

SOCIOLOGY TODAY AND IN THE PAST

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Abstract

The paper presents the writer's view of the main origins and current state of today's Sociology as an empirical science. This view holds that the field may be seen as composed of three overlapping areas: structural sociology (the analysis of power), sociological psychology (the analysis of relations among persons, and between persons and the societal structures they inhabit), and demography (the geographical distributions of populations by age, gender, migration, etc). Within these are applied subfields such as race, gender, organizational behavior, and social attitudes. Since its earliest days (Ibn Khaldun, 14th Century) the core of the field has been concerned with power differentials and with the related issue of variations in societal cohesion. Key writings over the 19th and early 20th Centuries are discussed, leading to the present theory of societal stratification. It holds that power relations are expressed through four content dimensions, that the shape of each varies through time and among societies by six structural dimensions, and that such structural states and their changes have significant consequences for everyone. The special theory of status allocation processes concerns how and why individuals' power trajectories within such structures, thus the courses of their life chances, are established and maintained.

Palavras-chave: sociologia, história, estratificação, poder, estrutura, *status*

SOCIOLOGIA DE HOJE E NO PASSADO

Resumo

Este artigo apresenta a visão do autor sobre as principais origens e a situação atual da sociologia como ciência empírica. Esta visão se sustenta na composição de três áreas interligadas: sociologia estrutural (análise do poder), sociologia psicológica (análise das relações entre pessoas e dessas com as estruturas sociais onde residem) e demografia (distribuições geográficas das populações por idade, gênero, migração etc). Dentro destas áreas, estão localizadas subáreas como raça, gênero, comportamento organizacional e atitudes sociais. Primeiramente segundo Ibn Khaldun no século XIV, o núcleo estava preocupado com os diferenciais de poder e com a questão das variações de coesão social. Os artigos de Key do século XIX e início do século XX foram discutidos, e conduziram à atual teoria da estratificação social. Isto fundamentou as relações de poder como sendo expressas em quatro dimensões; a forma como cada uma varia com o tempo e entre sociedades em seis dimensões estruturais; e que cada condição estrutural e suas mudanças tem consequências significativas para qualquer um. A teoria especial de processos de condição de alocação se preocupa como e porque o poder de trajetória individual dentro de cada estrutura e as mudanças de cursos em suas vidas são estabelecidas e mantidas.

Key-words: sociology, history, stratification, power, structure, status

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Introduction

This discussion of the field of Sociology consists of my own views. They may or may not agree with those of others. This is also true of my views of research methodology and theory. I believe that each science has its own specific research methods even though at a very general level scientific methodology is the same among all sciences. I hold a similar position regarding theory. Each science has its own conceptual scheme. Still, one science may be more-or less like another one. I was convinced of these views of science before I began to study sociology. I had had quite a bit of experience in electronics in the US Navy during World War II. This was followed right after the War by a couple of years of research in a physical chemistry laboratory. My epistemological position is thus quite similar to those of physical scientists.

I also believe that the sociologist's role as a scientist is one thing and that of his role as a citizen is another. Like other scientists, sociologists can present facts from their expertise. But there is no way they can know the full range of facts and opinions each person in the citizenry can and must taken into account when making decisions.

The findings yielded by well-designed sociological research are often quite different from ordinary beliefs of others. Take, for example, research that deals mostly with structural sociology. Structural sociology is mostly stratification, all the various forms of inequalities of power, including economic, political, informational and social. Of course, the consequences of inequality are so important and often so personal that they are with all of us all the time, even when we are not consciously thinking about them. Research findings in this area clarify common beliefs, which are usually haphazard and confused. They also clarify and correct ideological positions of the right and left, often at the annoyance of both. Finally, they often show things no one seems to have imagined.

So what is sociology? Let us look at the field, beginning with a definition of it.. For present purposes, we may say that "Sociology is the area of theory and

research that analyses human collectivities and the interrelationships within and among them, from dyads of two persons (natural and juridical), through small communities and formal organizations, to whole societies such as nations, focusing on their structures and the processes these undergo.”

For theoretic (conceptual) analysis, the basic units of sociology are of two kinds: collectivities and the people who are their participants. Sociology focuses on the structure of the collectivities, the positions held by their participants in these structures, and the relations among these positions, and thus the relations among the persons who hold them. This is a long way to say that sociologists study groups, the persons in them and one or more aspects of the group such as its classes; races; genders—or in formal organizations (say, businesses) the organizational structures and the statuses and roles of the persons who participate in them. Conducting empirical research of the kinds most common today requires a related perspective. Sociology’s data are observations taken directly or indirectly (from records) on or about persons or collectivities. For this purpose, there are two levels of units of analysis: units of aggregation and units of observation. A unit of aggregation is the overall collectivity, or ‘universe’, under study. The units of observation are the individual persons (whether physical or juridical), or sometimes sets of subgroups, within a collectivity. In current empirical analyses, the values of measurements on a collectivity are usually estimates attributed to it from data aggregated from measurements or other data taken on the units of observation. Each instance of a unit of aggregation (collectivity) has a structure consisting of the various positions within in it. Each of its participants (persons, individual members) has at least one position in that structure.

From a more general perspective we may speak of two essential ways of looking at these collectivities. One is theoretic. The other is operational. The theoretic is conceptual analysis. This is the reasoning the researcher uses to ‘think through’ the research issue under study, to deduce logically defensible relations of among the several conceptual variables that are under study. This process yields hypotheses to be tested. Hypotheses may result from deduction from general principles or from deductions from practical experience. The

second, operational, consists of the procedures used to measure the phenomena to be analyzed. This requires instruments measuring the operational variables that are both valid (in that they are faithful representations of the conceptual variables they purport to measure), and reliable (in that each yields the same score when the same measuring instrument is applied at different times to the same unchanged phenomenon).

These comments on measurement are true for all empirical research. Physical and biological scientists take this for granted, and they spend much time and effort to make certain theirs are accurate. Similarly, good instruments for measuring sociological phenomena are not easy to devise either. Weak instruments yield wrong or useless conclusions. So does weak theory. Together, rigorous theory and careful operations provide secure conclusions.

The 21st Century vs. the 19th

The founders of the field tended to write about fundamental questions of the great, sweeping states of societies and the variations they undergo. Most of today's deal with more specific issues. But in my opinion even these are either derivatives of the deep issues or are attempts to improve the sociologist's ways of obtaining clearer concepts and more secure data. The field is thus both old and new.

A mere century or so ago only a few did any empirical research. The works of historians were sociologists main sources of evidence. Sociologists of that time would be astonished at today's ways of observing, measuring, and processing data.

They would also be surprised at today's ways of linking general concepts with measurements of them, and of the probabilistic methods normally used to accept or reject hypotheses.

Another surprise would be the amount of research effort now devoted to sociological analysis. Today is carried out not only in governments and businesses, but, most importantly, in universities by professors, post doctoral researchers and post graduate students. To give a picture of the magnitude of

this effort, in the United States alone there are at least 211 postgraduate sociology programs. Those that offer doctoral degrees have, on the average, around 30 full time professors each. These programs awarded about 120 PhDs in 2003, each of whom required years of study in formal classes and advanced research experience, including the presentation of a dissertation. Looked at in another way, the largest sociological society is the American Sociological Association. It now has about 13,000 members. Another picture may be taken from the Year 2003 list of members of the International Sociological Association. Naturally, ISA's members are but a small fraction of the total number of sociologists in the world. Still, it lists at least 3000. Most live in North America and Europe, quite a few in India and Japan. More than 70 are in Brazil.

A fourth surprise would be the outpouring of research findings from all of the world-wide activities in sociology. In the United States, for example, this no doubt means that a great many social questions must be undergoing sociological scrutiny. Not to mention the flow of new findings regarding the basic issues addressed by sociologists over the centuries, as well as the derivative special expressions of these basic issues, plus works on the concepts and research apparatus required to improve sociological analysis.

