other people have called "status congruence" or "status crystallization". This theory will then include status politics as a special case.

The basic idea in this theory can be briefly sketched as follows. We assume that  $r_1, r_2, \dots, r_n$  are ranks in a given social system which includes two people A and B. A is consistently high on all his ranks, while B is high on some and low on others. Now, under some conditions, if B compares himself with A, a

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state of imbalance occurs. B may, for instance notice that although he has the same education as A, his income is considerably lower. He then feels relatively deprived. A comparing himself with B may feel guilty about the same situation. It is assumed that people, when confronted in comparison situations with states of imbalance occurring will often try, if possible, to act in such a way as to eliminate the imbalance.<sup>1</sup>

The theory, then, has to specify the conditions under which discovered inconsistencies actually will lead to imbalance and also with what the individuals concerned will try to do about it under varying conditions. We shall not further discuss these problems right here. Instead we will introduce some preliminary considerations as we discuss concrete material in the paper.

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<sup>1</sup> An important illustration is Homans' study of clerical workers. (Homans, 1962) His ledger clerks feel relatively deprived when they compare themselves with the cashposters. The ledger clerks point out that they actually have more responsibility and seniority but get the same pay as the cash poststers. The conditions under which imbalance does not occur includes role differentiation. A welder in a plant, for instance, does not normally expect a manager to get less pay than himself although the manager usually is less competent at welding. This and other conditions are discussed in the theory paper.

2. The Lenski Approach

Gerhard Lenski has pioneered the empirical work on rank equilibration, using data from survey data from the Detroit area. (Lenski, 1954). He worked with the following four rank dimensions: Occupational Prestige, (using the NORC rankings), Income, Education and the Prestige of Ethnic Group. (How the subjects were placed in each of these variables is described in Lenski, 1954, 406 f.) Comparing the ranks of different respondents on each one of these rank dimensions it is found that many individuals consistently have either high or medium or low ranks on all four dimensions, but also that there are individuals who do not consistently have the same rank on the four dimensions. Somebody will for instance have a low ethnic rank, but occupy a prestigious occupation, have a higher than average income and be college graduate. Somebody else has a low income in spite of having more than average education, occupational standing or ethnicity. Using a statistical procedure. Lenski divides his sample into two groups: (Lenski, 1954, 407 f) the highly crystalized who, by and large, occupy similar ranks on all four dimensions and the low crystalized. By dropping out some cases he sees to it that the high crystalized group has a somewhat lower average score on the four rank dimensions than the low crystalized group. Using vote for the Democratic party and responses to some opinion items as indicators of "welfare liberalism", Lenski then shows that in his data the low crystalized group tends to be on the average more liberal /than the highly crystalized one.

Democratic vote and liberal attitudes are taken as indicators of a desire for social change. Lenski's interpretations of his findings can most easily be understood if we consider a person with a low ethnic rank. Such a person may feel that others do not treat him with the respect he thinks is due to him

because of his high occupation, income and education. Getting rebuffed creates resentment in him. He may therefore desire to change the social structure in such a way that his ethnic group gets more respect. A minority rights liberal attitude results. This attitude may, presumably, become generalized to a concern for the rights of underdogs in general.

Irwin Goffman, a student of Lenski's tried to get a more direct measure of this desire for change by asking respondents to rank five power groups (State Governments, Big Business, Labor Unions, Businesses that are not large and the National Government) with respect to: (1) How much power they actually do wield in American society and (2) with respect to how much power they ought to have. The discrepancy between these two ratings, measured by Kendall's tau-coefficient, represents the magnitude of desired change in the power aspect of the social structure. (Goffman, 1957). Goffman's findings point in the same direction as Lenski's.

Lenski's study was replicated in detail by R. Sokel and G. Brennemeyer using data from Winchester, Mass. and San Francisco, respectively. Their studies did not show the low crystalized to be more liberal than other, however. Is Lenski's theory then false? We do not think so. Some theoretical considerations suggest that rank inconsistency under certain conditions will create a desire in people to change those aspects of social structure seen as responsible for the inconsistency. So we may suspect that the contradictory results found in the studies by Lenski, Sokel and Brennemeyer are due to an inadequate conceptualization of the problem

We propose to show that: (a) rank inconsistency may or may not have political consequences and (b) if rank inconsistency has political consequences for a person, the response chosen may be a right-wing or a left-wing one, depending

on the circumstances. Thus, there are no theoretical reasons why we should find that rank inconsistent as a group are more liberal than others. Let us consider a number of different cases of rank inconsistency.

