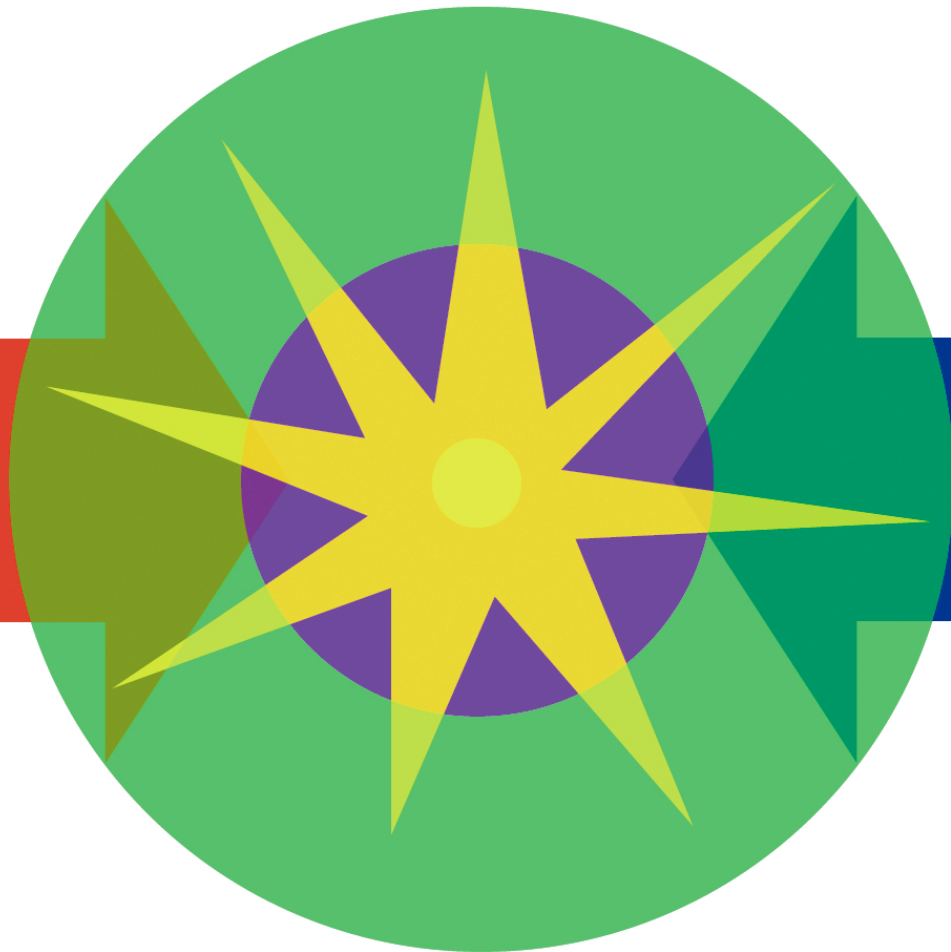


# **Convergence Theory**

## **Conflict Organicism**



**Joel C. Snell**

CONVERGENCE THEORY:

CONFLICT ORGANICISM

Joel C. Snell  
Department of Sociology

Dana College

This book of readings is composed of six chapters dealing with both the theoretical and methodological application of convergence theory. As noted by Ossowicki, functionalism and Marxism may have much to contribute to each other. Chapter one deals with the need for convergence theory and the individual(s) who might promote it or who have done so. Chapter two discusses the barriers keeping these two major theories apart from each other. The third chapter outlines how humanistic conflict theories have converged in various social sciences.

Chapter four and five are designed to measure convergence (or the lack of it) of demographic features and how to make clear a consensus of what is meant by our definitions. Thus, Marx and Parsons may come closer together toward a synthesis or accomodation.

The final chapter discusses the ultimate convergence of individual perception and social reality. Can ultimate reality and the social order that underlines it ever be created to provide ultimate meaning for the individual?

## CHAPTER ONE

### CONVERGENCE THEORY: CONFLICT ORGANICISM

#### Parsons Revised

As sociologists may recall, previous to Parsons, sociology was in a bit of a quandary. Sociological formalism, popularized by Park, Giddings, and others, was on the wane. Symbolic interaction still drew attention but was considered a micro level theory (Gouldner, 1971). Conflict theory was present (both in its right and left versions) but they were generally not nationally accepted. By 1950, Parson's Social System provided a new rationale, a new rhetoric, and an updated old model. Parsons, you remember, borrowed from Pareto, Marshall, and others. His presentation was, if one would like to look at it in the best light, mysterious. As Gouldner notes, young sociologists needed Parsons, as did the times. Indeed, in horn rim glasses, and argyle socks, they too were anti-communist...but what model could they use to counteract the Marxian one (Gouldner, 1971)? If one thought that the ecological

school was not comprehensive enough, nor micro level symbolic interaction too reductionist, what to do? Still, there was the right wing version of conflict theory championed by Spencer, Von Mises, Summer, and strong elements in the Republican and Democratic party. This model though was too moralistic, vulgar, and "main street" for "scientific" sociologists.

Now the Marxian model was comprehensive and attempted to account for political, social, and economic man. He had a following in the United States among some sociologists, but by the time of McCarthy these sociologists remained rationally quiet or harrassed.