Today's sociology, like other fields of knowledge, has both basic subfields, as well as other sub fields that draw upon those that are more fundamental. The basic subfields may be seen as structural sociology, which, in other words, is stratification (the theory of power); sociological psychology (the analysis of interpersonal relations, person-to-group relations, and the shared behaviors that sustain, challenge, and modify society's structures); and demography (the analysis of population and its distributions, such as age, sex, migration rates, etc.). Each of these influences the other two.

Then there are various specialities that tend to take their theory from the basics. These include the sociology of agriculture and rural life, industrial sociology, the sociology of education, sociology of religion, medical sociology, economic sociology, organizational analysis, political sociology; military sociology; the sociology of minorities (such as race, gender, and ethnicity, environmental sociology), etc. Besides these there are many spin-offs from modern sociological

know-how. By no means all of these last are done by sociologists. They include public opinion polls, marketing surveys, studies of so-called ‘focus groups’, applied demography, descriptive studies of communities, evaluation research (the study of the effectiveness of practical programs), service work for governments and private industry, studies of slum residents, and many others.

Though structural sociology is old, sociological psychology and demography are not. This is especially true of sociological psychology. It was mostly an invention of C. H. Cooley and G. H. Mead in the 1920s. Demography grew more slowly from its roots in analyses of data from population censuses. Shortly after World War II it branched out studies such as those of social mobility. Some of the work of demographers in recent decades has contributed to the theory of stratification. As one would suppose, almost all of the specialty areas and spin-offs from sociology are products of the last couple of generations.

Issues

So what are the fundamental issues of the field? From the work of the earliest professor of sociology around 650 years ago to the present, the most important are concerned with inequalities of power. The particular focuses of those ancient writings were cyclical variations in the composition of dominant classes in any particular society. Then, when sociology began to flourish again in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the organizing theme, still a matter of power, came to be the shift from forms of dominance in agrarian societies toward the emerging forms of power inequalities in industrial democracies and constitutional monarchies. Later, in the 20th Century, with the explosion of available resources and trained sociological research personnel, and with an increasing public demand, implications of the basic emphasis on power spread and subdivided into a vast number of specific topics, some practical, some theoretic and others methodological. Yet under all, one still sees the pervasive concern with variations of power, the causes of such variations and their consequences, as well as the methods by which to analyze them.

A second issue that has concerned many writers is the question of what it is

that keeps a society intact. How does it stay integrated? Throughout most of the 20th Century the dominant theory held that integration is maintained because each of the different sets of activities in the society's division of labor has an essential role to play in the whole. Each such set of activities has its own norms and values, the whole society being more or less glued together by norms and values shared by almost everybody, and by the essential contribution each part of the division of labor. Occupations make up most of these elements of the division of labor. This line of thought is called the 'functionalist' theory of society. Functionalism seems to have dominated the thinking of perhaps a majority of sociologists for about two-thirds of the 20th Century. Criticisms of functionalism seem to have begun shortly after World War II with the beginning of careful empirical analyses of inequalities of one of the forms of power, the hierarchical order of prestige of occupations, and thus of the people in them. Defenders of functionalism held that the prestige and the other 'rewards' of an occupation is an indicator of its importance for the society and so for maintaining its integration. Many of its opponents held that the theory is nothing more than a disguised defense of the status quo, and that many if not all of the higher positions were maintained by the power of the most prestigious.

In reality, the general question of how it is the societies remain intact is an important one. But it is better treated in other, less polemical ways. How are societies formed, how is it that the relationships among a very large collection of people coalesce into a more or less integrated whole that may reasonably be called a society? (I am not sure that this question has ever been seriously considered. Though descriptions of so-called primitive societies abound, such one-time snapshots are not sufficient.) Once such a whole exists, what are the internal and external processes that tend to maintain it or to cause its dissolution? To a large extent these questions lead right back to questions of power, both internal to a society and external to it. Each society has its own ways of treating its internal issues of power (and of course these are not necessarily stable). Is a given society's integration maintained by coercion, by active consent, by passive acquiescence? Can these modes change over time; if so, how, by revolution or some sort of evolution, or what? Externally, what is the role of

foreign military, economic, or prestige power in maintaining or dissolving another society? The Roman and Ptolemaic emperors, and many others had a solution. Extract taxes and provide garrisons. Apart from this, let the locals do what they will.

This is not to say that existing theory of societal integration is useless. Surely, behavior norms and value patterns like those that interested Emile Durkheim may also be important in the maintenance of society's integration. Analyses of the structure and changes of a society's stratification system—the types and distributions of power—its consequences and the causes of its structural variations will be required in order to discover general principles of societal integration..

The First Sociology: A Sudden Flame Suddenly Snuffed

In the 14th Century, Arab society was arguably the most intellectually advanced west of China. In theology, the center of this activity was the Al-Azhar Mosque—today Al-Azhar University. It was at Al-Azhar that the most respected teachers of Islamic faith taught their students. We are told the university role and title of Chairman was born there. This was because each professor led his classes seated on his chair next to a pillar. His students sat on the floor in front of him. After years of instructing the group, the Chairman would decide whether a given student was ready to go out into the world. Thus blessed by Al-Azhar, the former student would be received everywhere with open arms. No diploma was needed. Graduation from the most famous center of Islamic theology was sufficient.

Ibn Khaldun (1332-1395) was the Mosque's first chairman—that is, professor—who was not a theologian, and his professorship was sociology. Thus he automatically became the world's first professor of sociology.

He was born in Tunisia, of parents who had lived in Spain until Seville fell to the Christians. He apparently studied in Fez, a city in Morocco. His first book was written during three years in a small Algerian village while he was avoiding political turmoil.

With his vast knowledge of history and his style of thought, his work is a joy

to read. The absolute objectivity of his writing would be hard to match in any age. Nothing in it depends upon legends, myths, divine interference, or magic. Equally important, he made an intellectual leap that none of the great historians of antiquity were able to do. He saw repetitive patterns in the apparently chaotic flow of history.

He is now best known for two closely related cyclical theories of the flow of political and economic dominance. His and later theories of the oscillation of power holders are easily seen as special cases of a more general theory of societal stratification. Cyclical theories tend to bifurcate society into power holders, whose composition is variable through time, and the masses they control, who are essentially inert.

The first of Khaldun's theories has echoes in those of other sociologists and political analysts. These include Karl Marx and Vilfredo Pareto. Today the first of Khaldun's two theories is one of those called 'the circulation of elites'. It holds that patterns of dominance are in continuous oscillation. In Khaldun's, the cycling has no beginning and no end. If an outside observer were suddenly to look at a given society of Khaldun's time he might pick a point in the cycle when an ambitious clique was trying to muscle its way into power. Those of its circle would fend off other competitors' attempts to replace the rulers, oust the rulers, and take the ruling positions for themselves. As time passes the original participants in the takeover gradually drop from the scene and are replaced by new members. As this is going on, the clique becomes progressively softer or perhaps less interested in defending power, so it too becomes ripe for replacement. This emboldens other groups ambitious to try to assume power. By force, persuasion, or their own disinterest, the former elites are ousted and are replaced by one of the contenders. According to Khaldun the process repeats itself over and over again throughout history.

Such cycles of elites were not only common in the societies Khaldun knew best. In one form or another they may be seen in the 20th Century, for example when the Shah of Iran was overthrown. Or when Saddam Hussain's group took over Iraq. Are we about to see it attempted again in Saudi Arabia? Perhaps. Recently one of the Saudi princes reportedly told a group seeking to change

the nation from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy, “We took Arabia by the sword. If you want it, you too will have to take it by the sword”.

The second of his theories speaks of a circulation in which fierce nomadic tribes assault and gain mastery over weaker urban dwellers. They then move into the cities as a new dominant group. With the passage of time, they adopt the urban ways and become the prey of new nomads rising from the desert.

Khaldun’s work lives today in Europe, the Americas and elsewhere.. It didn’t last long in Arab society after he died, though it is unclear why. Until a generation or so ago, it is said that his writings remained unknown in Arab countries.

Rebirth: Brilliant Theory, Historical Evidence

August Comte (1798-1857). By the end of the 17th Century, Europe had made a substantial recovery from the centuries of ignorance that succeeded the fall of the Roman Empire. PDuring his time physical science, using formal experiments and mathematics, was beginning to be understood among the literate sectors of the continent’s population.