Consider first a situation in which Ego has Low Education but a High Income and Alter has both High Education and High Income. No effects are going to result unless some comparison process between Ego and Alter occurs. Assume that Ego compares his ranks with those of Alter. Ego may feel that given the investment in Education he has made he is doing well, since he makes as much money as Alter who has invested more in education. This situation may, then, lead to a feeling of relative satisfaction on Ego's part. Therefore, Ego may feel satisfied with the social order and will not attempt to change it. It is conceivable, however, that Ego will feel sorry for Alter if he thinks that Alter by no fault of his own has not gotten the rewards that his education would normally entitle him to. It is not easy to predict if this compassion will affect Ego's feelings about the social order, though.

Let us now assume that Ego and Alter have the same income, but that Ego has lower Ethnic rank than Alter.

|       | Rank 1<br><u>Ethnicity</u> | Rank 2<br><u>Income</u> |
|-------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Ego   | Low                        | Same                    |
| Alter | High                       | Same                    |

We first consider the situation from Ego's point of view. We make the following assumption as part of what it means that Ego's Ethnic rank is lower than that of Alter:

Assumption: (Partial definition of "Ego has lower Ethnic rank than Alter")

If Ego tries to engage in diffuse social interaction with Alter then Alter will rebuff Ego with probability  $p$ ,  $p > .50$ .

If Ego compares himself with Alter he will focus attention on either the first or the second of his ranks. Focusing on the first, he may reason that "for a (Jew, Negro...) I'm doing quite well, since I make as much as Alter." But focusing on his second rank he will say: "I make as much money as Alter but Alter still won't accept me socially because I'm a (Jew, Negro....)" The first choice is likely to lead to a feeling of relative satisfaction. The second, on the other hand, will lead to a feeling of relative deprivation, (provided that Ego feels that his Ethnic group should be treated as equal to that of Alter).

What consequences does relative deprivation have in such a case?

A. Ego can cease comparing himself with Alter and people like Alter and instead interact solely with other members of his own Ethnic group. This response we term "insulation." In this way ethnicity eventually ceases to be a differentiating characteristic since everybody Ego compares himself with has the same Ethnic rank.

B. Ego can persist trying to interact diffusely with Alter and comparing himself with Alter, and in the course of this "atrophy" his Ethnic status. This is a form of individual mobility called "passing".

C. Ego can engage in activities designed to change the social evaluation given his Ethnic Group. This may lead him to participation in organized groups with such goals, such as the Anti-defamation League or the NAACP. In the course of this, he may persist trying to interact with Alter to some extent in order to try to change Alter's behavior toward lower ethnic groups.

Responses A and C can, of course, occur in conjunction, but both appear to be incompatible with B. There may be some question about how appropriate it is to speak of the situation as one involving a choice between A, B and C. Instead of saying that "Ego chooses between A, B and C" we might say that "one and only one of A, B and C will occur." We speak of a choice because we believe that

at least sometimes the individual makes a conscious and deliberate decision about which alternative to select.

All three responses may or may not lead to political manifestations. A person who chooses to insulate may acquire power within his ethnic group, and may be able to influence the voting power of that group to further certain group interests. This, no doubt, presupposes that the ethnic group is an organized community, to some degree capable of united political action, and not merely a statistical aggregate of individuals scattered all over the social system. Some American Jewish communities seem to have this characteristic. (See, for instance, H. Wentz, 195 , and Kramer and Leventmann, 195 ). The "passer" may decide to embrace the traditionally conservative Republican's political views of the higher ranking group he is trying to pass into, in order to appear "respectable," or he may withdraw entirely from political commitment. The civil rights combattant is likely to engage in political action to attain his goals. He may become concerned with the rights of other ethnic and non-ethnic underdogs as well, but the conditions for this generalization of attitudes to take place are not well understood.

Let us now look at the situation from Alter's point of view. Alter may reason either that (1) "I don't make any more money than he does but at least I'm... (high status Ethnic group)...", or (2) "How come that... (low Ethnic group) makes as much money as I do?" Choice (1) leads to relative satisfaction, and choice (2) to relative deprivation. Regardless of which choice he makes, there is a possibility he will react to the comparison by reasserting his Ethnic rank. If, for instance, general community rank contains the weighted components Income, Ethnicity,.....then Alter will try to increase the weight with which Ethnic rank enters into community rank. In politics this may create sentiments of "nativism," and antisemitism and xenophobia may be manifestations of this. If choice (2) is made initially in the comparison, then reassertion of Ethnic rank may lead to



hostility toward Ego in order to show him "his place." (Hostility directed toward Ego leads to social rebuff of Ego, and we have just seen that this may have affected how Ego responds after comparing himself with Alter).

