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Ralf Dahrendorf: Social Structure, Group Interests, and Conflict Groups

INTEGRATION AND VALUES VERSUS COERCION AND INTERESTS: THE TWO FACES OF SOCIETY

Throughout the history of Western political thought, two views of society have stood in conflict. Both these views are intended to explain what has been, and will probably continue to be, the most puzzling problem of social philosophy: how is it that human societies cohere? There is one large and distinguished school of thought according to which social order results from a general agreement of values, a *consensus omnium* or *volonté générale* which outweighs all possible or actual differences of opinion and interest. There is another equally distinguished school of thought which holds that coherence and order in society are founded on force and constraint, on the domination of some and the subjection of others. To be sure, these views are not at all points mutually exclusive. The Utopian (as we shall call those who insist on coherence by consensus) does not deny the existence of differences of interest; nor does the Rationalist (who believes in coherence by constraint and domination) ignore such agreements of value as are required for the very establishment of force. But Utopian and Rationalist alike advance claims of primacy for their respective standpoints. For the Utopian, differences of interest are subordinated to agreements of value, and for the Rationalist these agreements are but a thin, and as such ineffective, coating of the primary reality of differences that have to be precariously rec-

onciled by constraint. Both Utopians and Rationalists have shown much ingenuity and imagination in arguing for their respective points of view. This has not, however, led them more closely together. There is a genuine conflict of approach between Aristotle and Plato, Hobbes and Rousseau, Kant and Hegel, and this conflict has grown in intensity as the history of thought has advanced. Unless one believes that all philosophical disputes are spurious and ultimately irrelevant, the long history of the particular dispute about the problem of social order has exposed—if not solved—what appear to be fundamental alternatives of knowledge, moral decision, and political orientation.

Conflicting philosophical positions must inevitably, it seems to me, reappear constantly in theories of science. Even if this should not generally be the case, I would claim that the philosophical alternative of a Utopian or a Rational solution of the problem of order pervades modern sociological thinking even in its remotest manifestations. Here, as elsewhere, philosophical positions do not enter into scientific theories unchanged. Here, as elsewhere, they pass through the filter of logical supposition before they become relevant for testable explanations of problems of experience. The sociological Utopian does not claim that order is based on a general consensus of values, but that it can be conceived of in terms of such consensus, and that, if it is conceived of in these terms, certain propositions follow which are subject to the test of specific observations. Analogously, for the sociological Rationalist the assumption of the coercive nature of social order is a heuristic principle rather than a judgment of fact. But this obvious reservation does not prevent the Utopians and the Rationalists of sociology from engaging in disputes which are hardly less intense (if often rather less imaginative and ingenious) than those of their philosophical antecedents. The subject matter of our concern in this study demands that we take a stand with respect to this dispute.

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Twice in our earlier considerations we have been faced with differences in the image of society—as I then called it—which correspond very closely to the conflicting views of Utopians and Rationalists. I have tried to show that, at least in so far as historical societies are concerned, Marx subscribed to an image of society of the Rational variety. He assumed the ubiquity of change and conflict as well as domination and subjection, and I suggest that this view seems particularly appropriate for the analysis of problems of conflict. In any case, it seems more appropriate than the Utopian view implicit in the works of Drucker and Mayo, according to which happy cooperation is the normal state of social life. Marx, or Drucker and Mayo, may not be especially convincing representatives of these views,¹ but the distinction with which we are concerned here is, in any case, not tied to their names. Generally speaking, it seems to me that two (meta-) theories can and must be distinguished in contemporary sociology. One of these, the *integration theory of society*, conceives of social structure in terms of a functionally integrated system held in equilibrium by certain patterned and recurrent processes. The other one, the *coercion theory of society*, views social structure as a form of organization held together by force and constraint and reaching continuously beyond itself in the sense of producing within itself the forces that maintain it in an unending process of change. Like their philosophical counterparts, these theories are mutually exclusive. But—if I may be permitted a paradoxical for-

mulation that will be explained presently—in sociology (as opposed to philosophy) a decision which accepts one of these theories and rejects the other is neither necessary nor desirable. There are sociological problems for the explanation of which the integration theory of society provides adequate assumptions; there are other problems which can be explained only in terms of the coercion theory of society; there are, finally, problems for which both theories appear adequate. For sociological analysis, society is Janus-headed, and its two faces are equivalent aspects of the same reality.

In recent years, the integration theory of society has clearly dominated sociological thinking. In my opinion, this prevalence of one partial view has had many unfortunate consequences. However, it has also had at least one agreeable consequence, in that the very one-sidedness of this theory gave rise to critical objections which enable us today to put this theory in its proper place. Such objections have been stimulated with increasing frequency by the works of the most eminent sociological theorist of integration, Talcott Parsons. It is not necessary here to attempt a comprehensive exposition of Parsons' position; nor do we have to survey the sizable literature concerned with a critical appraisal of this position. To be sure, much of this criticism is inferior in subtlety and insight to Parsons' work, so that it is hardly surprising that the sociological climate of opinion has remained almost unaffected by Parsons' critics. There is one objection to Parsons' position, however, which we have to examine if we are to make a systematic presentation of a theory of group conflict. In a remarkable essay, D. Lockwood claims "that Parsons' array of concepts is heavily weighted by assumptions and categories which relate to the role of *normative* elements in social action, and especially to the processes whereby motives are structured normatively to ensure social stability. On the other hand, what may be called the *substratum* of social action, especially as it conditions

¹This would be true, of course, for rather different reasons. Drucker and Mayo are rather lacking in subtlety, and it is therefore too easy to polemicize against their positions. Marx, on the other hand, is certainly subtle, but his notions of the "original" and the "terminal" societies of (imaginary) history demonstrate that he was but a limited Rationalist with strong Utopian leanings. Such mixtures of views really quite incompatible are in fact not rare in the history of social thought.

interests which are productive of social conflict and instability, tends to be ignored as a general determinant of the dynamics of social systems." (1, p. 136). Lockwood's claim touches on the core of our problem of the two faces of society—although his formulation does not, perhaps, succeed in exposing the problem with sufficient clarity.

It is certainly true that the work of Parsons displays a conspicuous bias in favor of analysis in terms of values and norms. It is equally true that many of those who have been concerned with problems of conflict rather than of stability have tended to emphasize not the normative but the institutional aspects of social structure. The work of Marx is a case in point. Probably, this difference in emphasis is no accident. It is nevertheless as such irrelevant to an understanding of or adoption of the alternative images of society which pervade political thought and sociological theory. The alternative between "normative elements in social action" and a factual "substratum of social action," which Lockwood takes over from the work of Renner, in fact indicates two levels of the analysis of social structure which are in no way contradictory. There is no theoretical reason why Talcott Parsons should not have supplemented (as indeed he occasionally does) his analysis of normative integration by an analysis of the integration of social systems in terms of their institutional substratum. However we look at social structure, it always presents itself as composed of a moral and a factual, a normative and an institutional, level or, in the doubtful terms of Marx, a superstructure and a substratum. The investigator is free to choose which of these levels he wants to emphasize more strongly—although he may be well-advised, in the interest of clarity as well as of comprehensiveness of his analysis, not to stress one of these levels to the exclusion of the other.