Parson's model, organic boundary maintaining and homeostatic was made for the times. One not only had a model now (American Sociology), but a macro level one. Like the Marxian claim, it was scientific. Groups were "Systems." Hostility and struggle was "tension management." Social change meant new "goal adaptation."

Elaborations of this added vertical and horizontal systems, but the model was relatively complete (Warren, 1963). Now, one had a model, jargon, and theoretical accounts of all groups. Young Stevensonian liberals

could now trade blow for blow with Marxists, and yet not sound like right wing preachers, or police state advocates.

Like Marx, there were disciples and revisionists. Homans (1950) in some ways was a revisionist utilizing Parsons in social psychology of alter-ego interaction and small group behavior.

At the interdisciplinarian level, functionalism also found a home. Paul Samuelson (1961) was popularizing Keynes economic functionalism, and David Easton (1953) was working in a similar vein in political science. Dahl's veto group theory (1967) fit nicely into functionalism. Thus, life really was organic and interdependent in the great free enterprise system.

Many were happy with Parsons as he prevailed but without discomfort over Wrong, Rossi, Gouldner, Dahrendorf, C. Wright Mills, and others. However, they were costly battles, and by the middle to latter part of the 60's Parsons was on the decline. Sociology was bringing men back into their models, and poverty, injustice seemed to burden the functional model.

## Marx Again

As Harrington (1974) has noted, Marx was his own revisionist and to portray the Marxian camp as a homogenous one is just plain wrong. There are Mandel Trotskyites, Social Democrats, Soviet socialists, New Left Marcuse Activists, and others. Under the Marx Umbrella came the gentle but active Beatrice and Sidney Webb to Lenin and further to Kropotkin.

By the 60's, communism, was not providing all of its promises. Though all were wage earners, an autocratic ruling class appeared in all centralism in Hungary in the 50's and Czechoslovakia in the 60's. However, in Yugoslavia, West Europe, and other side pockets, Marx was being revised away from the Leninist model. Yellow, brown, and black people made their own modifications (Fanon, 1966) as did women (Greer, 1971).

Some spoke hopefully of convergence of ideology. Someday, perhaps, they thought, Russian state party officials would drink and distribute Pepsi-Cola. In complimentary fashion, the low profit, deteriorating passenger rail system in the United States would be nationalized.

Though the cold war did thaw a bit, events in Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Vietnam, and the overthrow in Chile may have all but ended convergence theory. And yet, model builders, philosophers, and sociological theorists are left with two macro theories (Marxism and Functionalism) revised and battered. Now long ago, there was an unholy marriage between the positivists and the organicists (Martindale, 1960). Forces of history and their premises finally made them part, but their union may have been necessary for the times. So, too, may a blend of functionalists and Marxists be a realistic fusion for these times of occidental culture's age of economic scarcity.

### Coming Together

Something that may not have been intelligible to American sociologists a few years back is happening. Marxist and functionalists are coming together if not cautiously. One can only speak briefly of Lenski, Moore, Milovan, Gouldner, and Ossowicki (1962).

Ossowicki's book for his time was revolutionary (or counter revolutionary) for the Marxist camp. It said that the functionalist had a message for the left and



thus further debate was sterile. Stemming from Ossowicki it appears that it is now time for a new school and a hybrid of the two major philosophies. Interim attempts have lessened the gaps, but the big book on the level of Marx's Das Kapital (1936) and Parson's Social System (1950) is yet to be written.

### A "New Sociology"

Supposedly, there is always something new in a discipline. Gesellschaft societies especially of the market variety thrive on newness if nothing more than to create obsolescence. This includes the "New Politics," the latest psychotherapy, and a "New Sociology." The time is ripe for a new major sociological theory which may be coined "conflict organicism" or some other hybrid label.

The book must become a classic within a short duration of publication. The first few chapters must be a sweep of sociological thought. It must be burdened by footnotes and have wide academic appeal. Later chapters must reveal the antecedents to both Marx and the functional camp. The last chapter should outline a new model, system prerequisites, and paradigms. It must

also contain the following:

1. hybrid terminology avoiding Parsonian polysyllabicism, and Marxist vulgarisms,
2. a concrete model blending ownership of the means of production and system level of equilibrium,
3. private and/or public ownership of the means of production and level of dysfunction,
4. degree of inequality and tension management,
5. ruling class ideology and functional integration,
6. the latent functionalism of social change in market and planned economics,
7. functional aspects of an early welfare state, social democracy, and democratic socialism.

### The Messenger

Who should put this all together? In these days, the message is not enough. There must be a personal and promotional thrust carrying the book. She or he must be: (1) quotable, (2) not vulnerable, (3) well grounded in theory, (4) tenured, (5) positioned in a well established coastal school, and (6) have good contacts with literary agents, scouts, book representatives,

federal agencies, media barrons, and national newsweeklies. For the press, they need to say alot in thirty very interesting seconds. They must be able to foster, and hold, diehards, followers, and opposition. They must be able to overcome jet lag, future shock, and absence from primary groups for extended periods of time. On the other hand, they need a little mystique about themselves and their writing or academic just won't buy. They must have a Ph.D.

Who might do this? Let's conjure a few mythical personalities and perhaps the reader might find a choice.