Involved in this case is the "structural" fact that Alter cannot let Ego improve his ethnic rank without Ego losing some of his. A person of mainly Anglo Saxon descent in the U.S., for instance, has high ethnic rank only because Negroes, Jews and others have low. So if ethnic rank matters much to Alter (and it will matter a lot for some persons whose only high rank is the ethnic one) then attempts by Ego to raise his may become a serious threat to Alter. This results in resentment and "rank saving" behavior, including prejudice and hostility. The only way in which Ego can change his ethnic rank without conflict with Alter is if ethnicity ceases to be a differentially evaluated characteristic. People may of course still be proud of their ethnic identity, but they no longer use it as a basis for invidious comparisons. This seems to considerable extent to be happening in America at present. Empirical findings showing that lower class people are more in favor of discrimination against Negroes than higher class people is certainly consistent with the rank saving hypothesis. However, it is hard to tell whether reported prejudice is due to attempts to save rank rather than some other factor, for instance, <sup>lack of</sup> education. A well educated person is more likely than a less educated one to know that some of the beliefs underlying racial prejudice are in fact unfounded and may therefore find it impossible to hold some prejudiced opinions even though such opinions would be convenient as rank saving devices. A careful motivational analysis is required before we can impute rank saving as a motive behind bigotted opinions and behavior.

There are some data bearing on rank reassertion: Robert Sokel has studied the combination (High Ethnicity/Low Income or Occupation) and found that such people tend to support McCarthyism and to be more Conservative in their politics than lower income and occupation people in general are. The historian Richard Hofstadter

has used similar arguments to explain the rise of the Klu Klux Klan as a reassertion or rural Anglo-Saxon Protestants of their Ethnic rank in opposition to the more recently arrived Ethnic Groups (Hofstadter, 1955, 291 f-f). A number of papers in a volume on "The New American Right" made the same point about McCarthyism (Bell et. al., 1956). Consider now a situation in which Ego and Alter compare themselves with one another. Assume that Ego has a white collar job, and makes \$6,000 a year. Alter, we assume, has a blue collar job and makes the same amount of money.

|       | <u>Income</u> | <u>Occupational Group</u> |
|-------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Ego   | \$6,000       | White Collar              |
| Alter | \$6,000       | Working Class             |

Again, when Ego compares himself with Alter he may focus attention on either of his two ranks. He may say that (1) "Alter may make as much money as I make, but I have a better job" or (2) "Why if I have a better job (with more prestige) don't I make more money than he does?" Choice (2) is clearly more likely to make him feel relatively deprived than choice (1).

Assume now that Ego has in fact chosen the second response. Whether or not he in fact gets seriously upset depends on at least one factor; namely, what he expects his future earnings to be. If ego is 21 years old and just out of college and expects to rise gradually into higher income brackets he may not feel very deprived, especially if Alter is middle-aged and not likely to change his income upward in the future. On the other hand, if both Ego and Alter are middle-aged and if the relation between their earnings is not likely to change in the future, then Ego may come to feel that he makes unjustly less than he ought to in comparison with Alter. We can capture his difference in outcome in the proposition that if Ego finds his rank inconsistent in comparison with Alter he will get upset to the extent that he perceives that upward mobility in his lower rank(s) is blocked.

If the situation is perceived to be transient then Ego is not likely to get upset.

Let us now assume that Ego does in fact get upset when he compares his ranks with those of Alter. Then there are in fact several possible reactions that can occur. a. Ego may blame the unfavorable comparison in income on "monopolistic practices of the unions," and conclude that right-to-work legislation is called for. In pursuing this line of thought he may also expose himself to other political views propagated by advocates of right-to-work laws, and he may again through some generalization process, come to take a more or less general radical rightist view of political questions.\* b. Ego may decide that the workman is better off economically because of his union, and conclude that a strong white collar union is called for to look after the interests of Ego's own group. He may thus develop a very pro-union attitude and may also expose himself to other/ influences as well.

Which factors will influence Ego's reactions in this situation? We know very little about this question, but one "structural factor" seems certain to influence Ego's choice: Response b can occur only if a substantial proportion of the people who are in the same occupational class as Ego are willing to join a union. The conditions for this to happen are not very well understood (when identified they will form the basis for a theory of the emergence of social movements but according to our theory individual mobility expectations play an important role.

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\*Lockwood reports some British data on the attitudes of the clerks to the working class organization. "In a Gallup Poll (1956) roughly one out of every three clerks who were interviewed on the causes of recent strikes and on the policy of the government should take in this situation gave answers which clearly demonstrated their conception of the working class and trade unionism as a threatening and dangerous force which should be repressed." The Blackcoated Worker, London, 104, Footnote 2. Lockwood's entire chapter on the status problems of the British white collar workers contains many useful insights into status politics of the lower middle class in England. In his autobiography Ernst Wigforss, a Swedish socialist politician, gives excerpts from a letter containing a vivid eyewitness account of a meeting at which the rev. Stöcker a prominent leader in the pre World War I antisemitic movement in Germany spoke. Stöcker's speech blaming the Jews and the labor movement for all evils had a strong appeal among some lower middle class elements. (Ernst Wigforss, Minnen, 1914-1932, vol. II, Stockholm 1951, 27f.).