At the same time, there is an important element of genuine critique in Lockwood's objection to Parsons. When Lockwood contrasts sta-

bility and instability, integration and conflict, equilibrium and disequilibrium, values and interests, he puts his finger on a real alternative of thought, and one of which Parsons has apparently not been sufficiently aware. For of two equivalent models of society, Parsons has throughout his work recognized only one, the Utopian or integration theory of society. His "array of concepts" is therefore incapable of coping with those problems with which Lockwood is concerned in his critical essay, and which constitute the subject matter of the present study.

For purposes of exposition it seems useful to reduce each of the two faces of society to a small number of basic tenets, even if this involves some degree of oversimplification as well as overstatement. The integration theory of society, as displayed by the work of Parsons and other structural-functionalists, is founded on a number of assumptions of the following type:

1. Every society is a relatively persistent, stable structure of elements.
2. Every society is a well-integrated structure of elements.
3. Every element in a society has a function, i.e., renders a contribution to its maintenance as a system.
4. Every functioning social structure is based on a consensus of values among its members.

In varying forms, these elements of (1) stability, (2) integration, (3) functional coordination, and (4) consensus recur in all structural-functional approaches to the study of social structure. They are, to be sure, usually accompanied by protestations to the effect that stability, integration, functional coordination, and consensus are only "relatively" generalized. Moreover, these assumptions are not metaphysical propositions about the essence of society; they are merely assumptions for purposes of scientific analysis. As such, however, they constitute a

coherent view of the social process² which enables us to comprehend many problems of social reality.

However, it is abundantly clear that the integration approach to social analysis does not enable us to comprehend all problems of social reality. Let us look at two undeniably sociological problems of the contemporary world which demand explanation. (1) In recent years, an increasing number of industrial and commercial enterprises have introduced the position of personnel manager to cope with matters of hiring and firing, advice to employees, etc. Why? And: what are the consequences of the introduction of this new position? (2) On the 17th of June, 1953, the building workers of East Berlin put down their tools and went on a strike that soon led to a generalized revolt against the Communist regime of East Germany. Why? And: what are the consequences of this uprising? From the point of view of the integration model of society, the first of these problems is susceptible of a satisfactory solution. A special position to cope with personnel questions is functionally required by large enterprises in an age of rationalization and "social ethic"; the introduction of this position adapts the enterprise to the values of the surrounding society; its consequence is therefore of an integrative and stabilizing nature. But what about the second problem? Evidently, the uprising of the 17th of June is neither due to nor productive of integration in East German society. It documents and produces not stability, but instability. It contributes to the disruption, not the maintenance,

of the existing system. It testifies to dissensus rather than consensus. The integration model tells us little more than that there are certain "strains" in the "system." In fact, in order to cope with problems of this kind we have to replace the integration theory of society by a different and, in many ways, contradictory model.

What I have called the coercion theory of society can also be reduced to a small number of basic tenets, although here again these assumptions oversimplify and overstate the case:

1. Every society is at every point subject to processes of change; social change is ubiquitous.
2. Every society displays at every point dissensus and conflict; social conflict is ubiquitous.
3. Every element in a society renders a contribution to its disintegration and change.
4. Every society is based on the coercion of some of its members by others.

If we return to the problem of the German workers' strike, it will become clear that this latter model enables us to deal rather more satisfactorily with its causes and consequences. The revolt of the building workers and their fellows in other industries can be explained in terms of coercion.³ The revolting groups are engaged in a conflict which "functions" as an agent of change by disintegration. A ubiquitous phenomenon is expressed, in this case, in an exceptionally intense and violent way, and further explanation will have to account for this violence on the basis of the acceptance of conflict and change as universal features of social life. I need hardly add that, like the inte-

²It is important to emphasize that "stability" as a tenet of the integration theory of society does not mean that societies are "static." It means, rather, that such processes as do occur (and the structural-functional approach is essentially concerned with processes) serve to maintain the patterns of the system as a whole. Whatever criticism I have of this approach, I do not want to be misunderstood as attributing to it a "static bias" (which has often been held against this approach without full consideration of its merits).

³For purposes of clarity, I have deliberately chosen an example from a totalitarian state. But coercion is meant here in a very general sense, and the coercion model is applicable to all societies, independent of their specific political structure.

gration model, the coercion theory of society constitutes but a set of assumptions for purposes of scientific analysis and implies no claim for philosophical validity—although, like its counterpart, this model also provides a coherent image of social organization.

Now, I would claim that, in a sociological context, neither of these models can be conceived as exclusively valid or applicable. They constitute complementary, rather than alternative, aspects of the structure of total societies as well as of every element of this structure. We have to choose between them only for the explanation of specific problems; but in the conceptual arsenal of sociological analysis they exist side by side. Whatever criticism one may have of the advocates of one or the other of these models can therefore be directed only against claims for the exclusive validity of either.⁴ Strictly speaking, both models are "valid" or, rather, useful and necessary for sociological analysis. We cannot conceive of society unless we realize the dialectics of stability and change, integration and conflict, function and motive force, consensus and coercion. In the context of this study, I regard this point as demonstrated by the analysis of the exemplary problems sketched above.

It is perhaps worth emphasizing that the thesis of the two faces of social structure does not require a complete, or even partial, revision of the conceptual apparatus that by now has become more or less generally accepted by sociologists in all countries. Categories like role, institution, norm, structure, even function are as useful in terms of the coercion model as

they are for the analysis of social integration. In fact, the dichotomy of aspects can be carried through all levels of sociological analysis; that is, it can be shown that, like social structure itself, the notions of role and institution, integration and function, norm and substratum have two faces which may be expressed by two terms, but which may also in many cases be indicated by an extension of concepts already in use. "Interest and value," Radcliffe-Brown once remarked, "are correlative terms, which refer to the two sides of an asymmetrical relation" (2, p. 199). The notions of interest and value indeed seem to describe very well the two faces of the normative superstructure of society: what appears as a consensus of values on the basis of the integration theory can be regarded as a conflict of interests in terms of the coercion theory. Similarly, what appears on the level of the factual substratum as integration from the point of view of the former model presents itself as coercion or constraint from the point of view of the latter. We shall presently have occasion to explore these two faces of societies and their elements rather more thoroughly with reference to the two categories of power and of role.

While logically feasible,⁵ the solution of the dilemma of political thought which we have offered here for the more restricted field of sociological analysis nevertheless raises a number of serious problems. It is evidently virtually impossible to think of society in terms of either model without positing its opposite number at the same time. There can be no conflict, unless this conflict occurs within a context of meaning, i.e., some kind of coherent "system." No

⁴This, it seems to me, is the only—if fundamental—legitimate criticism that can be raised against Parsons' work on this general level. In *The Social System*, Parsons reportedly advances, for the integration theory of society, a claim that it is the nucleus of "the general" sociological theory—a claim which I regard as utterly unjustified. It is Lockwood's main concern also, in the essay quoted above, to reject this claim to universal validity.

