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A macrosociology is needed both on theoretical and on pragmatic grounds. I suggest that, theoretically, societies and polities have emergent properties, which it is fruitful to treat as the subject of a distinct subtheory, macrosociology. Such a theory is not to replace general theory, which deals with the universal properties of all social units, from the dyad to the world community, e.g. the level of integration. Both macro- and microsociology are additional tiers sharing this base, one dealing with the particular properties of macrounits (such as nations, classes), the other with properties of microunits (such as family, work teams, friendship groups). While sociological theory holds general, micro- and macrosubtheories, history is a macroscopic process.¹

From a pragmatic viewpoint, a disciplined study of the substantive problems of society—such as modernization, democratization, change of status

For additional discussion, see Amitai Etzioni, The Active Society: A Theory of Societal and Political Processes (New York: Free Press, 1968). This article was written during my fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. I am indebted to Sarajane Heidt, Fred Dubow, and Miriam Gallaher for comments on earlier drafts. In conducting this work, I also benefited from a grant from the National Science Foundation, No. GS-1475. A different version of the second part of this article was published in The American Journal of Sociology, vol. 73 (September, 1967).

¹. We usually do not refer to the history of microunits. There is a distinct term for the genetic study of persons or families (genealogies); sometimes this is referred to as life history or family history, but when the term "history" is used without additional characterization, it evokes a macrodynamic perspective.
relations among collectivities, societal reallocation of wealth, and political integration of previously autonomous units—cannot be much advanced without a systematic analysis of macroscopic factors.

The most basic distinction here, for reasons that will become evident below, is between guided and ongoing change. The higher the ratio of guided change over ongoing change, the greater the danger that instrumentality might rebel against the primacy of societal goals, and that collectivities whose vested interests rest in the realm of instruments might divert societal guidance to serve their goals. Hence, as has often been pointed out but has never been made the cornerstone of a sociological theory, the key problem of guided change is the development of more effective methods of societal guidance that will at the same time ensure the primacy of societal goals.

A Macrosociological Perspective

Macrosociology Defined

We can support the suggestion that macroscopic (social) units have emergent properties, above and beyond those of microscopic (social) units and beyond universal (social) properties, on tentative pragmatic grounds: Let us test this conception and see if it will enable us to gain some insight into substantive societal problems. We can further support the suggestion on empirical logical grounds, namely that macroscopic emergent properties account for a significant part of the variance of sociological data: explanation of those data cannot be reduced without a significant residue (that is, without unaccounted variance) to propositions drawing only on microscopic or universal properties. Finally, we can support the suggestion on mere logical grounds: a three-level referent structure—of units, subunits, and supraunits—can be applied at any level of analysis (such as roles, families, neighborhoods). There is in principle no reason why we cannot apply the same structure to societies, subsocieties, and suprasocieties. Thus, this differentiation is a private case of a universe of formal, hierarchical relations.

Whatever track we follow, the units of analysis must be substantively designated. In doing so we adhere to a functional approach in that acts are viewed as macroscopic if their consequences are macroscopic, that is, if they affect the properties of macroscopic units. These units are societies, their combinations, and their subunits. An act, let us say a peasant uprising, is in itself neither micro- nor macroscopic; its consequences might be both microscopic (a few families were destroyed) and macroscopic (a change of political institutions and stratification was forced). The same act might thus be studied from both viewpoints. However, because of the hierarchical
nature of the concepts, while acts that have macroscopic consequences always also have microscopic ones, those with microscopic consequences may or may not have macroscopic ones. (Some cutoff point in time is always to be specified because in the long run there might be consequences to consequences that would move from the microscopic to the macroscopic level.) Macroscopic theory deals with the acts that have macroscopic consequences and with the relations of these consequences to each other, not exploring their microscopic effects as long as they, in turn, do not have macroconsequences within the period specified.

Two Kinds of Reductionism

Two kinds of reductionism are prevalent in the social sciences. One reduces social or political analysis to the level of a universal theory of action or to psychology. This reductionism in effect denies both sociology and political science as distinct theoretical disciplines. It is widely embraced by philosophers and psychologists. Sociologists and political scientists naturally tend to profess to realize that their disciplines require a distinct theory, but their actual analyses are often psychological. This is particularly common in studies that use survey data about attitudes of individuals, such as studies of political sociology that deal only with aggregate data about various categories of voters, explaining their voting by attitudes they hold (for example, on a conservatism-liberalism scale) or personality variables (such as degree of authoritarianism). The explanatory processes are clearly intrapersonal. For instance, an individual who holds one attitude will tend to hold others that are consonant because dissonant attitudes cause a psychic cost or pain; or, aggressive attitudes toward foreigners fulfill a superego need. While various procedures for transition from such data to social analysis and suggestions for combination of such data with global data about the social units themselves have been advanced, most studies of this particular tradition do not carry out such analysis.

The second kind of reductionism is to microsociology, on the ground that micro- and macrosociological theories are isometric, and therefore that studying small groups will provide all the theoretical statements needed to understand relations among macroscopic variables (thus, studies of cohesion of small groups are used to explain class solidarity), or else the existence of macroscopic emergent properties is a priori denied. The reductionism from macrosociology to microsociology, which has already been forcefully called to our attention, is much less widely recognized by the

majority of sociologists and political scientists who work with empirical data than is psychological reductionism. Here, it is not only a matter of a threshold that is disregarded in actual research, but one whose very claim is questioned.  

**Substantive Assumptions**

Those who are engaged in macrotheory tend to follow one of two major approaches as to what substantive assumptions are to be made about the nature of macroscopic units, their properties, and their dynamics. We suggest a combination of the two approaches, and add a third ingredient. Before exploring these approaches, we briefly note the criteria used for differentiation among them.

We are interested in developing a theory for macroscopic social change, which is a formal concept for sociopolitical (or societal) history. Societal change, obviously, is affected both by factors which the participants control and by those beyond their control, a mix of guided and ongoing change. The approaches under discussion differ in the assumptions they make about the ratio of one kind of change as against the other. The collectivistic theories see chiefly ongoing changes; voluntaristic ones focus on guided changes. The collectivistic view of society—as an actor oriented toward himself—is rather passive; the voluntaristic is hyperactive. A third approach, which we favor, balances these two approaches.

We are dealing here with analytic languages (or metatheories), each one of which is used to formulate several theories. As we are concerned only with exposing their most basic assumptions, no attempt is made to do justice to any specific theory or to assumptions concerning dimensions other than the one explored: their position toward societal change.