"S. Rita Hanks," 33, daughter of a family of four. She has a younger brother, a housewife mother, and a father who was a merchandising representative for a defense contractor. She got her doctorate from UCLA, and her vitae lists two books and some twenty articles. She now teaches at a small, well endowed, elite school in southern California. She is on the way up, and **tenure has been granted**. Her mate is a 28 year old **social worker** who had one child by her first marriage. The liberal faculty and students like her for she is their token gay. She is really bisexual, but many men

have been trouble for her. In some ways, the men she dated had a common underlying desire to humiliate and what was true of the conservative, pimply-faced football player she dated in '58 was true to the Black radical she lived with in '69; it was all the same. There was a latent, sadistic intention on their parts when they wanted her to come on down and get it on...on their own terms.

"Theo. Moses Brown," 40. His grandfather was a slave and later a sharecropper in Mississippi. His father was a coach and geography teacher at PS 41 in Cleveland. Theo was the only Black on the block, or the next neighborhood, to get his doctorate. His lectures literally keep the students on the edge of their seats. Twelve colleges competed for him. He has tenure at a major west coast university and he is vice president of the AFT. He keeps a bachelor pad. Thirty articles and one reader are to his credit. He has been a reviewer for Ramparts and Transaction Society. Two years ago, he was interviewed on the "Today Show" about poverty programs and the slow death of the OEO. He is black outside and inside.

"Constance and Jason Smythe," 54 and 56 respectively. Both are from a small but powerful little school in New England. The enrollments have not dropped at the school nor the ACT scores of the incoming freshmen. Everything that reflects a normative left-of-center lifestyle still survives there and the townies don't mind too much as the school is one of its major resource endowments. Both were active in the Peoples Party in 1972, and they had a well attended rally (including four CIA informants) to see Dr. Spock. A picture of Norman Thomas still hangs in Jason's office. They made it through the McCarthy hearings, and were called at a pre-hearing in the Rosenberg case. Generally there is a CIA informant in at least one class of theirs every year. Constance is in the Sociology Department and Jason is in the Philosophy Department, but it doesn't matter. They work and publish together. They have written and published ten books. They review for the New Republic and the Monthly Review. In 1974, they invited Ramsey Clark up for a fund raising gathering. Their life and their gatherings are similar to another couple in England years ago. Like Beatrice and Sidney

Webb's Friday's Hill, their small cottage six miles out of town overlooks a small unpolluted pond. They are child free.

"Mikael Edward Nathan," 35. "Mike" grew up in North Central Minnesota, a small town of Park Rapids that is over run by tourists spilling all the way over to Nevis, Laporte, and the surrounding area. Originally, he was born in south Minnesota (Lake Benton) but his parents moved further north for the job opportunities. He attended St. Olaf College and was excited by a young instructor who had just recently returned from Turkey. Mike is now on the faculty of a large private university in New York, heavily funded by the Rockefeller family. He is married to Pat. She is into "N.O.W." and Women's League of Voters. She works part time as a speech therapist, and they have two children, each having a different genital. Mike is really a good grantsman, and yet lately he has been heavily into theory.

His hair is just a bit longer lately and they both smoked grass once. Mike is a good speaker. They live in the suburbs, and two Black faculty members live nearby. Mike and Pat are active in the Unitarian-

Universalist church.

So there they are. They are out there, and they have to put it together. A postindustrial culture demands a super man or woman. It doesn't have time for a Weber to work out his neurosis over a period of five years. Nor can it take another Marx writing and yet must bury two of his children who died of malnutrition. Parsons or his facsimile won't do nor an angry Black psychiatrist like Fanon. American sociology is literally starving for a model for late capitalism, social democracies, and humanistic socialist systems.

The model will probably suggest that inequality is necessary, but to what degree? All this and more must be scrutinized, hypothesized, and elaborately and theoretically stated.

If Marcuse could bring together Freud and Marx, surely someone can cogently fuse Marx and Parsons. Are you there?

## REFERENCES CITED

- Dahl, Robert  
1967 Pluralistic Democracy in the United States: Conflict and Dissent (Chicago: Rand McNally).
- Easton, David  
1953 The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science (New York: Knopf).
- Fanon, Franz  
1966 The Wretched of the Earth (New York: Grove Press).
- Gouldner, Alvin  
1970 The Coming Crisis in Western Sociology (New York: Basic Books).
- Greer, Germaine  
1971 The Female Eunuch (New York: McGraw-Hill).
- Harrington, David  
1974 Socialism (New York: Prentice Hall).
- Homans, George  
1950 The Human Group (New York: Harcourt).
- Martindale, Donald  
1960 The Nature and Types of Sociology (Boston: Houghton Mifflin).
- Marx, Karl  
1936 Capital: A Critique of Political Economy (New York: Modern Library).
- Ossowicki, Stanislaw  
1962 The Social Structure (New York: Doubleday).
- Parsons, Talcott  
1951 The Social System (Glencoe: Free Press).
- Warren, Roland  
1963 The Community in America (Chicago: Rand McNally).



CHAPTER TWO  
CONVERGENCE THEORY: BARRIERS OF  
FUNCTIONALISM AND MARXISM

Increasingly, social scientists have been turning to the field of futurism and peace research. While some forecasters have taken pains to stay on safe ground, others have ventured less guarded projections. Gouldner (1970) for one, predicts major changes in sociology. A crucial extra-polation about the sociology of the future is a convergence between structural-functionalism, and Marxism. It may also be the thrust of peace researchers.