If a person experiences deprivation associated with his present status then the more stronger his expectation is that he himself will be able to move to a higher status with less deprivation, the less likely he is to combine with others to remove the causes of deprivation in his present status.

So if it is the case that the bulk of American white collar workers especially those in the younger groups, expect to be potentially mobile into higher statuses (or for women to expect their jobs to be temporary) then there is little basis for a vigorous union movement. A consequence of this is that a rank inconsistent middle-aged person who no longer expects to be mobile will find it hard to choose response b.

Among European white collar workers, on the other hand, individual mobility expectations are said to be less widespread and accenuated. Unions have consequently caught hold among white collar workers in England, the Scandinavian countries and France to a larger extent than in the U.S. This line of thought has been put forth by Lipset and Bendix in their discussion of social mobility (Lipset and Bendix, 1959). They make a great deal of differences in values and beliefs about social mobility said to exist between European countries and the U.S. although the actual differences in mobility rates between European countries and the U.S. are quite small. (This is Lipset's and Bendix' main thesis, but the data advanced to support it are far from satisfactory).

"Thus, where, as in the United States, social mobility receives positive encouragement, the existing opportunities for upward mobility probably help to sustain the acceptance of the social and political order, by the lower classes. But such opportunities probably cannot shake the distrust of the prevailing order that exists among lower class persons in such countries as France, where the dominant historical image is one of an unfair distribution of opportunities, in which little mobility occurs."

Lipset and Bendix point to several factors which in their view contribute to the maintenance of widespread mobility expectations among Americans: The absence of a Feudal past, educational opportunities, the presence of successive

waves of immigrant minorities who have taken over much of the manual labor from those that arrived at an earlier time and who are not assimilating into American society. A substantial increase in the standard of living has also benefited those immigrants who remained low class and their children, especially compared to the conditions they used to live under in the countries of origin.

Also, whether a rightist or a leftist response will occur in a rank inconsistent situation will depend on the cultural modes of thinking available in the milieu of the actor. If, as seems to be the case with parts of the American middle class, rightist modes of thinking, expressed in suspicion of the central government, vague fears of Socialism, admiration for the tough self-made man and so on, permeate the milieu of an individual, he will be more likely to select a rightist than a leftist response. Also, if strong external "enemy" like the Soviet Union in a way is identified with some of the symbols of leftism, such as socialism, state control and so on, then these symbols will take on an even more odious quality. It goes without saying that it is hard to get information about some of the individual's perceptions of these factors using conventional survey research methods.

Let us now summarize the main arguments presented so far.

1. From the three examples discussed it should be clear that a. rank inconsistency does not invariably produce a political response and b. that if a political response occurs it can be rightist or leftist or take the form of political apathy depending on certain not very well understood conditions.

2. We know little, if anything, about the factors governing which rank people will focus attention on. Also, we have assumed that Ego's choice of which rank he will focus attention on takes place in a situation where the alternatives are mutually exclusive. That is, if Ego focuses attention on Rank 1 then it follows that he does not focus on Rank 2 at that particular time. However, it may well be

that Ego at one time focuses on Rank 1 and at some later time focuses on Rank 2. Oscillations between different ranks over time are definitely possible, and this will possibly have interesting psychological consequences. Does it lead to sentiments of ambivalence toward, let us say, Ego's Ethnic group if he alternately tells himself that "for a (Jew, Negro...) I'm doing quite well" and "why, if I make as much money as Alter does he rebuff me?"

3. The theory remains rather indeterminate with respect to the response process following the occurrence of relative deprivation. For instance in case two above we list three possible results of feelings of relative deprivation on the part of Ego's with low Ethnic rank, but we know little about the determinants of the choice between these alternatives.

### 3. On Some Political Consequences of Social Mobility

Social mobility leads to discrepancies between ascribed and achieved ranks or between two achieved ranks held at the same or at two different points in time. A certain amount of empirical research has been done into the effects of mobility on political attitudes and status politics conceptions have been used to explain results in some cases. Some of the findings, we believe can be explained by the theory of rank equilibration, but it is also clear that this is by no means the only process operating.

