



Basic Human Needs, Alienation and Inauthenticity

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BASIC HUMAN NEEDS, ALIENATION AND INAUTHENTICITY *

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This article presents a case for the usefulness of the concept of basic human needs. The author suggests that it is fruitful to assume that there is a universal set of basic human needs which have attributes of their own, not determined by the social structure, cultural patterns, or socialization processes. Ways are shown in which propositions which use the concept could be tested empirically. Restoration of the concept of basic human needs into sociological theory corrects the "over-socialized" conception of man, identifies a central distinction between the industrial and the emergent post-industrial society, and bridges two divergent traditions in sociology: structural-functional analysis and alienation.

MOST sociologists consider the concept of basic human needs as unproductive. Cohen accurately reflects the prevailing view:

... nobody has ever been able to formulate an inventory of original or unsocialized tendencies that has commanded more than scattered and temporary agreement. In the second place, the very meaning of "original human nature," in any other sense than a range of possibilities, each of them dependent upon specific experiences for its development or maturation, has always proved exceedingly elusive and obscure. (Cohen, 1966:60).

In this conceptual discussion we indicate the reasons the concept seems useful *and* the

* A much more elaborate, but earlier, presentation is included in Chapter 21 of Etzioni, 1968. In working on this article, I benefited from a 1967-1968 Social Science Research Council Faculty Fellowship. I am indebted for comments to Albert K. Cohen and Martin Wengilnsky.

ways the propositions advanced using it could be tested empirically. The restoration of the concept of "basic human needs" to full membership in sociological theory, we shall attempt to show, serves (a) to correct an "over-socialized" conception of man, which prevails in mainstreams of modern sociology, (b) to conceptualize a central distinction between the modern industrial society and the post-modern one, which seems to be emerging now, and (c) to bridge two main sociological traditions which have been growing apart: that of structural-functional analysis, and that of alienation, although, curiously, both rejected the concept.

As far as verification of the propositions advanced is concerned, we assume here a division of labor between those who specialize in theory-building and those who specialize in verification (Levy, 1966:167-172). We attempt to outline a perspective, spell

out propositions which are derived from it, and indicate the ways they may be refuted or verified. We are fully aware that they must submit to the test of empirical evidence like all propositions.

BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

By "need" we simply mean that the person can be denied a specified kind of experience only at the cost of an intra-personal tension. Our attention here is focused not on basic needs man clearly shares with the animal world—such as those for nourishment and sleep—but those believed to be more distinctly human, such as the need for affection and for recognition. With regard to these needs, three main points of agreement seem to prevail: (a) There is no one-to-one connection between any specific need and any specific "answer"; on the contrary, the needs can be satisfied in a very large variety of ways.¹ A great diversity of cultural patterns and institutional arrangements are both conceivable on theoretical grounds and empirically found. (b) Whether human needs are "universal" or not is basically immaterial because the malleability of the needs is held to be so high that they cannot be used to explain any specific social institution we encounter, even if they were "particularistic." In accounting for differences in social institutions, explanations have focused on the needs of the social system (in functional analysis), on historical forces (in Marxism), and on environmental factors (in ecological analysis). (c) Classifications of human needs are viewed as a-empirical. That is, they cannot be tested because we never encounter the needs in pure form, outside a specific

¹ "Man's 'original nature' is seen largely in neutral terms, as neither good nor bad. It is, rather, a potential for development, and the extent to which the potential is realized depends on the time and society into which a man is born, and on his distinctive place in it. If it does not quite treat him as a 'tabula rasa,' modern sociology, nevertheless, regards man as a flexible form which can be given all manner of content.

"Socialization, the process of learning one's culture while growing out of infant and childhood dependency, leads to internalization of society's values and goals. People come to want to do what from the point of society they must do. Man is, therefore, seen, in his inner being, as mainly moral, by and large accepting and fulfilling the demands society makes on him." (Inkeles, 1964:50.)

social mold. The unsocialized infant does not have these needs, and socialized men, by definition, have internalized social norms and patterns. Many lists of basic human needs have been provided (Davies, 1963) but none have had more than a fleeting hold over the sociological imagination; they did not prove to be productive.