Comte was grew up in that intellectual milieu It was he who conceived the idea of a field of knowledge that would describe and analyze what goes on in human societies. He named it Sociology .Clearly, he thought of the field as one in which many different researchers could participate. In this he was thinking more about the future of the field than Khaldun had. The latter did his own work, but is no evidence that he saw his efforts as launching a whole new science.

Comte believed the methods of the physical sciences were applicable to the study of society. Yet it remained for his successors to try to do so. At that time empirical analyses were next to impossible. Hardly anything was known about sampling human populations, and techniques by which to measure the abstract conceptual variables required by empirical sociological analysis seem to have been beyond the imaginations of the scholars of his time.

Sociological analysis requires data, and the data have to be secure so that

accurate inferences may be made from them. Comte and others must have imagined that some sort of quantitative empirical data on large groups could be possible. But it is unlikely that anything more than census data were available to use or to serve as examples. During the 19th Century it was at least feasible to use historical records. This was what was done, and done very well. Of course, historical evidence is still used to good effect today by many sociologists. But these days we have that and much more to go on. Back then there was little else. In any case, though he defined the field, and doubtless inspired many successors. Comte is not generally known for actually carrying out empirical research even though quite reliable historical data were surely available to him.

After Comte reinvented sociological analysis and defined the field of sociology, the basic foci of theory broke into the two discussed earlier, power and societal integration. Here we shall present a few comments on some of the leading exponents of each position.

Marx. As has been said above, the main focus of sociological analysis has always been on power, indirectly if not directly. In the 19th Century and into the 20th, such analyses have usually been at the level of whole societies. It has been said that certain later writers' analyses were criticisms of Karl Marx's theory of stratification. It may have been true, but those we will look at here do not seem to have said so. But the reader can see that where their works are comparable, they are both more comprehensive and more nuanced.

As is well known, Marx was born in 1818 and died in 1883, overlapping with Comte. It's hard to imagine that he was unaware of the latter's work, but he certainly didn't need it. Marx had a specific theory of the structure of society and its changes, based on historical evidence.

Some of what follows will be obvious, because Marx is so well known these days. But it should be covered because what came afterward can be seen as elaborations and qualifications of his ideas. He wrote of capitalists and workers. These he saw as the two basic classes in opposition to each other. So what was it that most basically separated the two? As he says in the Grundrisse, "Capital is the all dominating economic power of bourgeois society". It was

power. The bourgeoisie held it and the workers did not—unless, of course, they were to rise up and overthrow their masters. Unlike the feudal lords of the previous era, whose power lay in land, during the industrial revolution the power of the bourgeoisie—those of the capitalist class—lay in their control of the means of production—the tools, the machines, the workplaces, and even the jobs. This extreme difference in power had consequences for other aspects of life: in the words of a later writer, life chances—health, longevity, free time, food, access to goods and services.

Like Khaldun’s view in which society is seen as divided into two strata along an axis (or dimension) of power, so also was Marx’s. And like Marx’s society, Khaldun’s had what could be called a working class—tool makers, metal workers, construction workers, textile workers, petty merchants, transportation workers (ships, horses, donkeys and camels). And Arab society had an approximate equivalent of capitalists: those who provided the money to transact business—under the watchful eyes of the elite, of course.

So what was so special about bourgeois industrial society? No doubt it was in the easier sharing of identities and experiences among the large numbers of workers who labored together in the capitalists’ factories. A workers’ revolution was at least feasible in Marx’s day. In Khaldun’s it was not very likely. This was an important assumption for Marx’s expectation that the workers would rise up and overthrow the capitalists. Shared experiences and identities, and easy communication are necessary conditions for the mobilization of political effort.

In a few words, Marx had a theory of power and how it varies. His importance as a sociologist lies in the fact that he recognized the overriding relevance of power variations as basic for understanding how society functions and changes.

Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923). Pareto was trained as an engineer at the University of Turin, with a thesis on equilibrium in solid bodies. So it appears that his first contributions to knowledge might best be classified as physics. But he is known today as a sociologist who analyzed power and who contributed to economic sociology. He is also regarded as an economist. As a student of

power, he was one of the chief promoters of the concept of circulation of elites. Like Khaldun centuries before and Marx with whom he overlapped, he saw society divided into two strata—elites and a lower stratum—with new groups cycling into power, replacing those who there before. Unlike Khaldun, he believed that the new groups were composed of persons of exceptional ability. This, if verifiable in the real world, would be a contribution to the theory of stratification. (Rule by meritocrats?)

His studies of income distributions were pioneers, matters receiving considerable attention by sociologists and economists today. Indeed, for the past 25 or 30 years, analysts of both fields have been debating the policy relevance of income inequality and poverty. Sometimes those who make policy for poorer nations actually think the two are the same. But it is important to recognize, as sociologists have shown, that they are different. In Brazil, income inequality has been observed to rise while the rate of poverty was falling. If they were the same, the rate of poverty would always rise in step with increasing inequality. Pareto may not have had the final answer to these questions. How could he? The appropriate data did not exist in his day. But he called attention to the problem, one that is with us all today.

In short, Pareto's contributions to the theory of power are two, a form of the concept of circulation of elites, and a recognition of inequalities in the distribution of income. The first of these remains hypothetical, as yet untested. The second introduced an idea of considerable current interest among those concerned about life in poor nations. Both of these assume that almost everyone lives at a bare subsistence level, where survival is an everyday issue, and where the elites are a tiny minority. Today such societies are said to be highly unequal. They are, of course. But there is another way of looking at them: an equality of the 'outs', with a few masters.

Max Weber (1864-1920). Weber's theory of power is more comprehensive than those we have mentioned so far. First, he laid the groundwork for what has been called 'content' dimensions of power in society. Specifically, he wrote that power is exercised in any one of three fundamental ways. These are class (groups that owe their existence and influence to economic

factors such as wealth, earnings, etc.); ‘status ‘ (‘standig’ in German: a rather closed stratum whose members enjoy power due largely to prestigious ancestry, as among the nobility of Europe and elsewhere, and who are influential because of their prestige); and party (groups organized specifically to influence or control policy through the exercise of power). Though these were his basics, he also had other perspectives on the nature of power. One was education, the power of superior knowledge. Still another was his view of authority. Authorities exert influence due to their formal positions in a system of power that is legitimate in that it is supported or at least condoned by the population within which these positions exist. Military rank is perhaps the best example: those of inferior rank must do what their superiors, the authorities, order them to do. Obviously, too, he recognized the existence of the military power of nations. He defined power as the capacity of one to exert his (or its) will over and against another. (I think he stressed the competition of wills too much. Not all exercises of power involve a conflict of wills. Sometimes the less powerful agree with the interests of the powerful. And vice versa. Would it not be better to consider power as the capacity of one to elicit desired behavior from another? Perhaps not all changes are forced.)

He also considered mechanisms by which the power structure of a society could be influenced. One of the best known was his examination of the rise of capitalism in the West—and thus the power of capitalists. This he saw as the unanticipated consequence of a particular theological position within Christianity, the so called ‘Protestant ethic’. It held that one’s salvation to heaven or banishment to hell was predestined from eternity. So how could the true believer live with such terrible threat? How could he know whether he was to be saved or to be damned? He could work hard and become a success in this life, which of course was the will of God. If God made him successful surely he was one of the favored. This theory is an ironic criticism of Marx, who believed that religion was nothing more than an epiphenomenon, something irrelevant to the real workings of society. To Weber, it could well be determinative.

In the final analysis, his concepts of the nature of power have survived to take a place in current theory of stratification, albeit after being transformed

into variables. On the other hand, the Protestant ethic hypothesis is no longer widely accepted. (Why? Has it ever been subjected to a convincing test?)

Weber's conceptions of power are considered central to sociology today. Nevertheless, his theory of stratification has two large gaps. First, his concepts were categories, not variables. Second, they lack a theory of the ways a structure of stratification may vary. With minor adjustments made later by others, Pitirim Sorokin's 1927 work filled these gaps, as we shall see below.