Downward mobility. Let Ego be downwardly mobile, having been born in a family whose head had an occupation with more prestige than that of Ego. Ego himself has a low prestige occupation. If Ego compares himself with an Alter he used to know as a child whose parents had high prestige occupations and who themselves also have high prestige occupations, then he is likely to feel relatively deprived. The same will happen if Ego compares himself with an Alter whose father had a low prestige occupation but who himself has a high prestige one.

Another, but similar, situation arises if Ego's occupational career has taken

him down in the occupational hierarchy, let us say from a white collar to a working class occupation. If Ego compares his present rank with that he previously held he may feel relatively deprived. H. L. Wilensky who has studied the attitudes of downwardly mobile persons ("skidders") to the stratification order (Wilensky and Edwards, 1959) refers to such persons as "intragenerational skidders."

Wilensky and Edwards find that the skidders compared with other workers are more mobility oriented, both for themselves and for their children. Skidders are more likely to see the stratification system as relatively open, are more likely to identify themselves as middle class rather than working class, and are less in favor of labor unions. These attitudes are characterized as "conservative." However, at least one other American survey reports that downwardly mobile persons take on some of the attitudes of the class they move into. Eleanor Maccoby and her associates found that on questions dealing with whether the respondents side with the workers or with management in strikes, the downwardly mobile said that they side with the workers about as often as non-mobile members of the working class did. But in the same study it was also found that the downwardly mobile were more likely to prefer Eisenhower over Stevenson than both the non-mobiles in the class they came from the non-mobiles in the class they had moved into. (Maccoby et al., 1954). Strictly speaking there is no contradiction between these findings, the data came from surveys conducted at different times at different places. Still the data cast some doubt on the existence of any "automatic" tending for skidders to be conservative.

Can we interpret these findings using the rank equilibration theory? We assume that the skidder will attempt mobility in order to regain his former rank, either for himself, or for his children. But if mobility is blocked then one response available for the skidder who feels relatively deprived is to cling to the vestiges of his former rank, by refusing to become working class in politics and/or

way of life. This enables the skidder to say to himself that he is "not really" a worker. In order to show that this actually takes place, we would need data about Ego's perceptions and behaviorism in a variety of areas, including, of course, politics, leisure, styles of residence and so on. If rank saving were the only process operating, then we would expect to find that there is little difference between the skidder and the stratum he originally came from on these matters, especially if income can be held constant. We might even expect to find that in some areas, which it makes little difference how much money an individual has, like political opinions, the skidder would be even more conservative than the stratum he originally came from. In order to emphasize the difference between the regular workers and himself, a downwardly mobile person becomes middle class "with a vengeance." Something of this sort is, we recall, found in Maccoby's study in the preferences for Eisenhower vs. Stevenson. In the same study, however, the skidders were found to resemble the non-mobile workers more than the class they originated in at least one attitude dimension. Also, in a Swedish study it was found that the skidders in political preferences lie between the non-mobile workers and non-mobile middle class. (Anderson, 1963). This means that at least some of the downwardly mobiles are conforming to the modal norms of the working class. This is to say, that while there may be some skidders who hang on to the middle class political attitudes as vestiges of their former ranks, there is also a socialization process operating which tends to make the skidder take on the attitudes on the stratum that he has moved into.

In trying to analyze survey data about the behavior of mobiles using rank theory it should also be remembered that there are downwardly mobile persons who compare their own rank with that of other (non-mobile) workers. According to the theory these people should not get particularly upset. It may also be that some skidders are making more money as workers than they used to make in white collar jobs



or that their father's made. So much of the survey data we have examined are theoretically uninterpretable since they do not show with whom the skidders compare themselves and how they look upon and react to the rank discrepancies discovered in the comparisons.

Upward Mobility. Upward mobility has already been referred to in the discussion of the response called "passing" in section 1. Passing is mobility along the ethnicity rank dimension. But upward mobility most often refers to movement from one occupational prestige class to a higher one, either within the life history of one individual or between two generations of a family. Upward mobility is sometimes said to cause status anxiety. (Bell, 1962, ch.6) This anxiety can get generated through a rebuff process. Assume that Ego is socially mobile, and now occupies a high occupational rank. If he tries to associate with a non-mobile person of the same occupational rank and gets rebuffed and sees this due to, say, speech pattern or some other quality associated with his former low rank, he will presumably get upset and most likely try to obliterate the signs of the former status. Anticipation of rebuff may conceivably have the same effects. This leads to rigid "overconformity" with the norms of the new occupational stratum. Political conformity may be one symptom of this tendency. Therefore, upwardly mobile middle class groups will be non-Democrats at least as often as non-mobile members of the stratum they have moved into.