⁵As is demonstrated most clearly by the fact that a similar situation can be encountered in physics with respect to the theory of light. Here, too, there are two seemingly incompatible theories which nevertheless exist side by side, and each of which has its proper realm of empirical phenomena: the wave theory and the quantum theory of light.

conflict is conceivable between French housewives and Chilean chess players, because these groups are not united by, or perhaps "integrated into," a common frame of reference. Analogously, the notion of integration makes little sense unless it presupposes the existence of different elements that are integrated. Even Rousseau derived his *volonté générale* from a modified *bellum omnium contra omnes*. Using one or the other model is therefore a matter of emphasis rather than of fundamental difference; and there are, as we shall see, many points at which a theory of group conflict has to have recourse to the integration theory of social structure.

Inevitably, the question will be raised, also, whether a unified theory of society that includes the tenets of both the integration and the coercion models of society is not at least conceivable—for as to its desirability there can be little doubt. Is there, or can there be, a general point of view that synthesizes the unsolved dialectics of integration and coercion? So far as I can see, there is no such general model; as to its possibility, I have to reserve judgment. It seems at least conceivable that unification of theory is not feasible at a point which has puzzled thinkers ever since the beginning of Western philosophy.

For the explanation of the formation of conflict groups out of conditions of social structure, we shall employ a model that emphasizes the ugly face of society. In the following sections of this chapter I shall try to show how, on the assumption of the coercive nature of social structure, relations of authority become productive of clashes of role interest which under certain conditions lead to the formation of organized antagonistic groups within limited social organizations as well as within total societies. By proceeding step by step along these lines, we shall eventually be in a position to contrast the rudiments of a sociological theory of group conflict with such earlier approaches as have been discussed in the first part of this study, and to decide whether the category of class is still a useful tool of sociological analysis.

POWER AND AUTHORITY

From the point of view of the integration theory of social structure, units of social analysis ("social systems") are essentially voluntary associations of people who share certain values and set up institutions in order to ensure the smooth functioning of cooperation. From the point of view of coercion theory, however, the units of social analysis present an altogether different picture. Here, it is not voluntary cooperation or general consensus but enforced constraint that makes social organizations cohere. In institutional terms, this means that in every social organization some positions are entrusted with a right to exercise control over other positions in order to ensure effective coercion; it means, in other words, that there is a differential distribution of power and authority. One of the central theses of this study consists in the assumption that this differential distribution of authority invariably becomes the determining factor of systematic social conflicts of a type that is germane to class conflicts in the traditional (Marxian) sense of this term. The structural origin of such group conflicts must be sought in the arrangement of social roles endowed with expectations of domination or subjection. Wherever there are such roles, group conflicts of the type in question are to be expected. Differentiation of groups engaged in such conflicts follows the lines of differentiation of roles that are relevant from the point of view of the exercise of authority. Identification of variously equipped authority roles is the first task of conflict analysis;⁶ conceptually and empirically all further steps of analysis follow.

⁶To facilitate communication, I shall employ in this study a number of abbreviations. These must not however be misunderstood. Thus, "conflict analysis" in this context stands for "analysis of group conflict of the class type, class being understood in the traditional sense." At no point do I want to imply a claim for a generalized theory of social conflict.

from the investigation of distributions of power and authority.

"Unfortunately, the concept of power is not a settled one in the social sciences, either in political science or in sociology" (Parsons: 3, p. 139). Max Weber, Pareto, Mosca, later Russell, Bendix, Lasswell, and others have explored some of the dimensions of this category; they have not, however, reached such a degree of consensus as would enable us to employ the categories of power and authority without at least brief conceptual preliminaries. So far as the terms "power" and "authority" and their distinction are concerned, I shall follow in this study the useful and well-considered definitions of Max Weber. For Weber, power is the "probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests"; whereas authority (*Herrschaft*) is the "probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons." (3, p. 28). The important difference between power and authority consists in the fact that whereas power is essentially tied to the personality of individuals, authority is always associated with social positions or roles. The demagogue has power over the masses to whom he speaks or whose actions he controls; but the control of the officer over his men, the manager over his workers, the civil servant over his clientele is authority, because it exists as an expectation independent of the specific person occupying the position of officer, manager, civil servant. It is only another way of putting this difference if we say—as does Max Weber—that while power is merely a factual relation, authority is a legitimate relation of domination and subjection. In this sense, authority can be described as legitimate power.

In the present study we are concerned exclusively with relations of authority, for these alone are part of social structure and therefore permit the systematic derivation of group

conflicts from the organization of total societies and associations within them. The significance of such group conflicts rests with the fact that they are not the product of structurally fortuitous relations of power but come forth whenever authority is exercised—and that means in all societies under all historical conditions. (1) Authority relations are always relations of super- and subordination. (2) Where there are authority relations, the superordinate element is socially expected to control, by orders and commands, warnings and prohibitions, the behavior of the subordinate element. (3) Such expectations attach to relatively permanent social positions rather than to the character of individuals; they are in this sense legitimate. (4) By virtue of this fact, they always involve specification of the persons subject to control and of the spheres within which control is permissible.⁷ Authority, as distinct from power, is never a relation of generalized control over others. (5) Authority being a legitimate relation, noncompliance with authoritative commands can be sanctioned; it is indeed one of the functions of the legal system (and of course of quasi-legal customs and norms) to support the effective exercise of legitimate authority.

Alongside the term "authority," we shall employ (and have employed) in this study the terms "domination" and "subjection." These will be used synonymously with the rather clumsy expressions "endowed with authority" or "participating in the exercise of authority" (domination), and "deprived of authority" or

⁷This element of the definition of authority is crucial. It implies that the manager who tries to control people outside his firm, or the private lives of people inside his firm, trespasses the borderline between authority and power. Although he has authority over people in his firm, his control assumes the form of power as soon as it goes beyond the specified persons and spheres of legitimate control. This type of trespassing is of course frequent in every authority relation; and an empirical phenomenon well worth investigating is to what extent the fusion of authority and power tends to intensify group conflicts.

"excluded from the exercise of authority" (subjection).

It seems desirable for purposes of conflict analysis to specify the relevant unit of social organization in analogy to the concept of social system in the analysis of integration. To speak of specification here is perhaps misleading. "Social system" is a very general concept applicable to all types of organization; and we shall want to employ an equally general concept which differs from that of social system by emphasizing a different aspect of the same organizations. It seems to me that Max Weber's category "imperatively coordinated association" (*Herrschaftsverband*) serves this purpose despite its clumsiness.⁸

In conflict analysis we are concerned *inter alia* with the generation of conflict groups by the authority relations obtaining in imperatively coordinated associations. Since imperative coordination, or authority, is a type of social relation present in every conceivable social organization, it will be sufficient to describe such organizations simply as associations. Despite prolonged terminological discussions, no general agreement has been attained by sociologists on the precise meaning of the categories "organization," "association," and "institution." If I am not mistaken in my interpretation of the trend of terminological disputes, it appears justifiable to use the term "association" in such a way as to imply the coordination of organized aggregates of roles by domination and subjection. The state, a church, an enterprise, but also a political party, a trade

union, and a chess club are associations in this sense. In all of them, authority relations exist; for all of them, conflict analysis is therefore applicable. If at a later stage we shall suggest restriction to the two great associations of the state and the industrial enterprise, this suggestion is dictated merely by considerations of empirical significance, not logical (or definitional) difference. In looking at social organizations not in terms of their integration and coherence but from the point of view of their structure of coercion and constraint, we regard them as (imperatively coordinated) associations rather than as social systems. Because social organizations are also associations, they generate conflicts of interest and become the birthplace of conflict groups.