Another important concept of his is that of the legitimacy of a structure of power, the basis of authority as distinct from sheer might. This idea has been followed up by others who have noted that the collapse of legitimacy signals the rise of social unrest.

Pitirim Sorokin (1889-1968). Sorokin was born in Tsarist Russia, and was active in was in the anti-Tsarist movements. He lived and worked under the Soviets from 1919 to 1922, when he moved to the University of Minnesota. Today he is remembered mostly for the theory of stratification he wrote while he was there. And, it must be said, he ended his career at Harvard in a professorship made awkward by a conflict with Talcott Parsons who then was arguably the most respected sociologist in the world.

His name lives on in the roles of major contributors to an empirically viable theory of power. This he published in 1927 in a book called *Social and Cultural Mobility*. Despite the word 'mobility', the most enduring parts of his position are those that define stratification, the area that treats of power. Today (as will be seen in more detail later) we may speak of two classes of concepts of the power system, or stratification, of societies. One class, mentioned before, has been called 'content' (or substantive) dimensions. The other has been called 'structural' dimensions. Content dimensions are those that array people in hierarchical orders of power. Structural dimensions describe the variations any content dimension can undergo. Sorokin didn't use these or any other terms to classify the two types of dimensions of stratification. But he laid out three of each. His content dimensions were political stratification (variations among persons in their ability to exercise political power), economic stratification (variations among persons in their command of resources such as income and

wealth), and social stratification (variations among persons in the hierarchical order of occupations). Obviously, though their names are different, these are the variables underlying Weber's concepts of party (political power), class (economic power), and 'standig' or status (occupational power). The first of the three structural dimensions he named 'fluctuation of the height' (the rise and fall of the whole content dimension), second he called profile (the shape of the frequency distribution of the whole content dimension), and the third he saw as upward or downward mobility, which he called 'vertical mobility'.

In another advance over his predecessors, he took measurement seriously. Still, it is obvious that he found political stratification hard to measure, so he fell back on his knowledge of history. Economic stratification, however, was easier because by his time governments were producing data that could be used for this purpose. Social (occupational) stratification was tricky but he made an effort to measure it. Lacking any better way to provide a score for each occupation in the hierarchical order of all such, he turned to data gathered by University of Minnesota psychologists for the United States Army of World War I. Their analyses provided mean intelligence scores for each civilian occupation held by Army inductees. (Presumably, these IQ scores had been used by the Army to help allocate inductees to different training programs.). Today no one would use IQ to measure occupational status. Better instruments are available. But for its time it was quite an imaginative attempt. The main point is that he had solid reasons for identifying several content and structural dimensions of stratification, and he recognized the need for hard data by which to measure them.

Finally, Sorokin insisted that a society's stratification system is always changing. His structural dimensions (our term) were ways to measure such changes—although he didn't attempt to do so, or even to propose hypotheses about their causes or effects. We can, however, see that his theory is can incorporate the earlier theories discussed here. In addition to Weber's, the two-class systems of Marx, Khaldun and Pareto, and the cyclical theories of these last two authors.

Sorokin's work is a turning point in research on stratification. With the wisdom

of hindsight, we can see several ways in which he set the stage for today's concepts and methods. First, the earlier concepts of Khaldun and Pareto sit comfortably within it. Second, he clarified Weber and Marx. Without telling us that this is what he was doing, he gave us concepts by which to incorporate them in a clearer and more comprehensive theory of stratification. Third, he made serious attempts to quantify the variables of stratification. In a real sense, it may be said that the expressions of stratification that have emerged in the past half century are footnotes to Sorokin. We shall come to them later.

For now, let us go back to the late 19th and early to middle 20th Centuries to look at theories of societal integration.

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). Durkheim is another of the thinkers who has influenced theory about society. He was not much concerned with power. His overriding interest was in mechanisms that maintain the integration of society. The theory he pioneered is called 'functionalism'. He posited two kinds of societies, both of them held together by rituals, shared norms, beliefs and values. These he saw as the main glue that holds a society together. Primitive societies, he held, were integrated by a sort of saturation of similarity: identical values, norms, etc., and an unquestioned belief in the tribe's gods—who are really the collective representation of the tribe itself. This form of societal integration he called 'mechanical solidarity'. Modern society has a more complex form of integration. He called it 'organic solidarity'. Mechanical solidarity doesn't work in modern societies. As societies grew, the activities that sustained them subdivided into a complex division of labor. Here, each element in the division required its own set of norms, beliefs, values, and so on. Of course there still remain some similarities that help to hold a society together. But they aren't as effective as in primitive societies. Even so, there are other forces that tend to promote integration. These are the 'functions' each element in the division of labor performs for the others. As you can see, this drew on a biological analogy in which each organ performs its function and together all the organs keep the whole organism alive. In functionalist theory, society holds together as long as the force of the functional relations among its elements outweighs the force of the differences among them demanded by each element's particular activities, norms, values, etc.

As said, he didn't pay much attention to power. But it's any easy step from the division of activities to the division of power. Legitimacy provides the connection between integration and power. As Weber noted, power may be legitimate or illegitimate. Legitimate power he called authority. The legitimacy of authority rests on the consent of the population, which implies the rule of law to which all are subject, including the authorities. The lower a society's level of legitimacy, the more tenuous is its integration. But this is not the whole story, as the history of the 20th Century shows us. In any society one subgroup's authorities may be another's enemies. The dictatorships of the last century were just such societies. What was taken to be legitimate for the rulers and their supporters was illegitimate from the point of view of minorities they persecuted.

It is true that human society cannot exist without at least some degree of integration. But the level of integration Durkheim's functionalism assumes may or may not conform to reality. Theories of power that are more or less consistent with Weber's and Sorokin's leave questions of the processes of integration and dissolution of societies as a subject for empirical analysis.

Still, regarding legitimacy, another one of Durkheim's concepts is extraordinarily useful. It is anomie, which means conflict or confusion among the norms governing behavior. In his mechanically integrated societies all members share the same norms, even those that implied but never articulated. This makes it easy, even automatic, for each person to understand and appreciate the actions of every other person. So interpersonal behavior within the society flows with little or no conflict. Under normal conditions this would hold, although to a lesser extent even in organically integrated societies. Anomie is a condition of society, not of individuals. It occurs in periods of unusually rapid change, when the norms that once worked now fail to smooth relationships among individuals and groups.

Of particular interest is the role of anomie when economic development heats up or the economy falls. In such situations, theory holds, many individuals confront situations in which the norms that once worked for them turn out to produce responses that are hard to understand or even dangerous. Any drastic change of the preexisting power structure would be expected to generate a

heightened level of anomie. In extreme instances this could result in social unrest. Let us look at four examples of how society's levels of anomie would fare with sudden changes in two aspects of power, inequality and the incidence of poverty (remembering that the two may rise or fall independently of each other). 1. Inequality falls, poverty falls: little anomie. ('Everybody is better off'.) 2. Inequality falls, poverty rises; anomie rises somewhat. ('We are all in the same boat'.) 3. Inequality rises, poverty falls: little if any anomie. ('Everybody is at least a little better off, even if some are getting too much'.) 4. Inequality rises, poverty rises: substantial anomie. ('Injustice'.) In this last case, the level of anomie may induce social unrest.

Durkheim's concern with societal integration—how all the parts of modern society stay glued together—may have been overdone, even though it became central to the thinking of one of the most influential of mid-20th Century sociologists, Talcott Parsons. But the concept of anomie lives on. So do Durkheim's concepts of mechanical and organic solidarity, but with changes in name and in a few details.