This line of thought clearly presupposes a number of things: a. Democratic inclinations will be perceived as a sign of low rank in Ego's new social stratum and/or that Ego believes this to be the case; b. political attitudes are visible enough so that others will detect that Ego is a political non-conformist if he remains a Democrat (in U.S.); c. the other members of the new stratum will react negatively to this; and d. Ego's political attitudes are either weak or he cares little enough about them so that they will change under the amount of social pressures that the new stratum extends.

The evidence available in the empirical literature, based on survey research in different countries, to test the prediction is quite contradictory. In the U.S., Eleanor Maccoby (Maccoby, 1954) found that the upwardly mobile preferred Eisenhower over Stevenson to a greater extent than the non-mobile members of their new stratum. On the other hand they were more likely to say that they were Democrats or had Democratic leanings than the non-mobiles in their new stratum. Maccoby's sample consisted of young people, and it is conceivable that the effects of mobility on their attitudes had not run their course yet. Still for the U.S., Lipset and Bendix report data from a survey conducted in 1952 that show that of American middle class men, those whose fathers were manual workers were Democrats less often than those whose fathers were middle class or farmers (Lipset and Bendix, 1959, 67). Key presents some data from another Michigan survey showing that there is virtually no difference between upwardly mobile and stationary white collar people on attitudes toward Domestic Welfare Activities. (Key, 1961 146). Upwardly mobile workers, on the other hand, turned out to be somewhat more in favor of such activities, and hence more liberal, than stationary workers. Upwardly mobile Europeans are more often radical (Social Democrats or Communists) than the non-mobile members of their new stratum, but less often radical than the working class they come from. (Lipset and Bendix, 1959, Anderson, 1963).

In evaluating these conflicting results it should be remembered that we can expect conformity only assuming the conditions a-c listed above. Many mobile persons presumably do not experience or anticipate rebuff for not being Democrats (in U.S.) or Socialists (in Europe). It would be interesting to specify the circumstances under which such rebuff is likely to occur, but that is outside of the scope of this paper. The surveys we have referred to do not contain any information on this question. We suspect that if conformity or, for that matter, resentment due to rebuff or anticipated rebuff would be hard to diagnose with the

conventional survey interview. These motivations make people defensive and they often operate on a subconscious or only partially conscious level. Thus the data on the effects of mobility in political orientations have a rather loose connection with the theory of rank equilibration as we have stated it.

It should also be remembered that there are other processes which may cancel out some or all of the effects of status anxiety. Some upwardly mobile people will feel so strongly about leftist political views that they will not change even when under social pressures to do so. Many of them will also have contacts with the milieu they came from and get influenced by them. Others will move up into strata such as the Academic World in which a Democratic party choice is very common. And some will not try to atrophy the signs of their previous rank at all but will acknowledge their low class origin, and use their rank to further the interests of that class. There are also the autonomous individuals, rarely dealt with in studies of political behavior, who maintain certain convictions because rational reasoning has convinced them that they follow from the facts or because they seem to be implied by some general value commitments they take seriously. For these people convictions may be quite contrary to their "objective" class interests or even to their first "gut reactions" to some question of political controversy. The processes involved here have essentially to do with socialization and the choice and maintenance of reference groups, and they are, needless to say, only partly understood. It is clear, however, that no serious research into the effects of mobility on politics can ignore them. A discriminating "clinical" interview searching for the "meanings" which the rank dimensions and symbols attached to these have for different upwardly and downwardly mobile persons might conceivably enable us to infer something about the interplay of the processes we have discussed, but the standard survey procedure is clearly inadequate.

### 3. Some cases from history.

Some historians have found the conceptions of status politics useful in constructing explanations. Writers on the situation of the Bourgeoisie in pre-revolutionary France have pointed out how the well-to-do merchants, manufacturers and other members of the middle classes failed to get social recognition corresponding to their wealth, and how this made them turn against the old social order. (See C. Brinton, 1957; E. Barber, 1955; Le-Fevbre, 1957). The adjustment of the guilded artisans to rapid industrialization should also provide a fruitful area for the study of the political consequences of downward mobility. In a study of the early Trade Unions movement in Sweden it is shown rapid urbanization during the 1870's and 1880's lead to a rapid influx of unskilled workers into the cities. These migrants were willing to work for lower wages than those that had been common for the journeymen in the cities. "This led to competition for work among the workers, which increased as urbanization progressed. The piece rate system became more and more used which created further inequalities in income.... Finally, the migrants had usually not had the same thorough training in the trade that the journeymen had and this created discontent among the skilled journeymen." Comparing themselves with the unskilled migrants, then, the journeymen could sometimes discover that they got less or the same pay, which led to feelings of relative deprivation. By creating organizations the skilled workers tried to bar competition from the unskilled migrants and to promote the interests of skilled workers.