I have assumed in the preceding remarks that authority is a characteristic of social organizations as general as society itself. Despite the assertion of Renner—and other modern sociologists—that in some contemporary societies the exercise of authority has been eliminated and replaced by the more anonymous "rule of the law" or other nonauthoritative relations, I should indeed maintain that authority is a universal element of social structure. It is in this sense more general than, for example, property, or even status. With respect to post-capitalist industrial society, I hope to establish this position more unambiguously in the final chapters of this study. Generally speaking, however, the universality of authority relations would seem evident as soon as we describe these relations in a "passive" rather than in an "active" sense. Authority relations exist wherever there are people whose actions are subject to legitimate and sanctioned prescriptions that originate outside them but within social structure. This formulation, by leaving open who exercises what kind of authority, leaves little doubt as to the omnipresence of some kind of authority somehow exercised. For it is evident that there are many forms and types of authority in historical societies. There are differences of a

⁸Parsons, in his translation of Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, suggests "imperatively coordinated group." Any translation of Weber's term is bound to be somewhat awkward, but it seems to me that the word "group" in Parsons' translation is false. Weber uses *Verband*, e.g., to describe the state, or a church—units of organization which can hardly be called "groups." "Association" is probably as precise an English equivalent of *Verband* as is likely to be found.

considerable order of magnitude between the relations of the citizen of classical Athens and his slaves, the feudal landlord and his villains and serfs, the nineteenth-century capitalist and his workers, the secretary of a totalitarian state party and its members, the appointed manager of a modern enterprise and its employees, or the elected prime minister of a democratic country and the electorate. No attempt will be made in this study to develop a typology of authority. But it is assumed throughout that the existence of domination and subjection is a common feature of all possible types of authority and, indeed, of all possible types of association and organization.

The notion of power and authority employed in the present study represents what Parsons in a critical review of C. W. Mills's book on the American power elite calls the "zero-sum" concept of authority. Parsons objects to this concept, and his argument provides a welcome opportunity to clarify our notion somewhat further and relate it to the two models distinguished above. "The essential point at present is that, to Mills [and of course to us in this study—R. D.], power is not a facility for the performance of function in and on behalf of the society as a system, but is interpreted exclusively as a facility for getting what one group, the holders of power, wants by preventing another group, the 'outs,' from getting what it wants." (4, p. 139). This statement is unobjectionable, and in so far as Mills really uses power "exclusively" in the "zero-sum" sense, I should tend to agree also with Parsons' critique. But then Parsons continues, in the same passage, to make the same mistake in the opposite direction, and to make it deliberately and consideredly: "What this conception does is to elevate a *secondary and derived aspect of a total phenomenon* into the central place" (italics mine). Not surprisingly, Parsons continues to point out what is presumably the primary and original aspect of the total phenomenon: "It is the capacity to mobilize the resources of the

society for the attainment of goals for which a general 'public' commitment has been made, or may be made. It is mobilization, above all, of the action of persons and groups, which is binding on them by virtue of their position in the society" (4, p. 140). A clearer exposition of the two faces of society, and of the untenable and dangerous one-sidedness of Parsons' position, is hardly conceivable.

It is certainly true that for many purposes of analysis, power or—as I should prefer to say—authority, both realizes and symbolizes the functional integration of social systems. To use a pertinent illustration: in many contexts, the elected president or prime minister of democratic countries⁹ represents his country as a whole; his position expresses therefore the unity and integration of a nation. In other contexts, however, the chief of government is but the representative of the majority party, and therefore exponent of sectional interests. I suggest that as in the position of the prime minister neither of these elements is primary or secondary, thus neither the integrative nor the disruptive aspect of authority in social analysis is primary or secondary. Like all other elements of social structure, authority has two faces—those, so to speak, of Mills and Parsons—and on the highest level of abstraction it is illegitimate to emphasize either of these to the exclusion of the other. Authority is certainly not *only* productive of conflict; but neither is it *only* (or even primarily) "a facility for the performance of function in and on behalf of the society as a system." If we are concentrating in this study on what Parsons would call the "negative functions" of authority, we do so because this aspect is more appropriate and useful for the

⁹This illustration is unambiguous with respect to the president of the United States. Elsewhere, the representative and the governmental functions are usually separated; in these cases I mean not the head of state (king, president), but the chief of government (prime minister, chancellor).

analysis of structurally generated systematic social conflicts.

In referring to the ugly face of authority as a "zero-sum" concept, Parsons brings out one further aspect of this category which is essential for our considerations. By zero-sum, Parsons evidently means that from the point of view of the disruptive "functions" of authority there are two groups or aggregates of persons, of which one possesses authority to the extent to which the other one is deprived of it.¹⁰ This implies—for us, if not for Parsons—that in terms of the coercion theory of society we can always observe a dichotomy of positions in imperatively coordinated associations with respect to the distribution of authority. Parsons, in his critique of Mills, compares the distribution of authority to the distribution of wealth. It seems to me that this comparison is misleading. However unequally wealth may be distributed, there always is a continuum of possession ranging from the lowest to the highest rank. Wealth is not and cannot be conceived as a zero-sum concept. With respect to authority, however, a clear line can at least in theory be drawn between those who participate in its exercise in given associations and those who are subject to the authoritative commands of others. Our analysis of modern societies in later chapters will show that empirically it is not always easy to identify the border line between domination and subjection. Authority has not remained unaffected by the modern process of division of labor. But even here, groups or aggregates can be identified which

do not participate in the exercise of authority other than by complying with given commands or prohibitions. Contrary to all criteria of social stratification, authority does not permit the construction of a scale. So-called hierarchies of authority (as displayed, for example, in organization charts) are in fact hierarchies of the "plus-side" of authority, i.e., of the differentiation of domination; but there is, in every association, also a "minus-side" consisting of those who are subjected to authority rather than participate in its exercise.

In two respects this analysis has to be specified, if not supplemented. First, for the individual incumbent of roles, domination in one association does not necessarily involve domination in all others to which he belongs, and subjection, conversely, in one association does not mean subjection in all. The dichotomy of positions of authority holds for specific associations only. In a democratic state, there are both mere voters and incumbents of positions of authority such as cabinet ministers, representatives, and higher civil servants. But this does not mean that the "mere voter" cannot be incumbent of a position of authority in a different context, say, in an industrial enterprise; conversely, a cabinet minister may be, in his church, a mere member, i.e., subject to the authority of others. Although empirically a certain correlation of the authority positions of individuals in different associations seems likely, it is by no means general and is in any case a matter of specific empirical conditions. It is at least possible, if not probable, that if individuals in a given society are ranked according to the sum total of their authority positions in all associations, the resulting pattern will not be a dichotomy but rather like scales of stratification according to income or prestige. For this reason it is necessary to emphasize that in the sociological analysis of group conflict the unit of analysis is always a specific association and the dichotomy of positions within it.