Sociologists are, of course, aware that some major schools of thought, especially psychoanalytical and anthropological ones, rely heavily on the concept of "basic human needs" (or "human nature").² But, since works in these traditions command at best the support of qualitative data, and are often presented in rather vague, abstract, or ideological language—frequently statements are couched in terms which make the statements not only unsupported but untestable—these works have added more to the rejection of these concepts by most sociologists than to their acceptance.³ Suggestions that the notion of "basic human needs" may advance sociology as a science encounter such resistance that it seems necessary at this point to reassure the reader that the author shares the desire to keep sociology a logical and empirical enterprise, however critical such an endeavor may be.

Specifically, we suggest that it is fruitful to assume that there is a universal set of basic human needs *which have attributes of their own which are not determined by the social structure, cultural patterns, or socialization processes.* If this postulate is made, it follows that, since human needs are universal but societies differ in their cultural patterns, stratification structure, polity, and role-specifications, societies also differ in the extent to which their membership is able to satisfy their needs. That is, if we could find indicators of the membership's satisfaction with each one of the major facets of their society and build an index for those, or an indicator for the general level of affection or disaffection with a particular society, and assess this indicator for a society-wide sam-

² The first concept is used in the more technical writings; the second in more philosophical ones. The differences need not concern us here. Erich Fromm (1961) provides a popular overview of the philosophical issues involved, from a Freudian-Marxist perspective.

³ On the inability to test several of Sigmund Freud's key propositions, see Jerome Frank, 1961.

ple of the members, we would expect to find systematic differences in the scores various societies would attain. Since such measures of satisfaction have been designed (Bradburn and Caplovitz, 1965; Almond and Verba, 1963:46-61), we can hold that the proposition concerning inter-societal differences in terms of the satisfaction of the members is a testable proposition. The fact that human beings can adapt and are adapting to a very large variety of societal structures and cultural patterns is not sufficient evidence that their needs are highly malleable, as long as the frustrations they suffer or satisfactions they gain also co-vary. That people *live* both in Athens and in Sparta is not proof that they find the two kinds of societies equally responsive to their needs. Adaptation may have quite different costs in the two societies.

We turn next to discuss (a) a methodological aspect of the issue; (b) the empirical indicators of the concepts and tests for the propositions outlined; (c) implications of these propositions—if further verified—for sociological theory; (d) the bridge that the conception of basic human needs provides for the functionalist and the alienation schools; and (e) a central difference between modern and post-modern (post-1945) societies with regard to their responsiveness to basic human needs.

SURVIVAL VS. EFFECTIVENESS

The pervading sociological positions, as stated above, are formulated with what we described in an earlier publication as *survival models* (Etzioni, 1964:19). The models attempt to state under what conditions a social system could survive, suggesting a set of "functional prerequisites" (Aberle et al., 1950). These prerequisites are satisfied under a very large variety of social and cultural conditions. While this seems a valid statement, in the sense that, when these conditions are met, social systems do survive, its fruitfulness is limited because it cannot account for the very large differences among social systems which do survive. It is particularly unproductive for the study of societies because very few of these social systems ever violate the "survivalist" functional prerequisites, i.e., very few cease to exist.

In studying complex organizations as social units, we found it useful to analyze them in a different perspective, one of effectiveness, which asks not whether an organization survives but to what extent it realizes its goal or goals. Effectiveness models are more subtle than survival ones, if only because the latter recognize only two possibilities, while the effectiveness model recognizes numerous ones, i.e., varying degrees of relative effectiveness. To state the same basic point in the language of functional analysis: we distinguish between functional *alternatives* and functional *equivalents*. Alternatives which allow the system to survive are numerous but rarely are they equivalent in terms of the effectiveness of the system. Thus a "survivalist" model of automobiles informs us that water is not an "alternative" for gasoline; we still may be interested in the relative effectiveness of various kinds of gasoline, diesel oil, and electric current.