Sociologists are most familiar with collectivistic theories. Social system theories, functionalist models, anthropological-cultural theories of configuration as well as phenomenological ones are collectivistic and basically passive. They do not recognize systematically a seat of action on the macroscopic, societal level. Scanning major theoretical writings of these traditions shows that concepts such as goals, knowledge, decision-making, and strategies—all typical concepts needed to characterize an actor who guides a change process—are absent or appear only infrequently and mainly in relation to microscopic units and not macroscopic ones. The typical society under study is treated as though it had no government, and political processes are described as ongoing.

The propositions associated with the concept of differentiation are representative of many other theorems that could be utilized as an example. The concept is increasingly used over recent years by Parsons, Smelser, Eisen-
stadt, and others to relate societal change to functional-structural analysis. The core image, which is typical of the collectivistic approach, is taken from biology, where we find simple units that split into two or more, each one more specialized than the previous. All the functions carried out by the simple unit are also carried out by the differentiated ones, except that now each of the functions has a substructure of its own, a differentiated unit. Most biological studies do not ask what propels the transition, or to what degree the transition may be guided by a unit other than units which are being differentiated. Those who did raise these questions in biology dealt with the function of codes in guiding the transition from a simple to a differentiated unit. The code, which is found in the undifferentiated unit, holds in an abstract form (as an information pattern or model) a full differentiated design of the future unit toward which the simple unit is to evolve. Research focuses on what the code specifically contains and how its messages are transmitted to the evolving unit. In sociology so far, by and large the question which the conception of a code answers for biology—that is, what guides differentiation—has not been raised. The patterns of societal differentiation and its consequences are studied, but not its guidance mechanism. In other words, the process is viewed as ongoing and the unit merely as subject to it, as passive.

The voluntaristic approach is almost unknown in contemporary sociology. On the other hand, voluntarism was quite influential in political science until recently, especially in the study of international relations between the two world wars and in studies of administration or formal organizations. It is at the heart of general system theories, cybernetics, and


8. Among the contemporary writers along this line are those who believe that changes in the United Nations charter, especially weighted voting, would significantly enhance world government, and that direct election to a European Parliament would lead to the United States of Europe. See Leland M. Goodrich, *United Nations* (New
communication theories. The basic assumption of this approach, often implicit, is that there is a central unit that is able to guide the other member units of the particular system and more or less control them in accordance with its will. The voluntaristic theories divide sharply according to their assumptions about the nature of this will, or central unity, and its links to the other units. Some assume a rationalistic model (the subject units are reasonable), others an irrational one (the subject units are emotionally committed), but all share a view of a highly active guiding mechanism.

For our purposes, one rationalistic-voluntaristic model is of particular interest for reasons that will become evident below, namely the cybernetic model. The source of the model, it is important to realize, is the mechanical direction of machines, that is, the development of machines that take over control functions the way lower-order supervised machines took over earlier performance ("work") functions. The cybernetic model includes decision-making centers, and a communication network that carries the messages from the center to the units under supervision and feedback messages from the units to the center. The underlying assumption of the model, similar to that of the functionalistic full-integration model, is that in principle the center can guide the system. Disturbances such as overloading of the decision-making center are recognized; various solutions are worked out assessing priorities to messages. Similarly, gaps in the communication networks might appear, let us say, due to poor relay, and correction can be provided (for example, by including redundant lines).

When this model is applied to societal analysis, the government is viewed as the cybernatorial overlayer of society which provides it with a decision-making center, a communication network to member units, and feedback mechanisms. One of the most distinguished and influential political scientists of this generation, Karl W. Deutsch, has developed this application of the cybernatorial model.9

The irrational-voluntaristic model is held mainly by psychoanalysts who write about societies, some psychologists, and a few anthropologists.10 The tendency is to view society as man writ large, each society interacting with other societies basically the way one individual interacts with others. For instance, the United States and the Soviet Union misunderstand each other,
which leads to frustration, which generates aggression, and so forth. Improved communication between the sides is expected to increase their reality-testing and cooperation. Charles E. Osgood, a former president of the American Psychological Association, is one of the best known representatives of this approach. While this conception is diametrically opposed to the rationalistic approach in terms of its substantive assumptions about the mechanisms at work, which here are subconscious and emotional, the parallelism exists in that this voluntarism, too, views society as acting basically as a monolithic unit, being able to change, for instance, from a hostile to a cooperative mood as if it had one will.

All the voluntaristic approaches see one main seat of action, and in principle recognize no limitations to "man's"—that is, society's—capacity to change. In that sense all these theories are hyperactive, because they do not include as an integral part variables that can account for the forces that resist change, that block or distort implementation of the will.

*Toward a Synthetic Approach*

We suggest that a synthesis of the collectivistic approach, which in effect focuses upon ongoing processes and change, and a voluntaristic-cybernatorial approach, largely concerned with guided processes and change, would provide for a more balanced theory of societal change, especially of modern societies in which both kinds of change are prevalent. It also balances the nonrational focus of the collectivistic approach, which tends to stress the study of societal ties of sentiments, values, and institutions with the rationalistic perspective cybernetics often exhibits, which pays more attention to knowledge and organizations. A third major element that both approaches tend to neglect needs to be added, namely a conception and theory of power. By power we mean a relational attribute which indicates the capacity of one unit to overcome the resistance of the other(s).

The central position of power for our theory is manifest in our seeing in each society (and in each societal unit) an internal struggle between the guidance mechanisms and the passive elements, and not just an external, interunit struggle. The outcome of this struggle significantly determines the capacity of a societal unit to act upon itself (to effect its own change) as

12. Voluntarists, who face the question of the nature of the actor of the differing units of analysis, maintain their monolithic assumption by assuming a close relationship among the units, for instance between the president (or power elite) and public opinion. See, for instance, Osgood, *War or Surrender.*
13. Much has been written about the difficulties of defining power. To go into all the objections here would require more space than this entire article. We present our reasons for holding that the above definition is operational in detail in *The Active Society.* pp. 314-317.
well as to act externally and hence also to influence the patterns of the supraunit of which it is a part. Societies as supraunits, it is assumed, are composed of units having at least some cybernatorial capacities and power, as well as having, in principle, some such capacities and power of their own, on the supraunit level.

The collectivistic approach sees the members of the collectivity, configuration, or system as closely tied to each other. While some leeway or "play" is recognized, units cannot, basically, be moved around or changed unless other units change more or less simultaneously. If they do not, various pathologies are expected, described in such concepts as social lag and imbalance. And, as no guidance center is assumed—a center whose assumption would entail also assuming moveable and changeable, less "tied" units—the question of the source of the capacity to transform the units or the ties does not arise. Power has at best a marginal theoretical status. As a matter of fact, most collectivistic theories do not include the concept of power at all, while in others it is tacked on post hoc.