According to Gouldner, the younger sociologists, who are not as committed to the structural-functional models as older sociologists, will change the discipline in more democratic and humane ways. To corroborate this, he cites the efforts of radical caucuses, i.e., the Sociology Liberation Movement, and the young sociologists involved in reform movements. It is the young who are the most likely to develop Marxist models.

Moreover, with the growth of the Welfare State and the commensurate pressure to shift sociological orientations to social change, Gouldner (1970:368) says that some structural-functionalists, such as Smelser and Moore, have borrowed from Marx in analyzing social change. Peter Blau (1972:5) has also defended versions of "dialectical sociology." Radical sociologists and reformist activist sociologists, then, along with the left Parsonians who accept Marxism works, are presented by Gouldner as evidence of sociology's liberative potential.

Another possible indication of sociology's radical side is that academic sociology has developed alongside Marxian sociology in the Soviet Union (Gouldner, 1970:9).

However, closer inspection of Gouldner's arguments points to barriers which may stifle a convergence between structural-functionalism and Marxism. The authors posit that sociology, as long as it remains a profession existing within the university structure, may have difficulty utilizing a Marxian form of analysis.

One aspect of the profession---the graduate training period---serves the socialization function of moderating political ideology of the left. Merton (1968:328) describes graduate students as in-between reference groups---their old reference groups and their new one, the professional sociologists. While traveling in this no-mans-land, the aspiring sociologist has a rather insecure and uncertain status. This state of anxiety is heightened, since the new initiate is required to do certain rites of passage before he is accepted into the profession. Even though the graduate student's anxiety may be dysfunctional for him, the "degrouing" process is an aid for Functional sociologists since it serves to break down old group ties and to build new group ties (Merton, 1968:327). In effect, the graduate student is put through a positive status degradation ceremony.

Another reason why young sociologists and radical sociologists may be hampered in their move toward Marxism has been cited by Horowitz (1972:147) and Dixon (1971:60). Dixon, writing on the failure of the Sociology Liberation Movement (another one of Gouldner's

hopes), places the blame on the class position and class interests of professional sociologists. Class interests, also, constrain the young, aspiring sociologist who isn't necessarily radical, from taking a truly critical stance. As Dixon points out, a sociologist with the responsibilities of a wife, three kids, and a new car isn't likely to jeopardize his class position by taking on a radical posture which may inevitably lead to expulsion from professional sociology.

When Gouldner says that some structural-functionalists have incorporated Marxian analysis into their models, this may not always be the case. Some "Questionable functionalists," as some Marxist interpret them, may be trying to co-opt the left. By putting on a Kuhnian thinking cap (Kuhn, 1970) the convergence issue becomes clear. First, as Gouldner points out, structural-functionalism has reached a crisis stage and structural-functionalists, such as Smelser and Moore, have had pangs of uncertainty because their puzzles of structural-functionalism have not come out right. Second, competing models, such as Goffman's dramaturgy, Marxian analysis, and Garfinkel's ethnomethodology have emerged.

Third, according to Kuhn (1970:93), the final paradigm choice (either functionalism or another paradigm if one exists) is determined, in part, by techniques of persuasion rather than the cannons of logic (1970:94). In the present battle, then, the assertion by structural-functionalists that Marxism and other models fit into or will converge with the structural-functional framework may prove a maneuver to get other sociologists to accept the structural-functional paradigm (Collins, 1969:74).

The structural-functional work of Dahrendorf, Coser, and others have also demonstrated a gap between Marxism and structural-functional analysis. An oversimplistic, but not incorrect analysis of the positions of Coser, and Dahrendorf can be put this way.

1. A social system maintains itself via conflict.
2. Conflict is conflict within the boundaries of the system.

Implicit in such a stance, of course, are assumptions of welfare liberalism which leans more toward the functional model. So where does this lead convergence theory?

Academic sociology and Marxism are not bedfellows in Russia either (Hacker, 1972). Marxian sociologists, in Russia as in the U.S., are quite restricted. Sociology in Russia is very similar to U.S. sociology, since academic sociology dominates both. Another commonality is that the study of the existing power structure in the Soviet Union is uncommon (Katz, 1971:28). Instead, academic sociologists in Russia, like those in the U.S., focus on authority. Funds in Russia apparently go to projects with status, stabilizing orientations. From these observations, then, it seems reasonable to conclude that the Soviet government and the Soviet sociological establishment do not appreciate critical analysis any more than in this country. Moreover, the persistence of types of theory which are functional for the class positions of government and establishment sociology is likely.

However, if there are barriers, they may not be insurmountable. Futurists, whether it is Gouldner or someone else, may lead us to new questions about how convergence may occur and on whose terms, a functionalist Marxism or a Marxist functionalism.