Talcott Parsons (1902-1979). Parsons is at once the most influential sociologist of his era and possibly the most controversial. Except for periods abroad his whole career was at Harvard University. Harvard was one of the last of the great universities of America to establish a program in sociology. When Parsons returned after a stint in Europe, his university had only recently brought Sorokin from Minnesota to establish a sociology department. On the surface, it would seem that Parson would be a professor in Sorokin's department. But it didn't work out that way. It seems to have been difficult if not impossible for the two to work together. Probably this was at least in part because of fundamental differences over the kind of theory that Harvard would espouse: no doubt both of them quite reasonably assumed that the University would become the intellectual leader of the field—as in fact it did for awhile. As we know, Sorokin believed society's key structures were constantly changing. It follows that the sociologists should develop theories that took change to be a normal part of the life of a society. Indeed, at Harvard he worked a theory in which the culture of a society oscillates between two different emphases.

Parsons, however, returned to Harvard convinced that societies should be described as integrated wholes. This he had learned from the anthropologist, Malinowski, the leading functionalist of his day. Also, he ascribed to Weber's conception of 'Ideal Type' analysis, a tool used to describe institutions and to compare different societies throughout history. Parsons' ideal typical society was fully integrated, and he seems to have assumed this to be true of all real-world societies.

He was also convinced that beneath the apparent differences among the fields of the social sciences lay the seeds of a what he called the 'theory of action'. By around the end of World War II he had formed a new department, bringing to it many of Harvard's distinguished faculty members. It was to be more inclusive than Sorokin's department of sociology. In the early 1950s this new department published an edited book that seems intended to unify the various contributions of its faculty member's different fields. The book was called 'Toward a General Theory of Action'. The department attracted some of the best young minds in America as its doctoral students. It lasted for 15 or 20 years, then crumbled. Why didn't it last? Was it because the faculty really doubted the theory? Was it because the national associations of the fields were too strong and too independent from each other? Was it because the departments of other great universities were more interested in hiring Ph.D.s who were specialized in the departments' own fields? Was it because other social scientists were skeptical of the theory? Actually, leading sociology departments did in fact hire a number of these broadly trained people, and were strengthened by doing so.

Today his functionalism no longer attracts much attention. Perhaps this is because no society known to history ever closely resembled the fully integrated, changeless ideal typical society he tried to describe. Nevertheless, sometime after the book on the theory of action appeared he made at least two attempts to introduce societal change into his theory. In one, he held that advances in science tended to induce societal change. No one seems to doubt that today. In the other, he wrote that the social structure of Western society was the gift of two 'seed bed' societies, ancient Israel and ancient Greece. To many, this

didn't seem very convincing even though hardly anyone doubts that the two have indeed been influential, along with other factors. One of the troublesome parts of this idea is that it seems to assume that each one of the three civilizations—Israel, Greece, and the West—are or were fixed entities.

Today there are few defenders of Parsons' extreme form of functionalism. Nevertheless, after years of neglect a few sociologists are beginning to look at Parsons' work again. But it is too early to say whether his ideas will return in force, which seems unlikely. In the meantime, Parsons and the other main participants in Harvard's debates over the social sciences have left the scene. Harvard's department of sociology has been reconstituted, and it again plays an important role in American intellectual life.

Sociological Psychology

Sociological psychology is the type of social psychology that concentrates on those aspects of the larger field that are most relevant for sociological analysis. It begins with the obvious assumption that activity—overt and covert—is the natural and normal condition of humans as organisms. It goes on to hold that the human organism becomes a person with multiple and changing ties, both psychologically and in overt behavior, to an outside environment that was already there, and that the growing person interprets as expanding and becoming ever more complex as life goes on. The field holds that a great deal of the overt behaviors of people are driven by his goals and the conceptions he comes to have of himself. It also holds that each one is constantly interpreting his own behavior and that of others. It holds, too, that almost everyone's goals and self conceptions are selected (by observation, teaching, and default) from among structures of alternatives already available in the society: male, female; older, younger, etc. As with all living organisms, activity goes on all time—awake, asleep, at rest. The question sociology raises is how observable human behavior gets its directionality.

All this is pretty abstract. But it will become clearer below.

This section discusses and illustrates differences between two types of social psychological theory, one psychological, the other sociological. The

section concentrates mostly on the sociological. As will be seen, sociological lines of the area are the basis for generating some the key hypotheses concerning peoples' activities regarding the structure of power, especially those involving the factors that explain how young people are sorted into their adult status levels.

Social psychology first entered academic thought in a book by a sociologist in the late 19th Century. Then, about 1907, the first textbooks called by that name appeared, one by a British psychologist, the other by an American sociologist. As the years went by, the teaching/research departments of universities expanded and became more self-centered. So also did their national and local professional associations. Today, as in the past, the labor market for new PhDs is quite fluid in the United States, and the leading departments have been determined to hire only those who seem to have the greatest likelihood of contributing to the thought system of their own discipline. This forced a rift in social psychology between sociology and psychology. On the whole, psychology departments tend to center their activities on the areas the faculties believed to be most important. Sociology departments do the same.

On the whole, psychologists' efforts are devoted to the behavior of the individual. Social psychology is a bit peripheral to them. And, like all academic departments, those of psychology do not favor those whose interests are not close to the main lines of disciplinary thinking. So the theory and basic research of psychological social psychologists came to focus on more immediate social influences on individual behavior. These are the influences they believe to be best for understanding the whole personality of the individual. But that was not the only emphasis of these departments. Another line of activity, also called social psychology, came into being in them. Its concern was with the application of psychology to ameliorate social problems. Neither line was especially interested in the broader range of socially structured environments in which the immediate influences on the person reside.

The social psychologists called 'sociological psychologists' in this paper have a different agenda. Their concern is with the mechanisms by which persons become integrated into society, and the role of such integrations in maintaining

and influencing the structure of society. In other words, psychologists tended to use social data to help understand the behavior of the individual person or to use psychological data to help solve problems. Sociologists, on the other hand, tended to use data on persons to understand the workings of society. Because psychologists vastly outnumbered sociologists, the bulk of what is done in the name of social psychology was that of psychologists, not sociologists. The label, sociological psychology, is used here to avoid confusion.

The field's major contributors, C .H. Cooley and George H. Mead, were both active in the first half of the 20th Century, Cooley at the University of Michigan, and Mead at the University of Chicago. Both were concerned with the emergence of the person's self-identity; the embeddedness of such identities within the structure of society; the mechanisms by which self-identities determine individual behavior; and how, collectively, the resulting behaviors both sustain and change society. Sociologists are keenly aware of the enduring structures of society and of the organizations within them, as well as the fact that such structures change, usually very slowly.

Sociological psychologists have long recognized that each structural variable of society has a sort of mirror image in the range of self-identities and behaviors of its people. People act to fulfill their self-identities. Those who influence them are helping to determine their self-identities. H .S. Sullivan was the theorist who added this to the literature. He called such influentials 'significant others' (SOs). Their major influence is in providing information that helps one to form his conceptions of himself.

The basics of the theory explaining how young people set themselves up to move into their life trajectories will serve may help to understand these concepts.. As will be seen below, it is called the theory of status allocation processes (TSAP). Some of the "mirror image" concepts of behavior, identity, and SOs' influence are central to this theory.. For example, the hierarchical prestige order of occupations is one of the main dimensions of power. That is, the adults of each society are more or less aware of the average prestige people attribute to each occupation, and of course these averages have long been determined by empirical research. The prestige of the occupation of medical

doctors is among the highest. That of teachers and engineers just a little lower. Shoe-shiners close to the bottom, along with unskilled farm workers and others. Young people don't pay much attention to the whole hierarchy and usually have only vague notions about it. But they do learn to see certain jobs as possible occupations for themselves. By doing so each youth—perhaps unwittingly—defines a set of occupational prestige identities for himself. The jobs a youth chooses center on a specific level of the occupational hierarchy and are usually quite close to each other in prestige. Thus one's occupational self-identity is automatically located in a limited range of the whole prestige hierarchy of occupations, some youths toward the bottom, some toward the top, some in the middle. Those who hope or expect to be maids locate themselves toward the bottom. Those who aspire to be medical doctors are up toward the top. And so on.

One of these psychological 'mirror images' of the occupational prestige hierarchy is called level of occupational aspiration. It is a measurable variable describing differences among youths. Some youths have occupational aspiration levels far up on the occupational prestige scale, others lower ones. These levels aspiration are strongly affected by the influence of one's parents and other SOs. This variable, SOI, is also a mirror image of the occupational prestige hierarchy. Its effects are communicated to the youth in ways that are discussed below.