The voluntaristic-cybernatorial model stresses the importance of communication and information and the manipulation of symbols; largely excludes power other than that involved in manipulation of symbols; and does not, in principle, expect resistance of the units. It focuses on the problems of generating well-calculated messages, of relaying the messages from the center to the units, and of providing reliable feedbacks, but once the messages reach the performing units, no power is assumed necessary to overcome their resistance to the message. If the feedback indicates that the message did not trigger the expected action, the assumption is that the message was inappropriate (and the effective center is expected to revise it) or was distorted on its way because of communication difficulties, not that the message was appropriate and was "read" loudly and clearly, but was not backed up by enough power. Symbols, changes in patterns of information or meaning are transmitted, not power; 14 it is a matter of the nerves, not the muscles, of government. 15

Rather than characterizing our approach as one of the collectivistic-voluntaristic power analysis, we shall refer to it as a theory of societal guidance ("sociobernetics" would be more colorful but less accurate, and linguistically impure). 16

While the study of societal guidance draws on both the collectivistic and the voluntaristic approaches, it differs significantly on one major dimension from both: it does not assume that the societal unit it deals with is a monolithic or highly integrated unit. Authors of both traditions have argued that this assumption is just a heuristic device, a standard against which reality

14. Symbols are viewed as cognitive, not expressive, and hence have no motivational power.
16. For the main presentation, see The Active Society.
can be measured, and not an assumption about the nature of reality itself. However, even for those who remember that they are dealing only with a heuristic device, these models introduce the mistaken perspective that deviations from the standard are pathological, limited, and correctable; and they provide no model for the study of low integration or low compliance situations, which are abundant. We assume no particular relationship between the societal actors under study. The actors might relate to each other completely externally without any shared bonds, a situation approximated by nations in a state of all-out war. Or the actors might be related by complementary or shared interests, which bind them with ties that are limited to the transactions themselves and which are inherently unstable, because changes in the environment or in the actors that will change the interests concerned will lead to an abandonment of the relationship. Finally, the actors might be bound by shared values and institutionalized norms, which bind in a more generalized and stable way because commitments are non-rational and may have a moral force.

Relations might be classified accordingly as coercive, utilitarian, or normative. It should be stressed that while there are symbolic elements in all three kinds of relationships (for example, threats to use force play an important role in coercion), and one, the normative, is a relationship where the primary link is symbolic, the core of the other two relationships is non-symbolic. Utilitarian relationships draw heavily on interests and material objects, and besides the symbolic relation to the object (as has been stressed in the discussion of the institution of property), the nature and the distribution of the objects themselves are of much importance. The same holds for means of violence as the basis of coercive relations; too much has been made by contemporary sociologists of the symbolic element of legitimation in the concept of authority and too little of the other component, the actual capacity to use force.

We have argued elsewhere that these three kinds of relationships are analytically exhaustive, that every concrete relationship can be analytically classified in terms of various combinations of these three basic ones. The threefold conception of bases of societal order seems to answer the criticism raised by Dahrendorf and others on the symbolistic and non-conflict nature of prevailing sociological theory. It should be noted that each of these relationships can be either horizontal or hierarchical—that is, a relationship either of actors having similar values, interests, or force, or of actors that are subject to an actor who has power of one kind or another over them. All the members of a cohesive group are committed to each other, but the commitments of leaders and followers are asymmetric. Exchange between roughly equal units, and between those which are not, is basically different. This difference between hierarchical and horizontal interactions, neglected

Toward a Macrosociology

in many traditional as well as more recent writings, is central to the present approach.

System, Structure, and Transformability

Over the last decades the term *system* has been applied increasingly loosely, to such a degree that it has lost an essential quality of a concept, the ability to differentiate one referent from another. There is no relationship which has not been at one point or another directly or by implication characterized as a social system, including the relationships between the drivers of cars on the freeway. The essence of the concept as used in sociology, it seems, is collectivistic; no relationship makes a system unless there are nontrivial feedback effects among the members. If half of the American housewives were to have a cup of change-of-pace tea instead of another cup of coffee, the Brazilian economy would be damaged. This does not make these distinguished ladies and the Brazilian coffee plantations one system, however, because what happens to the Brazilian economy will not have significant feedback effects on the American housewives.

We see three kinds of relations: *situations* in which there are interunit relations but not linked by feedback loops; *systems* which assume nontrivial interdependence among the member units; and *communities* which assume a significant integrative supraunit capacity. Each of these three concepts covers a sector of a closeness-of-interaction continuum, and hence within each sector one might refer to more or less “tight” relationships (such as more versus less integrated units).

A system might be a relatively concrete concept referring to relations among units of action—tribes, nations, organized classes—or a relatively abstract one referring to relations among variables. Systems of either kind have boundaries which should not be confused with their structures. Boundaries determine which unit or variable is a member and which is not; structures characterize the specific pattern of relationship among the members. Boundaries change much less frequently than structures; the same system may have, over time, many structures.

Societal units whose structure includes an overlayer can partially guide the change of their nonsocietal situation, their relations to other actors, and their own internal structure. Relatively passive actors are those who react to environmental changes more than they introduce changes in their environment; they adapt by changing their internal makeup but the nature of their adaptation is itself often affected by external factors, including more active societal units. More active units are more able to initiate change both in themselves and in their environments, in accordance with their preferences.

Second, relatively passive units tend to be ultra stable, in the sense that when challenged they tend to introduce variants of the existing structure, attempting to maintain the same basic institutional “solution.” More active
units have a self-transforming capacity: they can create on the cybernatorial level a map of a not yet existing future-system, and guide their self-change toward the realization of a new structure, which is not a variation of the existing one but a basically new pattern. This capacity allows them (a) to adapt successfully to a much larger variety of environmental changes, (b) to participate much more actively in changing the environment, and (c) to actualize more of their own values. The study of the conditions under which the capacity for self-transformation increases and of the elements involved is an integral part of any theory of societal guidance; it systematically ties the study of encompassing societal changes, planned and unplanned, to structural-functional analysis.

The tension between ongoing processes and guided ones is central to the study of societal guidance. To realize his values, an actor seeks to guide processes; but in doing so he faces the constraining effects of other actors in the situation, his system or community ties to others, and the institutionalized consequences of both his and their earlier actions. He faces other factors, too, such as conditions of the nonsocial environment, but these are not the focus of the present study.

The degree to which an actor is active depends on his cybernatorial capacities, his power, and his consensus formation capacity. Each of these factors has both an internal and an external dimension: how much he knows about himself and about others, how much he can mobilize power over members and over nonmembers, and to what degree he can gain the support of subunits and of external units. Since for many purposes it is useful to refer to both cybernatorial and power capacities together, we shall refer to them jointly as the actor's ability to control. When his skill in building consensus is also taken into account, we refer to his ability to guide. As we grant to the subunits and other units in principle the same capacities as to the actor under study, his capacity to be active is obviously not optimized by maximizing his control capacities but by optimizing the combination of control and consensus formation—that is, by maximizing the capacity of his guidance mechanisms.