¹⁰There is one implication of the expression "zero-sum" which would be contrary to my thesis. Mathematically, it would be possible for both groups to have no authority in the sense of a complete absence of authority. I have argued above that under all conditions the authority of one aggregate is, so to speak, greater than zero, and that of the other aggregate correspondingly smaller than zero. The presence of authority, and its unequal distribution, are universal features of social structure.

As with respect to the set of roles associated with an individual, total societies, also, do not usually present an unambiguously dichotomic authority structure. There are a large number of imperatively coordinated associations in any given society. Within every one of them we can distinguish the aggregates of those who dominate and those who are subjected. But since domination in industry does not necessarily involve domination in the state, or a church, or other associations, total societies can present the picture of a plurality of competing dominant (and, conversely, subjected) aggregates. This, again, is a problem for the analysis of specific historical societies and must not be confounded with the clearer lines of differentiation within any one association. Within the latter, the distribution of authority always sums up to zero, i.e., there always is a division involving domination and subjection.¹¹

I need hardly emphasize that from the point of view of "settling" the concepts of power and authority, the preceding discussion has raised more problems than it has solved. I believe, however, that for the purposes of this study, and of a sociological theory of conflict, little needs to be added to what has been stated here. In order somewhat to substantiate this perhaps rather bold assertion, it seems useful to recapitulate briefly the heuristic purpose and logical status of the considerations of this section.

¹¹Inevitably, the qualifications introduced in the two preceding paragraphs are rather vague if stated merely in the abstract. They are, however, of the utmost importance for empirical analysis. By strictly postulating imperatively coordinated associations as units of conflict analysis, we are able to consider, e.g., the relations between industry and society as an empirical problem which allows of varying solutions in different historical contexts. Similarly we can, by this emphasis, regard subjection (and consequent deprivation) in several associations as a condition strengthening and intensifying conflict, but by no means necessary in historical situations. These and similar problems will become increasingly crucial as our investigation proceeds.

I have introduced, as a structural determinant of conflict groups, the category of authority as exercised in imperatively coordinated associations. While agreeing with Marx that source and level of income—even socioeconomic status—cannot usefully be conceived as determinants of conflict groups, I have added to this list of erroneous approaches Marx's own in terms of property in the means of production. Authority is both a more general and a more significant social relation. The former has been shown in our critique of Marx; the latter will have to be demonstrated by subsequent considerations and analyses. The concept of authority is used, in this context, in a specific sense. It is differentiated from power by what may roughly be referred to as the element of legitimacy; and it has to be understood throughout in the restricted sense of authority as distributed and exercised in imperatively coordinated associations. While its "disruptive" or conflict-generating consequences are not the only aspect of authority, they are the one relevant in terms of the coercion model of society. Within the frame of reference of this model, (1) the distribution of authority in associations is the ultimate "cause" of the formation of conflict groups, and (2), being dichotomous, it is, in any given association, the cause of the formation of two, and only two, conflict groups.

The first of these statements is logically an assumption, since it underlies scientific theories. It cannot as such be tested by observation; its validity is proven, rather, by its usefulness for purposes of explanation. We shall derive from this assumption certain more specific hypotheses which, if refuted, would take the assumption with them into the waste-paper basket of scientific theories. We assume in this sense that if we manage to identify the incumbents of positions of domination and subjection in any given association, we have identified the contenders of one significant type of conflicts—conflicts which occur in this association at all times.

As to the second statement, the one concerned with the dichotomy of authority positions in imperatively coordinated associations, it is not, I suggest, either an assumption or an empirical hypothesis, but an analytical statement. It follows from and is implicit in the very concept of authority that within specified contexts some have authority and others not. If either nobody or everybody had authority, the concept would lose its meaning. Authority implies both domination and subjection, and it therefore implies the existence of two distinct sets of positions or persons. This is not to say, of course, that there is no difference between those who have a great deal and those who have merely a little authority. Among the positions of domination there may be, and often is, considerable differentiation. But such differentiation, while important for empirical analysis, leaves unaffected the existence of a border line somewhere between those who have whatever little authority and the "outs." Strictly speaking, an analytical statement which states that there is a dichotomy of authority positions is tautological; but as this example shows, there are tautologies which are worth stating.

Having thus established the frame of reference and basic assumptions of a sociological theory of conflict, we now turn to its more specific elements—first with respect to patterns of conflicts between these groups.

* * * * *

"ELITES" AND "RULING CLASSES"

Our model of conflict group formation stipulates the existence of two opposed groupings in any given association. Each of these groups shares certain features, and each differs from the other by contradictory orientations of interest. Before concluding the abstract discussion of the model and the examination of some of its empirical consequences we may ask what, if anything, can be stated in general about the two groups thus distinguished. Independent of

particular empirical conditions, are there any features that characterize or otherwise distinguish the occupants of positions of domination and their interest groups from those of positions of subjection? It appears useful to discuss this problem with reference to the theories of three sociologists whose work is here representative and has heretofore in this discussion deliberately been mentioned only occasionally. I mean Pareto, Mosca, and Aron, whose conceptions resemble ours in several points. Of the three, Mosca takes the most explicit stand on the problem at hand, and his conception will therefore require particular attention.

The chief element of the model of class formation consists in the explanation of conflicts of interest groups in terms of quasi-groups determined by the distribution of authority in imperatively coordinated associations. We share this emphasis on authority structures with all three authors mentioned, whose work might therefore be described as the proximate origin of a theory of conflict of the type here proposed.¹² Since they argue in terms of authority, Pareto, Mosca, and Aron also operate with a two-class model. It is characteristic of all of them, however, that they concentrate their attention—unlike Marx, Weber, and many others—on the group possessing authority, the members of which occupy, in other words, positions of domination. We shall presently consider some of the implications of this emphasis on dominating groups for the analysis of subjected groups and of group conflict in general. In describing dominating conflict groups the authors in question use primarily two concepts. Mosca refers almost exclusively to the "political class" which, in the German

¹²To this list other names would obviously have to be added, among them, above all, Max Weber. However, Weber has failed to connect his theory of power and authority with the analysis of conflict. Contrary to Aron's, Pareto's, and Mosca's, his work is suggestive rather than directly indicative of the approach of the present study.

and English translations of his *Elementi di Scienza Politica*, has become a "ruling class." Pareto introduces for this group the much-disputed category of "elite"; however, he distinguishes "governing" and "nongoverning" elites (5, p. 222) and devotes as much attention to the latter as to the former. Aron has narrowed down the notion of "elite" to the "minority" that "exercises power" (6, p. 567); elsewhere, he speaks of "ruling classes." Without entering into terminological disputes, I propose to examine the general characteristics ascribed by these three authors to dominating groups and the validity of their analyses.

In their way of posing the problem, the approaches of Pareto, Mosca, and Aron entail at many points indications of the sociological theory of group conflict as we understand it. All three authors deal with the problem of inertia, i.e., the tendency of dominating groups to maintain and defend their domination. They also deal with the role of legitimacy in the maintenance or change of authority structures. Mosca and Pareto, in particular, emphasize the problem of social mobility to which we shall have to return. As to the psychology of conflict groups, their works contain many a useful suggestion. They discuss in some detail the formation and disintegration of "aristocracies" as well as other types of social change, basing their analyses on thorough historical documentation. If for the discussion of this section I select only five aspects of the theories of Pareto, Mosca, and Aron, it is because this selection is guided by the intention to combine a critical examination of these theories with some discussion of the general characteristics of dominating conflict groups.