People try to act in ways that are consistent with their conceptions of themselves. And one's level of occupational aspiration is one of these self-conceptions. So are educational aspiration and the influence of SOs (SOI), each of which is a mirror image of the hierarchical order of years of schooling offered by the educational system—from none at all, through the primary and secondary years, up through university and on up to post graduate study. So are the corresponding 'mirrors' of the other dimensions of power.

Of course these are not the only self conceptions. There are many others; for example a girl's unshakable conviction that she is indeed a girl, so she behaves like a girl in the way she dresses and in everything else. Going back to occupational prestige and education and their 'mirrors', those whose levels of aspiration are in the higher reaches of the power scales usually try to complete

as many years of education as they can. This is to maximize their chances achieve the levels they aspire to. For example, those with low levels of occupational or educational aspiration, and those who simply don't care, leave school as early as possible and try to get a job. The jobs they get will be quite low, consistent with their low levels of aspiration.

A given individual's levels of aspiration may be firm, or weak. The stronger they are, the greater their effect on his levels of achievement. The weaker they are, the less their effect—which usually means one has to take whatever he can get, which is usually pretty low in the hierarchy. In richer nations, most youths' levels of aspiration are quite firm, except for those who simple don't care (and are automatically shunted into lower positions). This means that the variable, level of aspiration, has a strong effect on its corresponding behavioral variable, level of attainment. In nations that are not so rich, there will be quite a few youths who have aspiration levels as strong as those in the richer ones, along with a great many others whose aspirations are weak or fragmentary.

In societies in which ambition and merit count more than the status of parents, aspiration levels are among the most powerful causal factors governing levels of achievement. In other types of societies, aspiration levels are more closely tied to the status of parents, and preliminary evidence suggests that they play a lesser role in attainment.

Even the most influential psychological social psychologists seem hardly aware that society's power structures have mirror-like reflections determining important self-concepts, which in turn have powerful consequences for individual behaviors. On the whole, psychologists see socially structured self-identifies as applying mostly to such obvious differences as age and gender.

To illustrate, let's look at Kurt Levine, one of the most influential social psychologists in the first half or so of the last century. He and his students identified the phenomenon of level of aspiration. They recognized perfectly well that aspirations affect behavior. Time and again, they and others tested this hypothesis, often by asking people to give the score they would try to achieve when throwing darts at a target. Then the researchers would measure the correlation between the estimates (aspirations) and the scores actually

achieved (behavior). The correlation coefficients were almost always positive. So they concluded that, yes, one's level of aspiration does in fact influence one's level of achievement.

It is obvious that Levine wanted to apply the concept to the world of occupations. But not once did he apply it to the occupational prestige hierarchy or any other power hierarchy. If Levine had been aware of research on the occupational hierarchy he might applied it to occupational aspirations and achievement. But this never happened.

Among the many self-concepts sociological psychologists have found to influence the individual behavior, those called levels of aspiration and SOI are essential elements of current theory of individual attainment levels within the four content dimenaions of power. This, of course, is the theory that purports to explain how people sort themselves into their life trajectories along the power dimensions—the theory of status allocation processes (TSAP).

Demography

One of the three basic sub-fields of sociology, it grew from many years of studies of the populations of nations. The numbers of people who lived in them and how these numbers changed over time were and are of great importance to the policies of governments. One of these, for example, is the question of who is to take care of the things the nation needs in order to exist. That is, how many people will be old enough, but not too old, to serve in the labor force as workers in farming and manufacturing, and so on? How many children will grow up to be the mothers, fathers and workers of the country? How many will be too old or children too young, and will have to be supported by the others? These sorts of numbers are the bedrock of demography, along rates of births, deaths and migration.

A knowledge of the numbers demographers have long provided is a sort of platform upon which the phenomena of the rest of sociology rests. Today's centers of demographic research provide these numbers and much more. Such centers are involved in many other matters that concern all sociologists. For

some examples, several are determining the consequences of international migration. Some are trying to understand why poverty exists and how people move in and out of poverty. Some are working on processes of colonization, as in Amazonia today. Others analyze patterns of the life courses of people born in different decades.

It will be interesting to see of such centers may one day expand their focuses so as to apply their considerable talents of sampling and analysis to a demography of organizations (juridical persons). If so, by taken individual organizations are their operational units of analysis, and the corresponding instances of the ‘universes’ from which the samples are drawn as instances of the appropriate collectivity, they could provide the base which to broaden and strengthen the other two basic areas of sociology.

Societal Stratification: Sociological Theory of Power Today

Early in this paper it was said that questions of power, or societal stratification, are spread all through sociological analyses today, even some that may not look like it at first. In this section we present an overview of what has been called the ‘synthetic theory of societal stratification’. (STSS), a theory that goes directly to the heart of power differences within and among societies. Power is key, as Weber showed us long ago and as Sorokin in effect repeated in his three content dimensions of political, economic, and social stratification. But differences of power are just the main face of factors describing fundamental aspects of life. They carry with them parallel differences of style of life, language, and even day-to-day behavior patterns of people. And when power differences are legitimate (in the sense discussed above), the authorities who exercise it are required to take responsibility for their actions. So power is the main face of this Janus, but hardly the only one.

STSS theory was designed to explain the way power is distributed in the many circumstances in which it plays a part—in any given society over time, among different societies, and (with minor adjustments) within and among organizations nested in on or more societies.

It is called ‘synthetic’ for two reasons. First, because it encompasses the classical theories of power, drawing especially upon those of Weber and Sorokin. Second, it is coherent with lines of quantitative research that were long employed by American empiricists..

Quantitative sociological research has been advancing rapidly since around the time of World War II, though it had been developing slowly for perhaps a century before. The stratification research of the empiricists was based on advances in sampling procedures, methods to measure degrees of statistical relationships, including coefficients of correlation and factor analysis—the technique that made it possible to test the existence of phenomena that could be seen only through their effects on more obvious indicators and to measure these elusive variables. Also, the sizes of samples stratification research demanded soon became too time consuming to process without at least the primitive computers that were coming on line in the early 1950s. Regarding content variables, the early empirical researchers’ interest a half century ago was in education, occupational status, the aspirations corresponding to them, and the socioeconomic status of families or households.

Advances in sampling and interviewing techniques made it possible for sociologists to make definitive measurements of occupational prestige. (Not that these were the first. Even back in the 1920s, sociologists studying youths’ plans for their futures were doing crude measures of this variable. One American sociologist even conducted such studies in the Soviet Union.).

The first study that yielded a valid estimate of the prestige of each of 90 occupations was published right after World War II. It was representative of the entire adult population of the United States. Even before this, during the depression of the 1930s sociologists were developing scales of the socioeconomic status of households, a concept now seen as a rather general expression of differences of power and life chances among ordinary people. (These are still used around the world). Even so, the full range of stratification theory was still years ahead. It began to fall into place when the empiricists discovered ‘classical’ European theory and began to put it to work.

Up to the late 1940s, Weber's work on stratification was hardly known at all in the United States. Sorokin's 1920s theory of stratification, written while he was at the University of Minnesota, was known. But little attention was paid to his ideas about the dimensions he discussed, except for social (occupational) stratification, and it only in the context of mobility. For all practical purposes, Weber's views of stratification were introduced in a book edited by Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills that appeared in 1948. The chapter on Weber's multidimensional conception of stratification revived interest in building the theory that came together somewhat later, in the synthetic theory of stratification (STSS) and in the sub-theory of status allocation processes (TSAP). It was the discovery of Weber's work that renewed interest in Sorokin's.