We turn now to exploring these factors in some detail. Our approach is at first analytic, in that each factor is explored as if all the others were held constant; in the following section we shall take a more synthesizing and historical view of actors that are becoming more active generally, on all major dimensions. In the analytic section we briefly compare societies and subsocieties. (Suprasocieties will not be discussed here.) The societies we focus on are political—that is, encapsulated in a state which serves as their organizational tool for both control and consensus formation. Similarly, the subsocietal actors are collectivities that have organizational arms, such as working classes with their labor parties and unions. Nonorganized collectivities are treated mainly for comparative purposes.

The purpose of the following discussion is merely to illustrate the kind
of factors our theory focuses on, and not to provide here a set of propositions (not to mention data) in support of the theory. The statements, however, have the basic structure of propositions; each proposes that if all other conditions were equal, a change of the specific variable discussed would correlate in the way specified with the active capacity of the unit under study.

**Control Factors**

**Cybernatorial Capacities**

_Knowledge input._ Societal units differ in their capacity to collect, process, and use information. This holds not only for corporations that compete over a market, but also for political parties (Kennedy is believed to have used social sciences more effectively than Nixon in the 1960 campaign), federal agencies (the Air Force is thought to be superior in this respect to the Navy and the Army), and civic organizations (the NAACP’s capacity to use information increased between 1955 and 1965).

We suggest that the input of knowledge into a societal unit follows the same basic patterns other inputs do; that is, it might be blocked (and hence partially or completely lost for action purposes) at each stage of the process. Societal units have varying facilities for collecting information (raw material input). This capacity seems to be associated with economic affluence but not in a one-to-one relationship. If we were to order countries (or other societal units) by their per capita income and then score their information collection capacity, say in terms of expenditure on research, we would expect the most affluent units to have much higher capacity than the next affluent ones, and all the other units would have few such capacities. Three powerful federal agencies in the United States spent more of the federal research and development (R & D) funds than the other 34 agencies together. Three affluent states out of 50 gain more than 50 percent of these R & D funds. Societal units that spend highly on information spent more in the last generation than in all previous generations combined. In short, patterns of interunit distribution of information seem significantly more inegalitarian than are those of distribution of economic assets.

The ratio of investment in collecting over processing information is an indicator of the sophistication of the cybernatorial overlayer and the knowledge-strategy to which the particular unit subscribes. The United States and Great Britain, it seems, tend to invest relatively highly in collection; France,

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at least until recently, has stressed relatively more processing. A societal unit that emphasizes disproportionally the collection of information will, we expect, have a fragmented view of itself and its environment; it will have many bits but no picture, like a survey study before tabulation. Such processing will tend to be associated with drifting (or passivity) as information that is not sufficiently processed is in effect not available for active societal guidance.

On the other hand, a unit that overemphasizes processing is expected to have an unempirical view of itself and its environment, because it will tend to draw more conclusions from the available information than are warranted; it is similar to acting on the basis of a poorly validated theory. Thus, overprocessing is expected to be associated with hyperactivity, as the actor assumes he knows more than he does. Master plans used to guide economic development are typically hyperactive in their assumptions. Finally, societal units whose collection and processing are relatively balanced (not in absolute amounts but in terms of intrinsic needs of the guidance mechanisms) are expected to have comparatively more effective controlling overlayers, all other things being equal, and to be active without being hyperactive.

Information that has been processed might still be wasted as far as the societal unit is concerned if it is not systematically introduced into the unit’s decision-making and implementation overlay where the main societal consumption of information takes place. Two major variables seem useful for characterizing the different arrangements societal units have for interaction between the knowledge-producing and the decision-making units; one concerns the relative degree of autonomy of production, the other, the effectiveness of communications of the product. It is widely believed that structural differentiation between the producers and consumers of information is necessary; fusion of the two kinds of units—for instance, in the management of a corporation—is viewed as dysfunctional both for production of knowledge and for decision-making. For societal units whose knowledge and decision-making units are differentiated, various modes and forms of articulation and communication exist whose relative effectiveness remains to be explored. Here we can touch on only one aspect of this intricate subject.

The controlling overlay itself has layers upon layers; processing is superimposed on the collecting of information, both in the logical sense that the one presupposes the other, and in the structural sense that those engaged in processing have higher ranks and more power to mold the societal input.

19. This is one meaning that is implied when the Anglo-Saxon tradition is characterized as pragmatic and the French as rationalistic. For some evidence, related to differences in economic planning, see Andrew Shonfield, Modern Capitalism: The Changing Balance of Public and Private Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 151-175.
of knowledge than those who collect information. Differences in the internal structure of the control overlayer affect the total action capacity of societal units. The division between those who work within a given knowledge framework and those who seek to transform it, and the structural relations between them, seem to be of much cybernatorial importance. Consumption and, to a degree, processing of knowledge are inevitably in part political processes. That is, which part of the available knowledge is used and what conclusions are reached on the basis of the knowledge is in part determined by political factors. These include considerations of the knowledge-producers in terms of the internal politics of the organizations in which knowledge is processed, their affiliations with political groupings in the society at large, and the differential absorption by various political actors of the knowledge produced, according to its political rather than its intrinsic value. The core of the politicization of knowledge lies not in deliberate or subconscious slanting of facts but in the interpretive and judgmental elements most items of knowledge include. It is not, as some students of administration would have it, that knowledge-units produce information and the political decision-making elites add the judgment. The producers of knowledge play an active role in formulating the judgments.

Within this context, one issue is of special significance for the study of societal guidance: the effect of the relative investments in two sections of the cybernatorial overlayer, namely, transforming versus stable knowledge production. Transforming knowledge rechecks and potentially challenges the basic assumptions of a system. Stable knowledge elaborates and re-specifies, even revises, secondary assumptions within the framework of a basic set which is taken for granted. Most decision-making elites most of the time seem to prefer stable over transforming knowledge production, to seek closure on basic knowledge assumptions precisely because they cannot be selected and reviewed on wholly empirical grounds. Hence, once consensus has been reached on the basic assumptions of a worldview, a self-view, a view of others, strategic doctrine, and the like, it is expensive politically, economically, and psychologically for the elites to transform these assumptions. Therefore they tend to become tabooed assumptions, and knowledge production tends to become limited to specifics within the limits of the assumptions. At the same time, the ability to transform basic perspectives is sharply reduced and with it the capacity for societal self-transformation. The societal units survive as long as the range of tolerance of their knowledge and societal pattern allows for sufficient adaptation to environmental changes, but such adaptation tends to become increasingly costly.