REFERENCE CITED

- Blau, Peter  
1972 "Functionalism and Dialectics," The Human Factor,  
11, Spring.
- Collins, Randall  
1969 "Politics of Sociology," Berkeley Journal of  
Sociology, XIV.
- Dahrendorf, Ralf  
1959 Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society  
(Stanford: Stanford University Press).
- Dixon, Marlene  
1971 "The Failure of the Sociology Liberation Move-  
ment," The Human Factor, 10, Spring.
- Gouldner, Alvin W.  
1970 The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology (New  
York: Avon Books).
- Hacker, Sally  
1972 "Interview with a Polish Sociologist at Iowa  
State University," Winter.
- Horowitz, Irving Louis  
1968 Professing Sociology (Chicago: Aldine Publish-  
ing Company).
- Katz, Zev  
1971 "Sociology in the Soviet Union," Problems of  
Communism, 20.
- Kuhn, Thomas S.  
1970 The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago:  
University of Chicago Press).
- Medvedev, Zhores A. and Roy A. Medvedev  
1971 A Question of Madness (New York: Alfred Knopf).

CHAPTER THREE  
CONVERGENCE: HUMANISTIC ELEMENTS IN  
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES\*

It is difficult to know in the histories of numerous disciplines where their dominant direction is focused. At times, the drift may be multi-headed, both in terms of ideology and the specific subject matter in which both teacher and researcher are concerned.

One could make a case though that by the late 1950's, major forces in sociology and counseling psychology were never further apart. At least by the early 1960's, counseling psychology was experiencing new directions (Goble, 1970). It was a post Freudian era. Not only was Rogers maintaining prominence, but humanistic, existential, and gestaltian forms were emerging. Allport and Maslow were popular and Perls was in the years to come make significant advances. Allport's Becoming (1958), Maslow's Motivation and Personality (1954), as well as others were to emerge as classics. In many respects, the change was politically leftward and theoretically existential as well as an admixture of emotive and cognitive forces.



The "third school" message was that man could choose. He was not entirely bound by his environment as Skinner would view it nor by his/her genitals in terms of the Freudian perspective.

What became important was that an individual perceived a new world, listened to his "body language," and developed more of his potential. Where Skinner and Freud appeared increasingly status quo, the "Third Force" was reformist.

On the other hand, the 1950's and early 1960's, structure functionalism had a stronghold on sociology. Functionalism popularized by Parsons, Homans, and Merton, as well as others saw man as a social "unit." He was defined as an integral part of a large macrolevel homeostatic system. Social systems had prerequisites and actors (Parsons, 1951).

Individual interaction was defined in terms of "patterned variables" between "alter" and "Ego." (Parsons, 1951). These pattern variables were to account for most human interaction and they were to be modified by only time duration and specific locale.

At the small group level, "actors" judged each other in terms of cost benefits. Exchange theory of Homans maintained that these actors had essentially instrumental orientations toward each other. One was rewarded or punished, and there were regularities in terms of social "costs" (Homans, 1961).

Homans, descendant of the wealthy Adams family, had idolized fascist Pareto in his early days (Goulder, 1971). To him, individuals calculated, judged, manipulated, and rewarded others.

In "exchange" theory, Homans had blended functionalism and Skinner. It claimed to be scientific and "value Neutral."

Important to an individual's perception of self and world was the consistency of "expectations." Thus a "slave" was thought to be adjusted if his early socialization and later treatment were consistent with the norms that he had internalized. Indeed evidence could show the loyalty of the house slave to his or her master.

A family that was functional was also patriarchal. Sex roles were mutually exclusive along instrumental and

expressive dimensions. Socialization was a relatively one way process, and actors were shaped to adjust to the macro equilibrium system with it's attendant rewards.

If one could hold constant and bring to a halt the two disciplines in the years 1962-64, an individual could see marked polarities. Now not all sociologists were functionalists, nor were many in counseling psychology always connected with "Third Force," yet the major differences remained.

Times change. The authors are suggesting that the two disciplines have traveled down an arduous road toward each other. This is not to suggest homogeneity, but accomodation. In the end, they now stand closer together.

How has sociology gravitated toward counseling psychology? Listed below are current trends which suggest new directions in sociology.

- 1) Conflict sociology emerges. At the macro level numerous sociologists have raised questions which bloodied if not permanently damaged functionalism. To conflict, sociologists, "consistency of expectations" were not enough. Questions were asked about depersonalization in

the market place. There were earthy considerations about the treatment of wage earners, women, and minorities. These same issues were also being raised by Fromm and Maslow. In sociology, they were championed by Horowitz, Gouldner, and others.

2) Symbolic interaction has a reawakening. To this perspective, man is a symbol creature that makes choices. The individual self is composed of a spontaneous "I" that makes each individual unique. Mead (1934) in his conception of man leaned toward the "Third Force," general semantics, and tao psychology. The Puttney's Normal Neurosis (1965) combined many of these philosophies.

3) Reverse socialization is considered. Sociologists were discovering the impact infants have on families. Bogue (1968) notes that demographers view lifestyle of households dependent upon the age of the last child conceived. Reich (1970) noted the impact new generations have on systems. The young were no longer considered "actors" bent upon conformance.

4) Social change is redefined. To functionalists, change was thought to be a relatively orderly process as the

system moved from one level of equilibrium to another. However other sociologists now saw change as personally frustrating, caused by charismatic individuals and activists minorities.

If sociology changed, counseling psychology also made complimentary adjustments. They are listed below.