It should be remembered, again, that factors like rank concerns are not sufficient conditions for the emergence of a social movement among the relatively deprived. For instance, if the discontented were scattered and isolated from

one another no movement would result. It has been noted that the segregated working class neighborhoods in Europe facilitated the growth of the union and socialist movements.<sup>1</sup> During the revolution of 1848 there occurred instances of artisans destroying machines which they feared would make them superfluous. (See, for instance, L.B. Namier, 1948 ). Here we shall discuss briefly two cases, the role of the British gentry in the revolution of 1640 and the rise of the Progressive Movement in the United States at the beginning of the present century.

### 3.1. The British gentry and the revolution of 1640.

During the last twenty years there has been a great deal of discussion among British historians about the role of the gentry in the English revolution of 1640. R. H. Tawney (1941, 1954) interpreted the revolution as a struggle for political power between a rising gentry class and the declining court nobility. Against this interpretation Trevor-Roper has tried to show that the gentry in fact did not improve its economic position between 1540 and 1640 but rather declined. The rebellion, then, is seen by Trevor-Roper as an attempt by the declining gentry to overthrow these parts of the social structure which were seen as the causes of their declining economic status (Trevor-Roper, 1953, 1957; Expec. 27-29). Trevor Roper's theory has a number of similarities with attempts by historians to explain other radical political changes, for instance with Hofstadter's interpretation of the rise of the American Progressive

<sup>1</sup> Tage Lindbom, Den Svenska Fackföreningsrörelsens Uppkomst, (Stockholm, 1938), 40f. Translated from the Swedish.

See Robert Michels, "Zur Psychologie der Anti-Kapitalistischen Massenbewegungen", Grundriss der Sozialökonomie, vol. IX, 247 ff., also Gregor Paulsson, Svensk Stad, Vol. 1, Stockholm, 1950.

movement prior to the First World War and with one standard interpretation of the rise to power of the Nazis in Germany.

The discussion between Tawney and Trevor-Roper centers partly around the question of how one assesses changes in the economic situation of the gentry during the hundreded years before the revolution. They agree that there was a substantial price and cost inflation during the period. The value of money went down with a factor of 2/3. At the same time, the crown demanded increased dues especially during the reign of James I. There were several ways in which members of the landed gentry tried to compensate for their loss of income due to the inflation and the increased levies.

1. They could increase the rents and other dues paid by their tenants. This was done and in some places produced unrest among the poorer classes. A peasants rebellion broke out in Midland in 1607, and radical demands for political change known as the "digger" movements grew up in response to the attempts of the gentry to raise dues and rents.

2. The gentry could rationalize their agricultural methods. Tawney believes that this was an important factor in the rise of the gentry that he thinks took place. (Tawney, 1941).

3. A landed gentleman who found that his income was declining could try to obtain an office from the king. This was done to considerable extent, but it became increasingly difficult, since there were not enough offices to go around, and because those who managed to get offices often were successful in making these hereditary.

4. Privateering against the Spanish colonies and shipping in the West Indies was a source of income for a gentleman who could equip a ship. This

avenue was blocked, however, when James I concluded a peace treaty with Spain, ending a long period of warfare between England and that country.

During the period a great deal of land which formerly belonged to the Church passed into the hands of the gentry. But during the reign of James I the crown began to protect the land rights of the Church, so that this way of increasing their economic status became blocked for the gentry.

Our theory now leads us to pose two separate questions:

A. The first of these questions is: Was there, on the average, a rise or decline in absolute terms in the economic standing of the gentry between 1540 and 1640 or was there may be no change at all? To answer this question we would have to instruct an index of income for representative samples of the landed gentry over the period. Into this index would go the incomes from land holdings as well as from the other sources 1-5 above. The sums would have to be adjusted for depreciation due to the inflation trend. Given this information one could then study variations in economic standing within the gentry class over given periods. For instance, even if there were a slight average rise of income there could still be large groups of landed property holders who did not benefit from the over-all improvement and among whom discontent with the political order could breed. The historians have recognized that there is a need for making distinctions between different parts of the gentry class: much of the discussion deals with the question of what happened to the gentry as a whole but Trevor-Roper's hypothesis about the causes of the revolution really deals with the role of the "backward rural gentry," and he recognizes that there were other gentry groups who did not support or were opposed to the revolution.

B. The second question is: How did the gentry or parts of the gentry do economically in comparison with other social strata they might have been comparing themselves with?