By this time, many stratification theorists had learned that a theory remains untestable unless its conceptual variables are measured and subjected to formal empirical tests. From then on stratification theory and quantitative analysis marched hand in hand. This work came to be centered at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where William H. Sewell and his graduate students had collected several data sets that turned out to be useful to advance and new ideas of stratification. These data provided the beginning of the first statement of the TSAP. As the years passed, the interests of the group gradually diverged and a second group gradually came into being. The first continued along its established lines. The second concentrated on filling in gaps in the STSS and on further developing the TSAP. Actually, it took many years and quite a few research trips before the two theories fell in place. The first statement of the TSAP, a clarification of a model published by University of Chicago sociologists, appeared in 1969. That of the STSS appeared in 1970. These publications came out more than 20 years after Sewell and his students collected the first data out of which the experimental forms of the STSS were constructed. Even then, a number of minor modifications or expansions were made over the next 30 years or so. Some of these were elaborations, some clarifications, and some shifts in the meaning of some of the concepts. Over the decades the STSS has also undergone a few changes. Despite such modifications, the basic theoretical structures of 1969 and 1970 have remained intact.

It will be remembered that in Sorokin's hands, Weber's categories of power groups were replaced by variables. Weber's 'class' became Sorokin's 'economic stratification'. His 'party' became 'political stratification'. His 'status groups' were changed in meaning from the hereditary statuses of Europe but nonexistent in the United States to the social status of occupations. Here, as we have seen, Sorokin ran into problems. Although data to measure economic stratification already available, those needed to measure political and social stratification were not. Except for historical evidence he gave up on the political dimension. But he reasoned that he could measure the social dimension through occupational status. As the reader will recall, lacking anything better, he turned to the average IQ scores of each occupation. These he took from World War I records on American soldiers organized by his colleagues in the University of Minnesota's department of psychology. Having turned Weber's categorical concepts into variables, Sorokin was in a position to see an important aspect of stratification structures that had eluded Weber. Measurements taken on variables on which individuals differ from each other are susceptible to assessments of their statistical characteristics such as averages, indicators of their dispersion and their intercorrelations, among others. This makes it possible to quantify variations in the demographic structure of stratification among societies and in the same society over time. As we have seen, Sorokin then asserted that any society's stratification structures will vary over time in three ways. One is what he called height. The second he called profile. The first is essentially the average of the status (power) score recorded for each individual.. The second is the shape of the frequency distribution of the scores. The third is the rate of upward and downward movement of people, which he called 'vertical mobility'.

In the STSS those of the first set are called 'content dimensions,' and those of the second set 'structural dimensions'. The STSS also calls attention to the difference between the dimensions themselves, which are conceptual, and the operational variables or 'indicators' by which the dimensions are measured. The content dimensions require empirical scales analogous to the thermometers that measure temperature. The structural dimensions can be measured by well-known statistical formulas.

During the 1960s, several sociologists, including O. D. Duncan and Kaare Svalastoga, acting more or less independently, made a few additions to Sorokin's concepts. For one, they each added the power of knowledge (measured by years of formal education). The other three remained intact. In the STSS the three are called the power of occupational level, the power of income and wealth, and political power. The more recent researchers also clarified the terminology and added new structural dimensions. There are six of these in the STSS. Other than crystallization, each structural dimension applies to each of the four content dimensions; crystallization is the intercorrelation of all four content dimensions. So a complete description of a societies stratification system at one time requires 25 different parameters ($(6 \times 4) + 1$).

All taken together, the structural dimensions came to be seen as the following, with their statistical expressions indicated in parentheses: 1. General Level (the average), the changes of which are upward or downward of a whole content dimension—called 'structural mobility' by some researchers; 2. Degree of Inequality (the dispersion of a content dimension); 3. Crystallization (the degree to which the four content dimensions are correlated with each other); 4. Degree of Status Inheritance (the level of positive correlation between the parents and offspring on a given content dimension). The opposite of the degree of inheritance is the overall degree of circulation mobility). 5. The Structure of Modes, or discrete classes (the degree to which the frequency distribution of a given content dimension is split into concentrations that are sharply separate from each other); 6. The Degree of Skewness, or asymmetry, of a content dimension (the degree to which the distribution is 'strung out', as in a society where those of an extremely tiny minority hold the positions of power on that dimension and the vast majority are equal and powerless.).

Tests of the STSS at the level of whole societies are difficult and expensive, and they are best tested by comparisons of different societies. Only a few nations have data sets that are appropriate, and these are so expensive only governments can afford to collect and prepare them for analysis. Adding to these complications, governments collect data for their own purposes and in ways that differ from nation to nation. They do not collect them for the benefit

of stratification theorists. So such data are not necessarily fully appropriate though they may be quite useful.. Brazil is the only society on which the theory has been tested with empirical data. Fortunately, a number of its annual national household sample surveys contain the most critical data needed to provide realistic tests of the STSS. And it is a large country that has been shown to be divided into five distinctly different macro regions defined by the socioeconomic development levels of the populations of its small constituent geographical units. So researchers may compare the macro regions as if each was its own unique society. Brazil's data cover most of the aspects of the theory. Analysis of them has yielded results consistent with it, showing that it corresponds to reality in all the many parameters that were available.

All in all, these results quite clearly demonstrate that the STSS provides an accurate and informative picture of the power stratification structure of a society and of how such structures may vary among societies. This opens the door to possibilities for determining the causes of power structure changes within societies and for variations among them, and for more comprehensive and nuanced analyses of the consequences of stratification and its variations.

This is important for contemporary thinking about the causes and consequences of variations of stratification within and among societies. Specifically, the STSS provides a way to measure the degree of stratification of societies: "Is this one more unequal than that one?"

Higher degrees of stratification will be seen by observing five of the structural dimensions of a society's stratification system. That is, wide dispersions of the frequency distribution of each dimension, a high degree of status inheritance of each, a greater degree of crystallization among the dimensions, a greater the tendency toward poly modality of each, and a greater the degree of skewness of each.

In turn, the availability of way to measure the degree of stratification makes it possible to identify optimal conditions by which to test hypotheses concerning causes and consequences of stratification, both of which have been of considerable interest to sociologists. One widely believed assertion holds that development induces destratification, i.e., the higher the level of a society's

development, the more equal it is. The other holds that the higher the degree of inconsistency among an individual's positions on the content dimensions, the greater his tendency to exhibit abnormal behavior. In other words, the more abnormal his status situation, the more abnormal his behavior. (One form of this links such inconsistencies to liberal or radical voting behavior.) One can reason that if a society's content dimensions are inconsistent, persons whose own statuses are inconsistent would be like everybody else. Such a society would not present optimal conditions under which to test the hypothesis. The right conditions would apply when the crystallization of a society's stratification system is quite high. In this case, a person whose statuses are highly inconsistent would indeed be unusual, and the effect of being unusual if the hypothesis were then tested. There is no reason to believe that the tests made do date have been carried out under appropriate conditions of degrees of crystallization. So its true or falsity remains moot.

Why SSTS Theory is Important

The present state of the theory of power is the result of many years of improvements. These include changes from partial to comprehensive conceptions of power hierarchies (Khalidun's to those of Weber, Sorokin and later writers), and from fragmentary historical evidence to quantitative measurement. Though lagging a bit, these changes have been more or less in step with those of physical theory. As of today, the theory of power appears to be complete. But so did its predecessors in their day.