- 1) Sexual politics has a social mileu. If individuals could make choices, what was the arena upon which they took action? An individual therapist could help a woman or a homophile to discover their potential, and yet they found a social world of job discrimination, and lack of social acceptance. To recognize potential was not always enough. Individuals found themselves organizing in groups for therapy and as activists. Change was discovered also to be a social process.
- 2) Minorities are social as well as psychological beings. Developing human potential in the privacy of the therapists office was offset by the reality of the ghetto. The psychology of "blackness," "La Raza," and other phenomna associate with yellow, brown, and black people, became new to many therapists. Counselors now

wanted to know about these sub cultures. What about the tensions of "White towners," "Native Americans," "Asiatics," and others? Counseling psychology looked to sociology and anthropology for certain clues.

3) Social class and neurosis are considered. To the counselor, not only did the impact of ethnicity become important so did poverty. With new government programs, the poor were counseled. Sociologists could help with information about social background and problems the poor faced on a daily basis.

If what all this is to suggest is that behavior is human, and that disciplines reside in perhaps necessary but artificial boundaries. For counseling psychology, choices, cognition, and emotive phenomena are now mediated by social processes. For sociologists, they have brought mankind back into their models. They now look at human interaction as frustrating, demanding, and rewarding all in the same reality.

\*Special thanks for the use of this paper that was originally published in Psychology: A Journal of Human Behavior, February, 1976, Volume 13, #1.

## REFERENCES CITED

- Allport, Gordon  
1958 Becoming (New York: Harper & Row).
- Bogue, Donald  
1968 Principles of Demography (New York: John Wiley & Sons).
- Goble, Frank G.  
1970 The Third Force: The Psychology of Abraham Maslow (New York: Grossman).
- Gouldner, A.  
1971 The Decline of Western Sociology (New York: Prentice Hall).
- Homans, George  
1961 Social Behavior in its Elementary Form (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World).
- Maslow, A.  
1954 Motivation and Personality (New York: Harper & Row).
- Parsons, T. and E. A. Shils  
1951 Toward a General Theory of Action (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).
- Parsons, T.  
1951 The Social System (Glencoe, Ill: The Free Press).
- Puttney, Snell and Gail J.  
1965 Normal Neurosis (New York: Harper & Row).
- Reich, C.  
1970 The Greening of America (New York: Random House).

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### CONVERGENCE OF CONSENSUS ON PRIMITIVE TERMS\*

It is probably a problem common to many disciplines, but it is one that is particularly frustrating to the fields of social science, psychology, and education. How does each individual discipline define it's terms? As an example, the definition of "anxiety," "grade level performance," and other terms may also vary.

One may not at this time hope to gain consistency at the level of accounting, math, or the physical sciences. However, there surely must be a technique to improve the reliability of social science and education terminology. Of course, one may say that though we differ in subtle nuances in our descriptions, we all really mean the same thing? Do we?

These authors are suggesting ways in which the numerous disciplines may have a set of standard definitions without stifling the creativity of new writers of papers, textbooks, and other social science materials.

Listed below are methods to establish consistency among definitions. They vary from the most democratic to the most elitist.



STRATEGY 1: The national association of each discipline would compose a questionnaire listing all major definitions and a panel would devise the viable alternatives to a definition. The questionnaire would also list the responding individual's demographics in terms of her/his status in the respective field. As the questionnaires are tabulated, responses would be weighted to education level, number and quality of publications, and prestige of institution. The questionnaire would be sent to all in that particular discipline including promising undergraduate seniors, graduate students, and practicing education and social science in private and public enterprise.

Obviously, there are problems with this procedure. The questionnaire may be extremely long, costly, and the return rate may not be good. The postal cost alone may over power some organizations that have already experienced a considerable budget squeeze. Strategy may be very democratic but the cost and time factors may delay this project indefinitely.

STRATEGY 2: Utilize the same questionnaire, but send it to a purposive sample of publishing Ph.D.'s at

elite schools. The sample would include those from all regions of the country, all ethnic groups, and those of various theoretical persuasions. The questionnaire could contain four or five fixed choice questions or open ended questions of which a content analysis would be conducted on the answers.

The problem with strategy 1 and 2 is that it overlooks the important process of discussion and interaction among professionals. It may be that when a term is discussed, criticized, and pondered that a viable compromise may emerge. Some would also suggest that those involved in conducting the study would have too much arbitrary power in deciding or on the basic definition in the field.

**STRATEGY 3:** An open floor debate could be conducted at the regional and national meetings of which a consensus may emerge over the definitions. The problem with this strategy is how representative are those who attend the meeting? If the meeting is scheduled for the early morning, what about those talented ones that don't make the meeting for numerous reasons. Could a late afternoon meeting compete with other extracurricular activities

that occur at professional meetings? This strategy may be too exhausting, too unrepresentative, if not unproductive.

STRATEGY 4: Appoint a blue ribbon panel of Ph.D.'s balanced by region, sex, ethnicity. "Dress up" the panel with one or two master's degree people, and some applied practitioners from government and industry. Let them decide. Their final list would be voted upon in total at the national meeting or by secret ballot sent to all professionals of that discipline throughout the country.

The problem with strategy 4 is that it is terribly elitist. On the other hand, it is less expensive and could more efficiently grapple with the problem.

The authors favor strategy 4. One might suspect that an elitist proposal would come from those at the top of the heap in their discipline. Please lay those fears to rest.

Once the discipline has a standard set of definitions, how may they be applied? The officially approved definitions should be included in all introductory textbooks to receive the disciplines approval.

Secondly, all terms exams at the master's or doctorate levels should utilize this list.