As we have said earlier in this paper, comparisons with other groups may very well create unrest among a stratum quite independently of how the stratum has fared in absolute economic or other respects. Thus, regardless of whether some portion of the gentry rose or declined in absolute income, discontent may have arisen if this group itself were doing less well over time than some other "relevant" reference groups, may be, including some other part of the gentry itself. There are some indications in Trevor-Roper's analysis that he is aware of the importance of the comparison process. He points out the fact that gentry holdings, especially in the counties near London were bought up by persons connected with the merchantile world of London. In terms of our theory, this may have "forced comparisons" between the gentry and these newcomers.... And it seems to be clear that the revolutionaries directed their resentment: as much against the commerical interests in London as against the court and the cavaliers. If it is hard to evaluate the data proposed to settle the question about the absolute rise or decline of the gentry or parts thereof, it would, presumably, be even harder to get data about with which groups particular parts of the gentry compared their own economic and social standing.

In Trevor-Roper's discussion of the coming of the rebellion there are some points about the effects of discontent. He states that the gentry discontent was merely "social tinder" and that some factors had to be present in order to ignite this tinder. Some discontented groups were Catholic, and not having access to any institutional means for expressing their desire for change, they resorted



to plots like the Gunpower Plot. The Puritan British gentry worked through Parliament for changes and violence broke out due to the irreconcilatory attitudes of King Charles and Strafford.

According to Trevor-Roper, then, the revolution of 1640 was a "rightist" revolt, and the revolutionaries had a political program which has some remarkable similarities with right-wing programs in our own time. The centralization of the political and commercial affairs of the country to London was to be abolished. An adventurous and expansionistic foreign policy was advocated and pursued. The past Elizabethian Age was glorified. (Trevor-Roper, 1957, 187, 201 f). This tendency to glorify the past is inherent in much "right-wing" ideology, and glorification of the past may, as Max Scheler tried to show in his classic book, be one expression of deep Ressentiment due to blocked ambitions in the present. (Scheler, 1961, 68).

There are a few points in Trevor-Roper's theory of the British revolution that would merit some further exploration in the light of our theory. First, Trevor-Roper says that the revolutionary gentry essentially failed to accomplish its ends and that the Restoration policies were essentially continuations of the pre-1640 conditions. The gentry, however, lapsed into quietism and conservatism after the Restoration. If the causes that created the discontent were still there, how did the quietism come about? How did the radical gentry become "the royalist 'young squires' of the Convention and Cavalier Parliaments, the squires of the October Club, the high-flying non-resisting tories"? (Trevor-Roper, 1953, 43). Trevor-Roper says that "all they gained by the revolution was, in the end, another court, other office-holders, other great financiers, heavier taxes." If the revolution proved to be a futile way of tackling the

very real problems of the gentry, did they attempt any other solutions to them?

Second, Trevor-Roper says that the situation of the British gentry was similar to that of the corresponding strata in France. (Trevor-Roper, 1953, 52). What, then, was the response of the gentilhommes? Why did no gentry revolution occur in France? And what was the substitute for a revolution in that country?

### 3.2 The case of the American progressive movement.

Hofstadter has used a "status politics" hypothesis to account for some tendencies in modern American history. In discussing the rise of the Progressive Movement during the decades prior to World War I, he points out that this movement was carried primarily by people of middle class status or higher. He first discusses the role of the old American wealthy families. These people, being used to having power and influence in local communities or in higher branches of civic life found themselves ousted from their positions by nouveaux riches business leaders connected with the emerging big corporations. The fortunes and incomes of the old elite were insignificant compared with those of the newly rich. Some resentment against the corporation elite developed among the old elite. At first this resentment was rather insulated, the "Mugwumps" had too little contact with the radical mass movements because of their political conservatism, adherence to laissez faire economics. The second generation of Mugwumps, says Hofstadter, largely abandoned this conservatism, and championed moderately radical ideas for social change, such as anti-trust legislation. (Hofstadter, 1955, 131 ff). The Progressive Movement was, then according to Hofstadter, partly an attempt by the old elites to curb the new plutocracy. Hofstadter does not really present any strict documentation for this thesis, however. The theory of rank equilibration predicts that, for

instance, if Ego as a member of an old wealthy family compared himself with the corporate plutocracy and if in doing so he focused attention on his own wealth and power compared to that of the corporate magnates, then he would be likely to feel Ressentiment. Given this we can predict that there was a chance that he would try to act politically in order to curb the power and the wealth of the newly rich. However, in comparing himself with the nouveaux riches Ego might instead have chosen to emphasize his lineage and the fact that his wealth was old. Or he might have chosen to ignore the newly rich altogether. As we have said before, we do not yet know much about how the comparisons of ranks come about, nor about how a choice is made between the several possible reactions to Ressentiment.

Thus we find again that the connections between the theory as it stands and complex political phenomena in the "real world" are somewhat tenuous.

That the rank equilibration theory used with caution capable of illuminating some aspects of the political process seems very likely, however, in light of the discussion in this paper.

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