More active units have supralayers that can be activated to review and transform tabooed assumptions. A comparison of corporations that have

shifted to a new line of products, restructured their internal organization, and found new markets when their old markets were gradually lost, with those whose sales and profits declined or "died" because of lack of innovations, suggests that transforming corporations maintained R & D units which were not only exempt from the tabooed assumptions but were also, among other things, expected sporadically to review these assumptions. That is, part of their institutionalized role was to engage in search behavior precisely where the decision-making elites would otherwise settle for satisfying solutions.22

The societal parallel of this cybernatorial arrangement is not difficult to see. The intellectual community acts as one major societal R & D unit, as a critical examiner of tabooed assumptions. Under what economic, political, and sociological conditions it can fulfill this function and what, if any, functional alternatives exist, are questions social scientists have much feeling about—but there is surprisingly little systematic research.23

These questions can be studied for any society and any societal units. As the input of knowledge becomes a major guided societal activity (more than 75 percent of expenditure of the R & D funds is federal), as the ratio of this input as compared to other societal inputs is increasing, both in relative expenditure and in sociopolitical importance, the macrosociology of knowledge becomes an unavoidable part of studies of societal change. Typically, earlier studies of a society stressed the size of its population, territory, and GNP; the present approach adds the number of Ph.D.'s a society turns out, the size of its professional manpower, and its investment in research and development as indicators of a major societal variable. Sociology of knowledge traditionally focused on the social conditions under which true statements are made; 24 macrosociology of knowledge focuses on the societal conditions under which knowledge for societal purposes is produced and consumed, opening a whole new field of inquiry for the study of societies.25

Societal Decision-Making

The head of the societal control overlayer are decision-making elites—the sociopolitical equivalent of the electronic center. The elites choose between alternative policies, issue signals to the performing units (guide the underlayer), and respond to feedback information. (The body of the overlayer

23. For one of the few sociological studies, see Lewis Coser, Men of Ideas (New York: Free Press, 1965).
25. For studies in this field so far conducted almost exclusively by nonsociologists, see Viscount Hailsham, Q.C., Science and Politics (London: Faber and Faber, 1963) and Don K. Price, The Scientific Estate (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1965).
is made up of communication networks which tie the élites to other member units and a power hierarchy.) Sociologists have studied élites by asking how closed or how open they are to members of various societal units, how dispersed control is among them, and how they relate to each other. But these are not cybernatorial considerations. They belong under the heading of consensus-formation (for example, closed and completely open élites are believed less effective for consensus formation than relatively open ones) and the study of power relations (for example, hierarchy plus decentralization is believed more effective than monopolization of control by one élite or its fragmentation among several). Cybernatorial aspects of élites have been studied largely by nonsociologists and have not been systematically related to analysis. The cybernatorial study of élites concerns the procedures used by the decision-making élites, the strategies employed, and the communication networks that lead from the élites to the performing units and back.

When élites engage in decision-making, they draw on an implicit or explicit societal theory as to what the relations among the units under control are like, and as to how much and by what means these can be guided by the élites. The validity of these theories varies from élite to élite; the greater the validity, the more effective one would expect the decision-making to be, which in turn is positively associated with the degree to which a social unit is active. This proposition is not earthshaking, nor are many other ones concerning the conditions under which decision-making is effective. However, the inclusion in or omission from a societal theory of a set of propositions about effective decision-making is of much importance. It is indicative of a central position regarding the nature of society and of societal change.

In seeking to explain the action or change of a societal unit, most sociologists are more inclined to explore background conditions, from the level of economic resources the unit commands to the educational opportunities of élite members, than to study the decision-making procedures the élites follow. There is a widely held assumption that such background factors constitute the basic substructure which not only sets the main limits of variability of societal action and change (poor countries lack the capital needed to develop) but also specifies the main factors which determine what decisions will be made among whatever options are left open (because of the revolution of rising expectations, democratic élites cannot defer increase in consumption). Differences in decision-making procedures are considered either dependent variables or trivial. In comparison, societal guidance views the societal actors as having more autonomy. Background

factors are viewed as setting a broad frame; the course followed within its limits is affected by cybernatorial factors, of which decision-making procedures are significant elements. For instance, an effective élite might defer consumption increase in a poor country, and thereby lead toward a stable development.

Actually many of the underdeveloped nations are not poor in resources nor overpopulated, but are poor in cybernatorial capacities: their élites are highly impotent. For instance, in 1930 Canada and Argentina had similar economic indicators. Since then Canada has continued to develop, while Argentina remains underdeveloped. A typical background conditions approach would stress the presence of the Protestant element in the one country and its absence in the other, as well as the differences in the Catholic stock in the two countries (in Argentina it is more that of Southern Spain and Italy, in Canada that of the French). These differences are expected, à la Weber, to correlate with attitudes favorable to capitalism.

An élite study would add the difference between the responsive democratic government of Canada and the authoritarian leadership of Argentina. True, this difference in leadership is in part due to differences in societal structure; thus, for example, Canada would not “tolerate” a Perón. But unless one assumes a one-to-one relationship between background factors and élite conduct and assumes that élite conduct has no significant independent effect on background factors, the analysis of the nature of the élites has to be included as an integral part of a theory of societal processes. To highlight the importance of systematically including the study of élites, it suffices to contrast the development of each country under different governments (such as Argentina under Perón and Illia) following different decision-making procedures.

One typical decision which societal élites in charge of guided change often have to make, at what are relatively critical turning points, is between acceleration and deceleration of the processes of change they guide. When a societal change is initiated—whether it be collectivization of farms, federation, or desegregation—resistance tends to accumulate because existing patterns are backed up by vested interests which are often threatened by the changes. As a change advances, there is often at least one critical turning point at which resistance rises to a point where it endangers the control of the élites. The president thinks he might not be reelected, the government believes it might be overthrown, or a part of the country might secede. The decision the élites then face is between acceleration, in hope of overpowering the opposition and reaching a stage at which the support of those that will benefit from the new pattern will rise, or slowing down to give more time for the opposition to be worked out, circumvented, educated, or otherwise dealt with.

Obviously the question is not which one procedure or strategy is in the abstract the more effective; the question is under what societal conditions one is more effective than the other and under what conditions an élite chooses the suitable as against the unsuitable strategy. In a comparative study of four cases we found two élites that accelerated and two that decelerated in face of a premature situation, where opposition was high and forces in support of the change weak. The accelerating élites lost control (in the United Arab Republic, Syria rebelled and seceded; the West Indian Federation was disbanded). The decelerating élites are still in control, though in one of the two cases (the Scandinavian system) the élite had to decelerate so much that the process of change (unification) came to a standstill, while only in the fourth case (the European Economic Community) was continuation of the process assured by deceleration.29

Other societal decisions, often debated ideologically but rarely studied analytically and systematically, concern the conditions of militancy versus moderation, or confrontation versus coalition politics, and the holistic versus the gradualist approach. These and similar strategic decisions draw on explicit or implicit theories about the nature of societal linkages and control factors, such as how far a government can be relied upon as an agent of transformation, what the result of mass activation of apathetic publics will be, or to what extent “spillover” in one societal sector will generate change in others. Here lies the main link between the study of societal decision-making and of societal input of knowledge.