Third, all major research should incorporate the terms or describe in a footnote, how they are at variance with the group of definitions.

The list should be updated at least every four to five years to reflect new knowledge and the times. Therefore, in one era, the definitions may lean more to one theoretical perspective yet another time period would have a flavoring of another perspective.

And after all the trouble, social scientists and educators would have some idea for which they stand, and be able to have a clearer grasp of the basic premises focused in primitive terms.

\*This article was written with William O. Wakefield, Department of Criminal Justice, University of Nebraska At Omaha.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PLOTTING CONVERGENCE WITH SOCIAL MAPS

#### SOCIAL ORDER

As Bauer (1966) notes, sociology contains numerous indicators about society without really describing the very social fabric of human systems. One can discover indices of Occupational Prestige Shifts, Crime Rate, Divorce Rate, Age Specific Death Rate, but not the relative positions of individual ranks or institutions.

As an example, what is really more important for the social survival of a system, the age composition of a society or the educational composition? Given that a system is industrial, can a nation remain viable with an age structure in which the majority of the population is over 65? Could it more adequately function even if most of the population had only an 8th or 10th grade education?

One also begins to wonder about the impact of such things as social class, or sexual status? Could a system be socially viable with all men? Could an industrial system be amenable to new growth with nearly all of the

population under the poverty line?

It begins to become obvious, no order is placed upon the very variables sociologists base their assumption. There is a social order, but how to assess it? Will the first ones now come last? All social and demographic variables have never been ordered relative to each other. Nor have the basic social institutions of human interaction. For a system to survive, what is most important? Families? Voluntary associations? Formal associations? Primary groups? The same questions arise, one knows that they are all important and interdependent, but important to what degree relative to other institutions?

#### ORDERING SOCIAL PHENOMENA

One is also confronted with the problem of ascertaining how to order social phenomena. Years ago, Weber (1968) and others established that social order is multifaceted including subdivisions of social, economic, and political.

Assuming that these three dimensions suffice for order of social organizations, how can one utilize them? If one were to list all demographic variables and ask a

national random sample to rank the variables relative to each other, respondents may answer on the social dimension, but the political and economic dimension may be more amenable to secondary sources, such as the Census Bureau or Statistical Almanac. This information would not only be easier to obtain but more valid.

### Ranking Social Institutions

To begin to form a social map, one must construct the variables to be assessed. They should include the following:

SOCIAL  
Institutions -

ECONOMIC

POLITICAL

---

Family	median annual income family household	median annual income contributed to campaign by per- sonal family to office holders*
Primary Group	not available*	not available*
Instrumental Voluntary Associations	median annual income of instrumental voluntary associations	median annual income contributed to campaign by instrumental volun- tary associations to office holders
Expressive Voluntary Associations	median annual income of ex- pressive voluntary associations	median annual income contributed by ex- pressive voluntary association to office holder
Primary Formal Associations	median annual income primary associations	median annual income contributed by primary formal associations to office holder
Secondary Formal Associations	median annual income secondary formal associations	median annual income contributed by secondary formal associations

---



<u>SOCIAL</u>	<u>ECONOMIC</u>	<u>POLITICAL</u>
Service Formal Associations	median annual income service formal associations	median annual income contributed by service formal associations
Quadenary Formal Association	median level taxes (direct) derived from taxpayers from three levels of government	median annual income derived by office holder by level of government
A) Federal		
B) State		
C) Local		

\*In these areas, one can only do a qualitative analysis of economic and political networks. As important as this is, it cannot be as easily researched. "Office holder" means state governors, and representatives, or senators (federal level).

## RANKING DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

For the social dimension, one should ask a national random sample of rank Age, Sex, Occupation, Education, Level of Income, Residence, Religion, and Ethnicity. This should tell sociologists, as well as other interested parties, the relative level of each status. In other words, what is most important? Age? Sex? How much an individual makes? The prestige of his occupation? After these ranks have been determined, gradations within each rank should be assessed on all three dimensions, social, economic, political (see Bogue, 1969).

	<u>Social</u>	<u>Economic</u>	<u>Political</u>
<u>Age</u>	0-12 12-21 21-45	median of annual income categories listed in "social"	median number of occupants of categories listed in "social" in political office*
<u>Occupation</u>	Professional-Managerial Technical Skilled Semi-skilled Unskilled	median annual income of categories listed in "social"	median number of occupants of categories listed in "social" in political office
<u>Sex</u>	Women Men	median annual income of categories listed in "social"	number of occupants of categories listed in "social" in political office
<u>Social Class</u>	upper-upper class lower-upper class upper-middle class lower-middle class upper-lower class lower-lower class	median annual income of categories listed in "social"	median number of occupants of categories listed in "social" in political office
<u>Education</u>	MA + BA High School + High School 8th Grade Below 8th Grade	median annual income of categories listed in "social"	median number of occupants listed in "social" in political office