(1) Even in his definition of dominating groups, Aron refers to these as "minorities." Mosca does not hesitate to elaborate this into the general thesis that the ruling class is "always the less numerous" group. The notion of an elite appears to evoke almost automatically the idea of the "chosen few," of a small ruling stratum. Thus, even Marx describes the

action of the proletariat as the "independent movement of the overwhelming majority in the interest of the overwhelming majority," (7, pp. 20 f.), and almost as a matter of course Geiger, in his graphical schema of class structure, (8, p. 43), represents the ruling class by a segment of the whole (circle) much smaller than the subjected class. That dominating groups are by comparison with their subjected counterpart often insignificantly small groupings is an assumption which to my knowledge has never been contested in the literature. Not all authors state as clearly as Machiavelli how small, exactly, these groups are: "In any city, however it may be organized politically, no more than 40 or 50 men attain real power" (see 9, p. 271). Mosca, in particular, supplements his political class by "another, much more numerous stratum including all those who are suited for leading position" (9, p. 329); but by this extension he merely obliterates his analysis without abandoning the minority character of elites. In fact, the assumption that in any association the number of those subjected to authority is larger than the number of those in possession of authority does seem capable of generalization. It seems hard to imagine an association in which the "rulers" outweigh the "ruled" in number. In every state, the number of cabinet ministers is smaller than the number of citizens; in every enterprise there are fewer executives than employees. However, this seemingly general statement requires qualification for industrial societies at an advanced stage of development. Today, one is hardly surprised to find that in many modern industrial enterprises almost one-third of all employees exercise superordinate functions. Delegation of authority in industry, in the state, and in other associations makes possible in industrial societies dominating groups which are no longer small minorities but which in size hardly fall short of subjected groups. We have earlier examined some of the problems of delegated authority and we shall return to this point. By way of

generalization, these phenomena justify at least the negative statement that it seems to be one of the characteristics of industrial societies that those who are plainly subjected to authority in imperatively coordinated associations of many types not only do not any longer amount to the "overwhelming majority" but actually decrease steadily. Pareto's, Mosca's, and Aron's thesis of a small ruling minority requires correction. Legitimate power may be distributed, if with considerable gradations of spheres of authority, over a large number of positions.

(2) Pareto and Mosca characterize dominating groups by a number of peculiar properties which are alleged to be necessary for a group to attain and successfully defend its position of power. Pareto emphasizes "energy" and "superiority" (5, p. 230), an "instinct of combination," concentration on the proximate, and similar "properties" (e.g., pp. 242 f.). Mosca goes even further; for him "the ruling minorities usually consist of individuals who are superior to the mass of the ruled in material, intellectual, and even moral respects, or they are at least the descendants of individuals who had such virtues. To put it differently, the members of the ruling minority generally have real or apparent properties which are highly esteemed and convey great influence in their societies." (9, p. 55). This kind of thesis illustrates that pre-sociological character of Mosca's analyses, i.e., the speculative recourse from social structures and roles to individuals and their "properties," which hardly helps our insight into social relations. Without the full consistency of the Aristotelian argument, Mosca approximates the notion that certain people are "by nature" rulers or ruled, freemen or slaves. This notion, however, in whatever variant it may appear, has to be banned radically and finally from the sociological theory of group conflict.

Whether dominating conflict groups are characterized by attributes and patterns of behavior other than common manifest interests is a question that can be answered only by empirical observation and in relation to specific

social conditions. This is in fact the question with which we have dealt above in terms of "class culture." It is certainly possible that there are societies in which dominating groups are also distinguished by patterns of behavior crystallized hypothetically in "properties"; but it is at least equally possible that the coherence of such groups is confined to the defense of common interests within well-defined units of social organization without significantly affecting other spheres of the behavior of the members of ruling groups. From the point of view of the theory of group conflict, the "properties" of individual group members are in principle indeterminate and variable.

(3) Mosca consistently derives from two untenable postulates—the minority character of ruling groups and the existence of a common culture among them—the conclusion that dominating conflict groups are always better organized than subjected groups. "The minority is organized simply because it is the minority" (9, p. 55). Like its premises, this conclusion can by no means be assumed; it is, rather, an empirical generalization, and one demonstrably false. Within the association of industry, for example, it would appear that there are greater obstacles to the formation of an interest group on behalf of the incumbents of positions of domination (because of the far-going internal differentiation of this quasi-group?) than is the case for the subjected workers. At the very least, we can say that we know of no point of view that would permit the postulate that a transition from quasi-groups to interest groups is easier for dominating than for subjected groups.¹³

¹³To clarify this problem fully one would have to consider all the conditions of organization. Thus it might be feasible to make an empirical generalization to the effect that in pre-industrial societies ruling groups were (above all because of easier communication) provided with better conditions than subjected groups. In industrial societies, however, this clearly does not hold.

(4) Mosca, and to some extent Pareto, means by the name "ruling class" only the incumbents of positions of domination in the political society. Pareto recognizes elites in all spheres and associations of society, but "governing elites" are for him politically governing elites. Mosca limits the field of his analyses by the very concept of "political class." It is only Aron who intimates an extension of this approach by emphasizing "the distinction between the political power of classes, founded on the position occupied in the state by their representatives, and their economic power, determined by their place in the process of production" (6, p. 572). Yet Aron also presupposes the unity of a class ruling in all spheres in which authority is exercised. In so far as this presupposition implies a restriction of conflict analysis to the association of the political state, it is unnecessary and, indeed, disadvantageous; in so far as it implies the assertion that the "political class" is *eo ipso* the ruling group in all other spheres of society, it is once again an untenable empirical generalization. One of the shortcomings of the theories of Mosca, of Pareto, and, to some extent, of Aron is that although these authors derive conflict groups from relations of authority, they fail to relate these to the crucial category of imperatively coordinated associations.

Ruling groups are, in the first place, no more than ruling groups within defined associations. In theory, there can be as many competing, conflicting, or coexisting dominating conflict groups in a society as there are associations. Whether and in what way certain associations—such as industry and society—are connected in given societies is a subject for empirical analysis. Without doubt, such analysis is of considerable significance for a theory of conflict. Nevertheless, it is analytically necessary and empirically fruitful to retain the possibility of a competition or even conflict between the ruling groups of different associations. In this sense, the expression "ruling class" is, in the singular, quite misleading.

(5) Of the three authors under discussion, Mosca in particular has fallen victim to a Marxian overestimation of class analysis. If Pareto claims that history is "a cemetery of aristocracies" (5, p. 229), he leaves it open whether group conflicts or other forces caused the death of ruling elites. But Mosca is quite explicit: "One could explain the whole history of civilized mankind in terms of the conflict between the attempt of the rulers to monopolize and bequeath political power and the attempt of new forces to change the relations of power" (9, p. 64 f.). This is hardly more than a reformulation of the Marxian thesis "the history of all hitherto society is the history of class struggles" (7, p. 6). Mosca's statement is therefore subject to the same objections. Ruling groups in the sense of the theory here advanced do by no means determine the entire "level of culture of a people" (9, p. 54). As coercion theory emphasizes but one aspect of social structure, thus the distinction between ruling and subjected groups is but one element of society. It would be false to identify the upper stratum of a society unequivocally with its ruling conflict group. There is no need for these two to be identical with respect to their personnel, nor do these categories, even if the personnel of upper stratum and ruling conflict groups are the same, describe the same aspect of social behavior. In any case, ruling classes or conflict groups decide not so much the "level of civilization" of a society as the dynamics of the associations in which they originated.