The quality of decision-making gains in importance the more active a societal unit is by other criteria. Obviously the more activated a unit is and the more assets it has, the more advantages it can gain by effective use of them, and the more it can waste them if it uses them ineffectively. For passive units, which barely guide their own processes, background factors are of much importance; for units that react more creatively to their environmental as well as to internal challenges, it is the quality of decision-making that is of much importance. Under what structural conditions—all other conditions being equal—élites make more effective decisions, is a question that has barely been explored sociologically.

Cybernatorial factors other than processing of information and decision-making include various attributes of societal goals, such as the clarity of their formulation, and the degree of compatibility of the various goals a unit pursues. Also important is the quality of the communication networks that lead from the decision-making élites to the performance units and back, including number and intensity of gaps, “noise” on the line, and so forth. As our purpose here is not to list all these factors, but to illustrate the main categories, we turn now from cybernatorial factors to the second element of control: power.

Societal assets and power. Societal structures are not just patterns of interaction of actors, patterns of expectations and symbols, but also patterns of allocation of societal assets, the possessions of a societal unit. These can be classified analytically as coercive, utilitarian, and normative, concerning respectively the distribution of means of violence, material objects and services, and symbols. A measure of the assets a societal unit or subunit possesses is not in itself an indication of its actual power, but only of its potential. Assets might be used to generate more assets, be consumed or stored, or used to overcome the resistance of other actors, which is what by definition societal power means. (This does not mean necessarily to force other actors; their resistance might be overcome, for instance, by offering a payoff.) In exploring the relations between assets and power, it is essential not to shift the frame of reference in midanalysis. Conversion of assets into power in time one might lead to more assets in time two; in time one, however, the generation of power entails a loss of assets.

A central predisposition of societal guidance is that the relationship between assets and power is a loose one—that is, the amount of assets allocated to a societal unit in a given structure is a poor predictor of how much societal power the unit will have. The amount of power generated depends significantly on the intraunit allocation of the assets among alternative usages. A unit poor in assets can in principle command more power than a much more affluent one, if the poor unit assigns more of its assets to power “production.” (With half the GNP the Soviet Union maintains a defense budget similar to that of the United States.)

What fraction of the assets a unit possesses is converted into power is itself influenced by the societal context and not freely set by the societal actor (for example, the fact that Negro-Americans are politically less active than Jewish-Americans is in part due to differences in educational opportunities). However, we suggest, the degree of intraunit assignment of assets to power is a relatively more malleable attribute than the amount of assets the unit possesses (at any given point in time). It is here that an important element of voluntarism enters the societal structure. A comparison of colonial societies in the years immediately preceding the takeoff of national independence movements with those immediately after they won their independence seems to show that the takeoff involved more change in the relative use of assets for power than in the assets base. Similarly, the American civil rights movement, which between 1953 and 1965 transformed important segments of the American Negro from a passive to an active grouping, entailed much more of a change in mobilization of power than in amount of assets.30

Mobilization. Each societal unit has at any given point in time a level of activation which we define as the ratio of its assets that are available for collective action over its total assets. The percent of the GNP spent by the government, the percent of the labor force employed by it, and the percent of knowledge producers that work for it are crude indicators of national activation level. Mobilization refers to an upward change in the level of activation, to an increase in the fraction of the total assets possessed by a unit that are made available for collective action by that unit. (Demobilization refers to a reduction in that level.)

The level of activation of most societal units most of the time is very low; if all their assets are taken into account, usually less than ten percent are available for unit action. Hence relatively small percentage changes in the level of mobilization may largely increase the action capacity of a unit. For example, an increase of ten percent in the assets of a unit that are mobilized might more than double its action capacity. Major societal transformations, such as revolutions and the gaining of national independence, usually involve relatively high mobilization. The secret of the power of social movements lies in part in the relatively high mobilization which their asceticism and the intense commitment of their members allows for.

Aside from the asset base a collectivity possesses and the amount of power it is mobilizing, the kind of power mobilized also affects the action capacity of the unit. To employ power is, by definition, to overcome resistance, but in society as in nature each application of power generates a counterpower, a resistance of its own (the result of the alienation of those who were made to suspend their preferences in favor of those of the power wielders). While all power applications have this effect, some generate more alienation than others.

In estimating the effect of the use of a particular kind of power on the relationships between the power wielder and the subjects, it is essential to take into account that this is as a rule a generalized relationship. That is, while a particular instance of exercise of power may generate little alienation, repeated use may generate much. Even when no alienation is manifest, it might accumulate covertly and express itself indirectly.

We suggest that when the power relationship is explored (and not just described), if the power used is coercive, all other things being equal, resistance will tend to be high; if utilitarian, lower; and if normative, lower still. Most power wielders may prefer to use the less alienating kinds, but there are limitations on their capacity to mobilize these kinds as well as on their understanding of the dynamics involved, with the consequence that they may opt to use the more alienating kinds of power, even where this is not otherwise necessary.

A study of control thus adds to the exploration of the asset base of a

unit, the degree to which it is mobilized for collective action, and which kinds of power are mobilized. These added factors in turn determine to a considerable degree how alienating control will be, and whether relations between the elites and the other units will be ones of open conflict, encapsulated conflict, or cooperation.

Consensus Formation

Consensus Defined

So far, guidance of change has been explored from a downward view, from the controlling overlayer to the controlled underlayer; even the discussion of communication feedback and subject resistance has been from the viewpoint of a controlling center. The main difference, though, between societal and electronic cybernetics is that in the societal we take into account systematically that the controlled units have some of the controlling capacities themselves: they input knowledge, make decisions, pursue goals, and exercise power. Hence the capacity of any one unit to act is determined only in part by its ability to control the others; it is similarly affected by the degree of consensus, that is, the degree to which the goals it has chosen to pursue and the means it employs are compatible or in conflict with those preferred by other units.

Consensus, the congruence of preferences of the units concerned, is viewed by typical collectivistic theories as largely given (or changing under the impact of ongoing processes); voluntaristic theories tend to view it as open to manipulation by charismatic leadership and/or mass media. From the viewpoint of the societal guidance theory, consensus is the result of a process in which given preferences and guided efforts affect the outcome, which is a changing consensus. Many studies have applied such a perspective; in societal guidance it finds a theoretical home. How much consensus is actually achieved changes with a variety of sociopolitical factors and cannot be explored here.