SocialEconomicPoliticalEthnicity

Americans of North  
Europe Heritage

median annual incomes  
of groups listed in  
"social"

median number of oc-  
cupants listed in  
"social" in political  
office

Americans of South  
Europe Heritage

Americans of Third  
World Heritage

Residence

Urban-Central City  
Suburban  
Rural Non-Farm  
Rural

median annual incomes  
of groups listed in  
"social"

median number of oc-  
cupants listed in  
"social" in political  
office

Region

South  
Border  
New England  
Middle Atlantic  
Great Lakes  
Plains  
Mountain  
Pacific  
Southwest

median annual incomes  
of categories listed  
in "social"

median number of  
occupants listed in  
"social" in political  
office

Income

Upper 1%  
Upper 2-12%  
12%-40%  
40%-75%  
75%-100%

median annual incomes  
of categories listed  
in "social"

median number of  
occupants listed in  
"social" in political  
office

SocialEconomicPoliticalMarital  
Status

Married  
Single  
Divorced  
Never married

median annual incomes  
of categories listed  
in "social"      median number of  
occupants listed in  
"social" in political  
office

Religion

Roman Catholic  
Protestant  
Jewish  
Other Religious  
Non-Sectarian

median annual incomes  
of categories listed  
in "social"      median number of  
occupants listed in  
"social" in political  
office

## Asking the Questions

Of all the data, the social portions will probably be the most difficult to obtain. Questions must be posed so that they are understandable to less than the average laymen. However, it is possible. Numerous pollsters have taken rather complicated issues and are able to obtain relatively valid responses.

## Other Benefits from Social Maps

The social map could indicate to the observer the overall position of positions. The assumption is that all the phenomena discussed is theoretically related but only of ordinal quality. The authors lean toward the soft school of numbers and assumed that no other statistical manipulation can be used except that allowed by ordinality.

The most useful purpose of the social map is in panel studies over time sequence periods to assess the relative shifts in positions and those who occupy them. It is also important to know the opinions of key sub pockets of the population. Marxist sociologist would want to know how the elite ranked everyone else. Functionalist would want to see countervailing changes in classes and ethnic groups and changes over time.

Others may assume that the social map has strong, thus all phenomena is ratio. If that be the case, multiple regression and other statistical manipulations may be possible. In some ways, one could then have a social GNP.

It is of the author's opinion that this cannot be defended. However, one still has a very useful tool. A tool in which interested parties may chart the course of social groups, systems, and social change in areas that sociologists have rarely comprehensively operationalized.

REFERENCES CITED

- Bauer, Raymond  
1966 Social Indicators (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press).
- Bogue, Donald J.  
1964 Principles of Demography (New York: Wiley).
- Weber, Max  
1968 Economy and Society (New York: Bedminister Press).

(article will appear in an upcoming issue of the journal, Psychology: Journal of Human Behavior )



## CHAPTER SIX

### CONVERGENCE OF ARISTOTELIANISM AND INDIVIDUAL'S PERCEPTION OF REALITY

Inbued in science are the assumptions of Greek scholars who made their mark hundreds of years ago. Indeed their tradition is a long and honorable one with contributions from medieval occidental culture, the "Age of Reason" and contemporary academicians. The basic premise of Aristotelianism is the thrust of logical-positivism. It assumes that phenomena is recurring, knowable by the senses, and classifiable by laws of identity, non-contradiction, and mutual exclusivity. In terms of macro level considerations of society, this form of "realism" is indeed germane. The salient features of this approach is to be able to quantify and index social behavior. Statistics are taken on infant mortality levels, gross national production, and current cropland yields.

However, not all concur that logical positivism is the most relevant to such important issues as individual perception, dyadic interaction, and qualitative studies of

subcultures and ethnographic research of cross cultures. Those who have raised the most questions in terms of realism (logical positivism, aristotelianism), are critics involved in Tao psychology, general semantics, symbolic interaction, and Third Force psychology.

Though their opinions are not homogenous, their general contentions are the following:

- 1) Social phenomena is unique to individual perception. Each individual's definition of the situation will direct his/her life in terms of their conceptions and beliefs.
- 2) For life to be enjoyed, non-cognitive processes of body language, affect, and predisposition are extremely important.
- 3) In terms of indexing social behavior, ultimately individuals are not classifiable. In the language of general semantics, Cow 1 is not Cow 2 is not Cow 3.
- 4) Though some non-aristotelians will admit to insight into individuals, many feel that ultimately the individual is in a solipsistic impasse. That his or her own verbal report is the only available information to work from the context of that interaction.

5) Though many critics will contend that empirical science may reduce bias these same people will also support the contention that science is not value free. "Value neutrality" at times, they say may even be harmful or detrimental to the subjects under study.

6) Last, non-aristotelianism seeks the humility of combining reason, empiricism, and internal nonquantifiable concepts under one academic umbrella. Thus, such terms as "self," "ego," and "culture" are viable as long as one does not reify them.

The questions that lie ahead for those who oppose logical positivism, is the ability to establish some consensus in reference to terms, baselines, and some standardizations. Indeed, in the years ahead there may be a convergence of quantity and quality, that may act as a synthesis bridging the empiricists with the qualitative oriented disciplines. A good example of this is the use of the "goodness of fit" test in statistics. The chi-square or the goodness of fit really applies hard interval numbers to nominal or qualitative categories. Without violating the uniqueness of the behavior that is observed, numerical quantification can be used on qualitative items.

Some standardization may also occur in observation techniques of case studies, and individual client work.

However, the ultimate question is the salient feature of uniqueness and categorization. For the author,

can only lean to the qualitative side, and support one American sage, who noted: "a life that is well spent is the summation of many single moments individually enjoyed."