"MASSES" AND "SUPPRESSED CLASSES"

It is a significant if confusing trait of the theories of Pareto and Mosca that both of them are concerned less with the explanation of social change than with that of stability or, as Pareto explicitly says at many points, of "equilibrium." By concentrating their attention primarily on the "elite" or "ruling class," they tend to reduce all changes to changes in the composition of the ruling class, i.e., to one type of social

mobility.¹⁴ Pareto's "circulation of elites" and Mosca's emphasis on the "ability" of a people "to produce in its womb new forces suited for leadership" (9, p. 227) aim at the same phenomenon, i.e., the regeneration of a leading stratum which is assumed to be universally procured by individual mobility. By virtue of this emphasis the theories of Pareto and Mosca take a strange turn of which their authors are probably not aware. Although both of them originally refer to two classes (5, p. 226; 9, p. 52), their approach gradually and barely noticeably reduces itself to a "one-class model," in which only the ruling group functions as a class proper. Pareto characteristically speaks, by way of introducing the notion of "circulation of elites," of "two groups, the elite and the rest of the population" (5, p. 226), and Mosca similarly distinguishes at one point "the subjected masses" and "the political class" (9, p. 53).¹⁵ Both notions, however—that of a "rest of the population" and that of "masses"—are basically residual categories defined by privation and not considered as independently operative forces. It need hardly be mentioned that this procedure robs any theory of conflict of its substance. At this point we see the crucial difference between elite theories and conflict theories in the sense of the present study.

The almost unnoticed transition from conflict theory to elite theory in the works of Pareto and Mosca has one aspect of some significance for our context. This becomes apparent if we contrast this modification with Marx's approach (which at times almost appears to commit the opposite mistake and to recognize only the proletariat as a class). The thesis might be advanced that in post-classical history of Europe the industrial workers of the

nineteenth century constituted, indeed, the first subjected group that managed to establish itself as such, i.e., that left the stage of quasi-group and organized itself as an interest group. Thus, earlier "suppressed classes" could quite properly be described as "masses" or "rest of the population," that is, as quasi-groups such as the French peasants of Marx's "18th Brumaire," who provided—as Mosca argues along lines similar to Marx's in his study of Louis Bonaparte—merely a basis of legitimacy and "support" of competing "groups within the political class." We need not settle this question here. But the fact that it can be raised provides a further reason why I have chosen to limit this study—contrary to Pareto and Mosca as well as Marx—to industrial societies. Perhaps it is feasible to make the general assertion that, in principle, ruling and suppressed classes have, in industrial societies, equal chances of organization, because in these societies one obstacle to the organization of subjected groups characteristic for most earlier societies is removed: the impossibility of communication. Although I suspect that the theory formulated in this study might be extended in such a way as to apply to pre-industrial societies also, I shall confine myself to applying it to societies in which manifest conflicts of organized interest groups are empirically possible.

Subjected conflict groups must therefore not be visualized as essentially unorganized masses without effective force. In analogy to the characteristics of ruling groups we can state (a) that they do not necessarily comprise the majority of the members of an association, (b) that their members are not necessarily connected by "properties" or a "culture" beyond the interests that bind them into groups, and (c) that their existence is always related to particular associations, so that one society may display several subjected conflict groups. Beyond these, one distinguishing feature of subjected groups must be emphasized. The Marxian expression "suppressed classes" might appear to mean

¹⁴Quite consistently, then, revolutions are, for Pareto and Mosca, abnormal events which betray the weakness of an elite, namely its inability to rejuvenate by absorbing new members.

¹⁵Italics in both quotations mine.

that any such group is characterized by the attributes which Marx ascribed to, or found present in, the proletariat of his time. However, this implication is by no means intended here. "Pauperism," "slavery," absolute exclusion from the wealth and liberty of society is a possible but unnecessary attribute of the incumbents of roles of subjection. Here, again, the connection is indeterminate, i.e., variable, and its particular pattern can be established only by empirical observation and for particular associations. It is not only conceivable that members of the subjected group of one association belong to the dominating group of another association, it is above all possible that "suppressed classes" enjoy, despite their exclusion from legitimate power, an (absolutely) high measure of social rewards without this fact impeding their organization as interest groups or their participation in group conflicts. Even a "bourgeoisified proletariat" can function as a subjected conflict group, for conflict groups and group conflicts are solely based on the one criterion of participation in or exclusion from the exercise of authority in imperatively coordinated associations. Difficult as it may be for minds schooled in Marx to separate the category of "suppressed class" from the ideas of poverty and exploitation, a well-formulated theory of group conflict requires the radical separation of these spheres.

CLASSES OR CONFLICT GROUPS?

Up to this point I have postponed and at times avoided the question whether the concept of class is a useful concept to employ and, if so, what its precise meaning is in the context of the theory of conflict group formation. The reader will not have failed to notice that I have in fact strenuously avoided the word "class" in the present chapter wherever possible. Before turning now to an attempt to settle this rather disturbing question, I want to emphasize one point. In my opinion, the problem of the

applicability of the concept of class is a purely terminological problem. In positive terms, this means that it is in part a matter of arbitrary decision, and in part a matter of convenience. Logically, there is no reason why we should not call quasi-groups and interest groups classes or anything else. Pragmatically, of course, the usage and history of words has to be considered; it is unwise to provoke misunderstandings by choosing words which carry associations that are not intended. In negative terms, the terminological nature of this problem means that I see no meaning in the statement that class is a "historical concept" in the sense of being inseparably tied to a definite historical entity such as the industrial proletariat of the nineteenth century. "Historical concepts" of this kind are fictions of Hegelianism or, more generally, conceptual realism. If I shall therefore try to bring together, in the following pages, the arguments that can be advanced for and against using the concept of class for conflict groups other than those described by Marx, the ensuing discussion is concerned exclusively with problems of pragmatic convenience, and the conclusion it reaches remains reversible.

So far in our considerations there have emerged four main reasons why the concept of class should not be applied to the analysis of conflicts in post-capitalist societies. The first of these is of a historical nature. We have seen that the changes which have occurred since Marx's time have in several ways affected the classes with which he was concerned. Bourgeoisie and proletariat are no longer uniform blocs of identically situated and oriented people if, indeed, they can be said to exist at all in post-capitalist society. The progressive institutionalization of the values of achievement and equality has removed many barriers which for Marx were associated with the concept of class. Without anticipating the results of empirical analysis we can already conclude that conflict groups in modern society are likely to be rather

loose aggregations combined for special purposes and within particular associations. In view of factual developments of this kind, it seems certainly questionable whether it is useful to employ for the conflict groups of advanced industrial society the concept used for the Marxian classes of the nineteenth century.