Control and Consensus

There is a trade-off curve between control and consensus; that is, for any given level of activation, the greater consensus, the less need for control, and the less consensus gained the more need for control. Which mix is used is, of course, not without consequences; it affects the level of alienation and of resistance, and hence the future capacity to act. It is important to realize that when both consensus and control are higher, more change can be guided than when both are lower, without an increase in alienation. (The additional consensus absorbs the additional alienation which the additional control would generate.)
Consensus Formation Structures

To illustrate a societal guidance study of consensus formation, we briefly compare built-in to segregated consensus formation structures. In a built-in structure, consensus formation is by and large the output of ongoing interactions among the societal units. Consensus formation in smaller and less complex preliterate tribes seems to rely largely on ongoing interaction between the member families. In the Soviet society, consensus is to a degree produced in the process of interaction between factory managements, union leaders, and party officials, though the prime function of these interactions is not consensus formation but is economic and administrative in nature (in the downward guidance sense of the term). In a segregated structure, political units (such as parties and legislatures) exist as distinct from societal ones, and societal differences are translated into political ones before consensus concerning collectivization is worked out. Segregated structures seem more effective for consensus formation than built-in ones, though they can produce only enough to back up comparatively low levels of activation. They are like a sophisticated machine that cannot be used for heavy duty.

In the search for a structure that would allow for more guided change and higher consensus, a search that is far from completed, voluntary planning as developed in France in the postwar years and by the European Economic Community has gained much attention. There is less segregation of political and societal units than in the segregated structure (typical of traditional democracies) but more than in built-in structures (typical of totalitarian regimes). Above all, the knowledge input units are not related only to the decision-making units but are tied also into the consensus-forming process, thus informing the controlled and not just the controlling units, and remodeling the judgments that information units produce—on the basis of interaction with both groupings.

Comparative studies of consensus formation ought to supplement, and in part replace, the comparative study of constitutions and formal studies of governments. To supplement, because we need studies both of the political institutions and of consensus formation which will relate these institutions to societal groups and relations among them. To replace in part, because the studies of political shells have proved too rigid and simplistic for many purposes. The study of democracy might illustrate this point.

As democracy was traditionally defined—the rule of the majority—the concept was unable even to distinguish between totalitarian and democratic regimes. The more subtle definition—provision for the institutionalized change of the party in office—still disregarded less formal democratic

mechanisms, such as changes in the coalition partners and the factions represented inside the ruling party in response to changes in societal power, and defines countries such as West Germany and Israel as non-democratic. Neither the Christian Democratic Union nor Mapai has been voted out of office since the establishment of the two states, and whether or not these parties can be voted out is an open question. Also, the formal study focuses on parliaments and parties as the consensus formation agents, but these are rapidly losing their effectiveness as the power of the executive rises. Thus, a polity that meets all the criteria of formal democracy might still not generate enough consensus for the prevailing level of activation, not to mention increased levels which are both needed and occurring, thus leaving the society with substandard consensus leading either to accumulative alienation or curtailment of activity.

Similarly, important differences among the consensus formation of various totalitarian societies and of authoritarian ones, a mode of government which prevails among the new nations and in Latin America, as well as their changes over time, can scarcely be studied in formal terms (which characterization of regimes as totalitarian or authoritarian are) or by the classification of regimes as one-, two-, or multi-party states. In comparison, a societal guidance study of consensus formation provides a less institutional and more total approach.

A Synthesizing View: The Active Society

We shall now illustrate the synthesizing perspective on societal change that can be attained once our understanding of the various components of societal guidance is more advanced, although here little more than a brief illustration can be provided. Using control (cybernatorial capacities and power) and consensus formation as two dimensions of a property space, we characterize, in an ideal-typical manner, a society which is high on both dimensions as comparatively active; low on both as passive; high on control but low on consensus as overmanaged; and low on control but high on consensus as drifting.

The passive society is approximated by highly primitive societies. Their low level of societal self-control is obvious. Their consensus is collectivistic and static, but it is largely not mobilized around societal goals and there is little machinery to form consensus when additional consensus is needed. Hence while background consensus might be high, the consensus formation capacity is low. One indicator of this low capacity is that when primitive societies do act, coercion often plays a rather central role in overcoming resistance.33

The active society maintains a level of activation that is not lower, and is possibly even higher, than that of overmanaged societies, and it forms at least as much consensus as drifting societies. This is possible because the active society commands more effective control and consensus formation mechanisms; it can rely more on the less alienating kinds of power, especially on the normative. Also, high consensus requires a high level of activation and realization of some of the variety of goals the various subsocieties and the society as a unit are committed to. Effective control, in turn, requires support of those subject to the control; hence raising the level of control without at the same time raising alienation requires a high capacity to form consensus. Thus, high control and high consensus, high activation and low alienation, are mutually reinforcing. Finally, the active society has the highest capacity of the four ideal-types for self-transformation, which is the ultimate safeguard against widespread alienation as it makes possible that the rise of radically different goals and subsocieties may still be accommodated within the same system.

The active society is largely a utopia which does not exist, although it is not a utopia in the sense that no society might become one, for its functional requirements do not appear to violate any sociological law. Social-movement societies, such as Israel in 1948, approximate such an active society. A main difference between a social-movement society and the active one is that the latter stabilizes some social-movement features such as high consensus formation and intense commitment, rather than merely passing through such a phase. The mechanisms for stabilization cannot be discussed in the present limits of space.

The overmanaged, high control, low consensus type is approximated by the totalitarian societies. Typically these have inadequate consensus formation structures, and those they have are mainly of the built-in type. Societal action is oriented to hyperactive goals, which later are scaled down, as consensus mechanisms here do not allow discovery beforehand of where and how much resistance will be encountered in the various subsocieties as various societal changes are introduced. Typically, too, use of alienating kinds of power is high.

Whether overmanaged societies are transformable and what kind of societies they will become if they are, are two widely debated questions. The argument is between those who see democratization as taking place and those who argue that the totalitarian societies are ultra stable.34 This dichotomy seems not to exhaust the possibilities. Democratization seems unlikely because democracies are themselves no longer well adapted, as their present control and consensus mechanisms are insufficient for the

34. The transformation view is presented by Gabriel Almond, The American People and Foreign Policy (New York: Praeger, 1960), p. xvi; the opposite one by Philip E. Mosely, “Soviet Foreign Policy since the 22nd Party Congress,” Modern Age, vol. 6 (Fall, 1962).
higher level of activation needed, and because there is no legitimation of democracy or democratic experience in the history of most contemporary totalitarian societies. On the other hand, in view of the far-reaching changes of the Soviet Union since 1917, it is hard to maintain that totalitarian societies are not transformable.