Despite the fact that the theory presents unusually difficult operational problems, there are several reasons why sociologists and others would be expected to give it careful thought. First, it unifies all previous major theories of the behavior of its phenomena from Khalidun to Sorokin—a subject matter whose importance no sociologists doubt, and which pervades the lives of all people everywhere. And empirical evidence shows it that it works. Second, it accommodates comparisons within and among societies. This too has held up in tests with large scale national sample survey data on Brazil's distinctively

different macro regions. Third, with minor adaptations, such as the use of occupational authority as a key content variable, it appears to be applicable to all formal organizations, big and small. It has done this on data on the supervisory personnel of Sao Paulo's factories. Fourth, in itself it is apolitical and does not make apriori assumptions about the appropriateness of earlier conceptions of stratification structures to a given society (i.e. cyclical theories). Instead, it provides the parameters needed to determine their relevance. Fifth, for any existing society, now or in the future, each of the STSS's conceptual dimensions can in principle be measured, as can the parameters describing their specific characteristics and interrelationships. Most of its parameters have been tested on Brazilian national household survey data and have been shown to conform to the theory. Sixth, it is comprehensive, precise, and conceptually parsimonious, making it easy for researchers to use it to generate rigorous, fruitful and testable hypotheses. Seventh, in principle each instrument designed to measure its content dimensions can be checked for validity and reliability. Eighth, it is applicable to both individual and juridical persons. Ninth, it facilitates comparisons of the full range of power variables describing differences between such societal categories as races, genders, ethnic groups, the classes of Pareto and Marx, etc. Tenth, it provides the framework that, with concepts of sociological psychology, allows for a special theory of status allocation processes—the area that explains how it is that young people are projected into their life-long status trajectories ('careers'). It has already done so. Eleventh, in concert with a few other concepts such as anomie, legitimacy, economic development, technological change, and others, it can aid in anticipating and understanding other societal phenomena such as the rise of social disorder or the dissolution of a society. For example, how certain abrupt changes in the structure of power may or may not induce disorder. Twelfth, it makes no assumptions about the integration of society beyond the fact that power structures themselves require at least a minimum level. This leaves the question of optimal levels of integration and the causes of their changes as open questions within the general framework of the structure of power. Thirteenth, it provides the concepts by which to test hypotheses concerning

the causes of variation of the structure of stratification. For one example, the widely believed hypothesis that development decreases the degree of stratification of a society. This belief, too, has been tested with national sample data on Brazil—and has been found wanting. Fourteenth, a rich empirical literature on social mobility fits nicely within the STSS. Fifteenth, the theory can serve as a framework to help guide social planning. This has occurred regarding educational practice in the United States, where its sub theory, the TSAP, has long been put to use. And a derivative of it, the measurement of the socioeconomic development levels of local and macro regional populations has been applied to development policy in Brazil. Also, it may have been put to practical use by several other international groups that know about it: the United Nations Center for Regional Development, the Indian National Centre for Science, Technology, and Development Studies, and the United Nations Centre for Science and Technology for Development (1985). In addition, various aspects the STSS and the TSAP have been presented to many other agencies and associations devoted to practical policies of one sort or another.

The Theory of Status Allocation Processes

Status (power) allocation processes (TSAP) are those that shunt individuals into their status trajectories, thus influencing many other aspects of peoples' life chances, attitudes, political preferences, anxieties and even happiness. This special theory fits easily within the framework of the STSS. In addition, it relies on concepts of sociological psychology sketched earlier. Its antecedent variables are the psychological 'mirror images' of the content dimensions of the STSS.. These psychological phenomena are formed before and during adolescence. Its dependent variables are the levels of the power trajectories at and after the beginning of adulthood—when formal education terminates. Each such trajectory is related to the others, both at entering adulthood and thereafter. One's level of educational attainment projects one onto an occupational level, which, along with the person's income aspirations (formed earlier), influences one's economic situation. (The causal relations of peoples' economic and

political attainments remain unclear.) These and all other relationships of the theory are expected to vary with variations of the structural variables within which they are embedded.

There is another way to describe the process. Just prior to the dependent variables stand the aspiration variables, each of whose content is a mirror image of one of the power variables—educational aspiration level mirroring the educational hierarchy, occupational aspiration level mirroring the occupational prestige hierarchy, and so on. That is, each aspiration variable is an isomorph of its corresponding power dimension. The effect of each aspiration variable is also influenced by its causal proximity to the different attainment variables, e.g., educational aspiration being nearer to educational attainment in the causal order than it is to occupational attainment.

Powerfully influencing youths' aspiration variables are the corresponding variables of significant others' influence (SOI). Like the aspiration variables, each of these is a mirror image of its corresponding power dimension. There are two forms of SOI, modeling and defining. By exemplifying a level of education, occupational status, etc., people who are a youth's models illustrate the levels to which he might aspire. Those who are definers tell the youth what he may or should aspire to. Some of the SOs are both models and definers. Some SOs communicate this directly. Parents are often definers. But usually not the only ones. Some SOs do it indirectly, or even unintentionally, by giving off clues that help the youth define himself. The influences of definers are called expectations in that they are what a significant other expects of a youth. The influences of models are called illustrations or exemplifications because they present the youth with possibilities he could emulate. The total effect of SOI on youths' aspiration levels has been found to be the arithmetic average of the levels of his models' illustrations and his definers' expectations.

There are three other influences on the process. The first of these is the youth's objective academic ability. The second is his parents' own stratification positions. Finally, TSAP theory holds that the whole process is affected in predictable ways by the prevailing structure of the stratification system within which it is embedded.

The main aspects of the theory have been tested with different American data sets at least four times. Three of these were national samples. As sociological research on individuals goes, it is extraordinarily powerful. It has been shown to explain up to 70% of the total variance of its dependent power variables on samples of youths who were restudied many years later. Other details, such as the effect on aspirations of the average expectation and illustration levels presented by students' SOs have been determined on smaller samples queried in schools.

Conclusion

This paper has sketched the history of sociology, going back to its first appearance two-thirds of a millennium ago. Its basic areas are structural sociology, sociological psychology, and demography. For its first statement and those of the classical sociologists from the 18th Century into the 20th, structural sociology's enduring concern has been with power. Then, over the rest of the 20th Century the concepts needed in order to understand how power works have become both more comprehensive, more precise, more parsimonious, and more amenable to empirical analysis. This has greatly improved sociologists' ability to generate powerful hypotheses concerning the power structure of society and of smaller collectivities. Further, another major theory, functionalism, was found to be flawed, and the parts of it that were not flawed subsumed within the theory of power or employed by it.

Sociological psychology is but a century old. It is an area within what is called social psychology, yet it differs from the latter's forms as they are practiced in departments of psychology. Indeed, many of its most important concepts are what we have called 'mirror images' of social structural variables. Some of these variables are cognitive and others are behavioral. This field was designed to connect individual behavior to social structure.

Demography is a modern outgrowth of many years of studies of geographical distributions of population, a matter of great interest to governments. Age and sex distributions of areal units, as well as population

projections and in-and-out migration rates remain its bedrock, but in recent decades it has diversified and has added research on population dynamics, such as consequences of international immigration and inter- and intra generational occupational mobility, among others.

But sociology is more than its basic areas. There are rich literatures in many areas of application, such as education, urban life, interclass relations, minorities, gender studies, agriculture, environmental effects of human behavior, and others. And today one finds ideas born of sociology in schools of business, communication arts, industrial engineering, law, medicine, nursing, pharmacy and probably others.

Today all of the conceptual variables of the field may, in principle, be measured by dependable instruments, although not all have yet succumbed to measurement. Equally dependable are the techniques for collecting valid data from which to construct the variables. Also, building up for over a century, statistical techniques and electronic technologies capable of processing the large number of quantitative items of the data often required for such analyses have become available.

Certain conclusions apply to power. One is that the central focus of sociological theory is and always has been the analysis of the hierarchies of power that are called stratification. Another is that the current theory and methods for the analysis of power (the STSS) are now in a state at which their current gaps should be filled by additional research.

The main current gap concerns the content dimension of political power and its psychological derivatives. Methods by which to measure these conceptual variables need to be worked out, tested and employed in empirical research on societal stratification.

There are two conditions under which the STSS should be retested. One is that data on national sites different than the one on which is validity now rests. Preferably some of these tests would draw their data from one or more of the richer societies of the world. The other is that it should be applied in social systems smaller than national societies, for example within or among formal organizations in the private and public sectors.

Other conclusions apply to the smaller theory of status allocation processes (TSAP). It should be retested inside the United States now that a generation has past since its last tests there. It should also be retested in other societies, especially those at other levels of development and in non-Western cultures. And like the STSS, it is expected to be applicable within and among formal organizations in the private and public sectors. The non-psychological parts of it have already been used to determine why individuals' remuneration varies among upper level personnel in the labor force of Sao Paulo's manufacturing firms. This test showed promising results. New tests that use the full range of its variables might be even more informative.

In final summary, the work reviewed herein is intended to show both the historical roots of sociology and how to think systematically about it today. Yet this is not merely a sterile academic game. These theories have had and are having important practical consequences.

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