This doubt is strengthened by a second argument accruing from our theoretical considerations in the present chapter. We have deliberately restricted our model of group formation to elementary and highly formal features of the phenomenon. Most of the empirical characteristics of conflict groups are subject to a wide range of variability the limits of which may be fixed in terms of a constructed model but the substance of which needs to be determined by observation and experience. Conflict groups may, but need not be, immobile entities; they may, but need not be, characterized by a "class culture"; they may, but need not, engage in violent conflicts. Moreover, we have endeavored to detach the category of conflict groups and the whole notion of social conflicts from economic determinants both in the Marxian sense of relations of production and ownership and in the Weberian sense of socioeconomic class situations. Conceptually, the similarity between Marx's and even Weber's concepts of class and our concept of conflict group is but slight. There is reasonable doubt as to whether there is a chance for the concept of class not to be misunderstood if it is applied to conflict groups in the sense of this study.

Thirdly, in addition to these general conceptual difficulties, the question must be raised: what precisely do we mean by class even if we decide to apply this term to conflict groups? Are we to follow Ginsberg and conceive of classes as quasi-groups, i.e., unorganized aggregates of the occupants of positions endowed with role interests? Or are we to follow Marx in calling classes only such groups as have attained political organization and coherence, and which are interest groups? Distinctions

such as those between "collectivity" and "class," or "class," and "party," or "class in itself" and "class for itself" are necessary, but they do not exactly help to render the concept of class unambiguous.

Finally, the history of the concept in sociological literature has to be considered. One may deplore the fact that the terms "class" and "stratum" have tended to become interchangeable categories in sociological studies, but it remains a fact. While the existence of a difference between the study of social conflict and the study of social stratification is probably plausible to anybody, the concepts of "class" and "stratum," as they are often used today, fail to express this difference. Under these conditions, it may not be wise to try to restore to the concept of class a meaning which for many it lost long ago.

There are, on the other hand, three arguments that might be held against these doubts about the applicability of the concept of class to conflict groups in the sense of our model. First, the alternative category of conflict group is so general as to be almost embarrassing. We have explicitly distinguished from other conflicts those conflicts arising out of the distribution of authority in associations. Yet there is no conceivable reason, other than an inconveniently narrow definition, why the contestants in conflicts between Protestants and Catholics, Negroes and whites, town and country should not be called conflict groups. Short of using a more specific, but extremely clumsy, expression (such as "conflict groups arising from authority structures in associations"), the concept of class seems to provide a convenient tool for emphasizing the limitations of scope of the theory advanced in this study.

This is, secondly, all the more plausible, since the heuristic purpose originally associated with the concept of class is also the heuristic purpose of this study. When Marx adapted the word "class" to the requirements of his theories, he used this word as a term for structurally generated groups that engage in conflicts over

existing arrangements of social structure. It is true that before Marx the term "class" was used by a number of authors in a rather less specific sense; but it is probably fair to say that it was Marx's category which became germinal for later students in the field and which therefore represents its original version. The essential importance of this heuristic purpose has been emphasized at many points in our considerations. Since there is no other concept that expresses this purpose with equal clarity, one might consider it reasonable to retain the concept of class despite all qualifications necessitated by the arguments against it.

One of these arguments has referred to the history of the concept in sociological literature. Thirdly, however, there is one not entirely insignificant branch of sociological thinking which has consistently used (and uses) the term "class" in the form, if not the substance, assigned to it by Marx. This is true not only for many Marxist scholars whose work is, as we have seen, often pitifully barren and fruitless, but also for eminent non-Marxist (although possibly Marxian) sociologists such as Renner and Geiger, Aron and Gurvitch, Pareto and Mosca, Marshall and Ginsberg, Lipset and Bendix, and many others. We might go even further and assert that the trend of conceptual development in the work of these scholars anticipates in many ways the theses advanced in the present study. Many of them have tried to refine the concept of class by maintaining its heuristic purpose while altering its substance; quite often, this altering of substance meant a shift from property to power as a determinant, or other attempts at generalization. In using the concept of class for Marx's bourgeoisie and proletariat as well as for modern and utterly different conflict groups, one could refer not only to the origin of this concept with Marx, but also to a great and unbroken tradition in sociological analysis.

It is hard to weigh the "pros and cons" of the preceding argument entirely rationally; an element of personal preference will probably enter

into any decision. Without trying to argue for this decision at any length, I will therefore state immediately that in my opinion the case in favor of retaining the concept of class is still sufficiently strong to warrant its application to even the most advanced industrial societies. This decision does involve, of course, a polemical stand against all those who "falsify" the term "class" by applying it to what should properly be called social strata. It also involves considerable extensions of the concept as it was used by Marx as well as by all Marxists and Marxians. But it emphasizes that in class analysis we are concerned (a) with systematic social conflicts and their structural origin, and (b) with but one specific type of such conflicts.

In terms of our model, the term "class" signifies conflict groups that are generated by the differential distribution of authority in imperatively coordinated associations. This definition implies no assumption as to the looseness or rigidity of their coherence, the presence or absence of a common culture or ideology (beyond specific interests) among their members, and the intensity or lack of intensity of their engagement in social conflicts.

It will be noted that this definition is inconclusive with respect to the differentiation of quasi-groups and interest groups. I would suggest that it is useful to leave it so. The category of class is a general term for groupings of the kind described more specifically in our model of conflict group formation. For all particular purposes of analysis, it is necessary to abandon this general category in favor of the more specific concepts of quasi-group and interest group. The attempt to confine the concept of class to either of these is bound, indeed, to provoke misunderstandings. Classes, like conflict groups, indicate an area and type of sociological analysis rather than its substance. Both terms are more useful in compounds such as "class analysis," "class structure," or "class conflict" than on their own. This is but one further illustration of the essential insignificance

of a terminological dispute about these matters. For purposes of the present study, and without any dogmatic insistence on terms, I propose to dissolve the alternative "classes or conflict groups" into the definition "classes as conflict groups."

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C. Wright Mills: The Structure of Power in America

Power has to do with whatever decisions men make about the arrangements under which

they live, and about the events which make up the history of their times. Events that are beyond human decision do happen; social arrangements do change without benefit of explicit decision. But in so far as such decisions are made, the problem of who is involved in making them is the basic problem of power. In so far as they could be made but are not, the problem becomes who fails to make them?

We cannot today merely assume that in the last resort men must always be governed by their own consent. For among the means of power which now prevail is the power to manage and to manipulate the consent of men. That we do not know the limits of such power, and that we hope it does have limits, does not remove the fact that much power today is successfully employed without the sanction of the reason or the conscience of the obedient.

Surely nowadays we need not argue that, in the last resort, coercion is the "final" form of power. But then, we are by no means constantly at the last resort. Authority (power that is justified by the beliefs of the voluntarily obedient) and manipulation (power that is wielded unbeknown to the powerless)—must also be considered, along with coercion. In fact, the three types must be sorted out whenever we think about power.

In the modern world, we must bear in mind, power is often not so authoritative as it seemed to be in the medieval epoch: ideas which justify rulers no longer seem so necessary to their exercise of power. At least for many of the great decisions of our time—especially those of an international sort—mass "persuasion" has not been "necessary"; the fact is simply accomplished. Furthermore, such ideas as are available to the powerful are often neither taken up nor used by them. Such ideologies usually

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