The direction of any such change might be toward an active society whose level of control is relatively closer to that of totalitarian societies than of the democratic ones, whose less segregated consensus formation structure is closer to the totalitarian built-in one than to the democratic segregated one, and whose social-motion character can draw on legitimation of the most charismatic period of totalitarian societies. The sharpest transition needed would be from reliance on force and propaganda as central means of compliance to a focus on education and normative power; such a transformation, as drastic as it is, may be easier than a shift to a utilitarian focus characteristic of capitalistic democracies. In fact, this is the direction of change already evidenced by the Soviet Union.

Drifting societies are approximated by capitalist democracies. Their most important relevant feature is that they act as societies to introduce significant structural changes only when the need to act is “overdue,” 35 in a “crisis,” when broad consensus can be mobilized. Second, the action taken often does not remove the lag, as the changes introduced are the fruit of compromise between the more conservative and the more change-oriented subsocieties. The second major reason why capitalist democracies are drifting societies is that the more powerful subsocieties draw societal assets for their own consumption and power, either by neutralizing the societal controls or by slanting them to serve their subsocietal interests. In either case, as far as the society at large is concerned, it is not guiding its processes and change.

Consensus, Equality, and Activation

Here a conceptual addition must be introduced to tie the idea of consensus formation to those of asset analysis and alienation, an addition found in the concept of equality. Equality is more nearly approached the closer the distribution curve of assets approximates a straight line; in other words, groupings of the population that are equal in size possess equal amounts of assets. No society is completely egalitarian, but there are obviously significant differences in the degree of inequality. These in turn are associated, though of course not on a one-to-one basis, with differences in power. Now when consensus is formed it reflects the power relations among the members; the policy agreed upon tends to be closer to that preferred by the more powerful subsocieties. It is as if the weaker members say to themselves that

35. Etzioni, Political Unification, pp. 81-82, 95.
they had better go along with a suggested policy, in which their concurrence is traded for some concessions—for fear that otherwise the powerful would impose a policy even more removed from their preferences. The amount of alienation that remains in the weaker units, however, is clearly related to the measure of inequality. Consensus which leaves little or no alienation can be formed only under conditions of comparatively high equality.

While this cannot be demonstrated here, we suggest that there is a secular historical trend toward a reduction in inequality among the subsocieties making up the capitalistic democracies although so far this reduction has been limited. (The trend is fairly obvious as far as political rights and status symbols are concerned; it is less clear with regard to economic well-being.) Continuation and acceleration of such a trend, if it were to take place, would move democratic societies toward a high level of activation by allowing the formation of more consensus with less alienating undertones, and more facing of societal problems before they are overdue. A major force which propels the transition from a drifting to an active society is the mobilization of the weaker collectivities; this is triggered by the spread of education, by changes in employment opportunities, and other factors that generate imbalanced status sets, as well as by the priming effect of elites, especially intellectual ones. As this statement is rather central to our conception of societal change as far as the transition of Western societies into the postmodern (see below for definition) period is concerned, the assumptions implied should be briefly outlined.

As we see it, transformation of capitalist democracies is not propelled by conflict among classes, but by interaction among organized collectivities. Thus, the societal units may be an ethnic group, a race, a national community, and not just a class; the relationship might be of coalition, limited adversary, or the like, rather than all-out conflict; and, above all, the unit of action is not the collectivity per se, but that part of it which has been mobilized into organizational structures. Thus, history is not affected by the working class as such, which is a passive unit, but by labor unions, labor parties, social protest movements that mobilize a segment of the working class. (The same could be said about the civil rights movement and the Negro-Americans or of national independence movements and colonial people.)

Collectivities are bases of potential power, but generally only a small fraction of these potentialities are actualized for purposes of societal action and change. The capacity of any societal actor to influence the pattern of societal change (his actual societal power) depends as much on his capacity to mobilize—that is, on the outcome of the internal struggle between mobilizers and the apathetics—as on the actor’s potential power base.

It might be said that the capacity to mobilize is itself determined by the distribution of assets among the collectivities; that the more powerful units hold down the capacity of the weaker societal units to mobilize. While this
is a valid observation, it is also true that the mobilization of any collectivity reduces the capacity of other collectivities to hold it down. For each point in time, hence, it is necessary to study not only the power potential of a societal actor but also his mobilization capacity, which affects his actual power at this point in time. The dynamic analysis then proceeds by comparing changes in potential and actual power over time and the effects of changes in the power of some actors over that of the others. A study of societal change which focuses largely on the stratificational relations among collectivities (as Marx did and in which he was corrected to a degree by Lenin),\textsuperscript{36} not to mention theories which exclude power analysis altogether, provides at best a fragmentary view of societal change.

What does all this imply for the change of capitalistic democracies? In these societies, too, most members of most collectivities have a formal right to participate in the political process; they have an egalitarian political institutional status unmatched in their societal positions. An increasing number are also gaining an education, which has a mobilizing effect.\textsuperscript{37} For historical reasons which need not be explored here, campus groups, professionals, clergy, middle-class members of ethnic minorities, all of which command political skills, are allowed to act as mobilizers, though under various constraints. And, we suggest, with weaker collectivities becoming increasingly mobilizable, and with an increase in the number of mobilizers, the total effect is increased societal power of the heretofore weaker and underprivileged collectivities. The effect of the mobilization of weaker collectivities, which is only in part neutralized by countermobilization of more powerful collectivities, is to transform the society in the direction of a relatively more egalitarian and active one. Whether such transformation will sooner or later lead to a showdown between the powerful and the mobilizing collectivities, or whether the mobilization will run out of steam on its own, or whether the scales will be tipped for an active society—that is, whether a structural transformation will take place—are questions which our study of societal guidance points to but cannot at present answer.

Overmanaged and drifting societies both seem to be tending in the direction of an active society (rather than either of the less active types becoming the prevalent type). The new means of communications and of knowledge technology may be working in this direction in both kinds of societies; continued mobilization of the weaker collectivities in capitalist societies and increased pluralism in totalitarian societies may also be supportive of such a transformation. Under what conditions an active society will be advanced is a major subject of macrosociology. The new cybernatorial capacities that have been increasingly available since 1945 offer a


\textsuperscript{37} For a review of several studies which show correlations between education and political activation, see Lester W. Milbarth, \textit{Political Participation} (Chicago: Rand, 1965), pp. 42-54.
new range of societal options and hence mark a period that might be referred to as the postmodern one. The year 1945 marks also the opening of the atomic age and hence suggests that a major issue for macrosociology, not touched upon here, is that of changing not the structures but the boundaries of the systems. The question as to which conditions favor and which block the rise of active societies and the transformation of an anarchic world into a communal one, we suggest, is regained for systematic sociological study by such approaches as that of societal guidance.