We add now that societies (and for that matter all other social units) may also be studied with an "effectiveness" perspective in mind. First, societies often set some goals for their members (frequently by the use of organizations—such as state agencies—as sub systems). Secondly, societies' effectiveness in satisfying their members may be used as a base to compare them with each other and over time. Societies which all score in the same way from a survivalist viewpoint, because they exist and persist, will score differently in terms of the relative level of disaffection or happiness they generate. How is one to explain such differences except by differences in the societies' respective responsiveness to their members' needs? If all could mold human needs to their specifications, no systematic difference could be expected, that is, other those resulting from conflicting specifications. One may argue that the source of differences in the level of members' satisfaction a society generates is intra-societal, e.g., socialization to conflicting social norms generates frustration rather than the discrepancy between the norms the society prescribes and the underlying human needs. But this suggestion too assumes a human need, one for consistency, one which finds conflicting demands frustrating. If human nature was as malleable as it is often argued, why can it not be molded to find satisfaction

in the variety and tensions afforded by conflicting demands?

That there are some "limit" conditions under which societal demands become very frustrating to the members has been widely recognized. But the conception usually is one of a very large "box" in the confines of which more or less anything "goes" as long as the boundaries are not challenged. Our position on this point is as different from the "box" image as a continuum is from a dichotomy. We hold that any two social patterns, roles, or structures that differ significantly from each other intrinsically in social terms also differ from each other in terms of their responsiveness to basic human needs. The "box" is full of gradations leading up to and away from the "limits." Actually it is the very gradation—which can be empirically verified—which demonstrates best the *existence* and *specificity*, i.e., limited malleability, of basic human needs.

One additional clarification seems necessary before we can turn to questions raised by the need for operationalization: we hold that there are basic *human* needs which are universal but whose foundation is not biological. We are not referring to the needs for shelter or food but to needs such as those for affection and recognition. Those may exist in the animal world in some very primitive way but are, as we see it, central to the human being, and much more symbolic than in the animal world, to the extent that they are found there at all. The question must be answered, how can such needs be universal but not biological or biologically derived? What else is there which is universal but not socially shaped? The answer, it seems to us, is that these are the functional prerequisites of *human* beings. That is, unless these needs are satisfied, the animal-like newborn infant will not become a human being; extending affection, and recognition of achievements are two main ones. While these needs are answered socially, i.e., by other human beings in a social relationship, the need for them is not socially *determined* in the sense that no society can opt to do without them. Their at least partial satisfaction is a prerequisite for the *human* phenomenon—hence their universality. There is little sense in asking where do they "come from" (although a psychic-genetic or cultural-genetic answer

can be given), since the frame of analysis is functional and not historical. To stay with the automobile analogy, we state that the car would not function (or be a moving vehicle) without certain kinds of fuel; who designed the car this way or where the fuel comes from is a very different set of questions, belonging to a different explanatory frame of reference.

EMPIRICAL INDICATORS AND TESTS

We limit our methodological discussion here to that of two basic human needs often listed as such: affection and recognition (Parsons, 1951:186 ff.; Etzioni, 1968:pp. 624 ff.). These are both very significant ones, they are quite representative of others, and suffice for the purposes of this methodological analysis. (For discussion of other needs, see Etzioni, 1968:Chapter 21). We focus, for the purposes of this presentation, on one attribute of these needs: a built-in, universal preference for frequent satisfaction (or release) over an infrequent one.⁴ The preference is expected to hold for all but very frequent satisfactions, which are so high that there is no chance for an "appetite" to build up. Also, we expect that a balanced distribution in the frequency of satisfactions *among* various needs is preferred over frequent satisfaction of some, coupled with infrequent satisfaction of others. But these qualifications and elaborations should not detain us here; our main task is to suggest ways it could be empirically demonstrated that there is a preference for frequent over infrequent satisfaction, and that this preference is not culturally or socially determined.

Our main answer is that the proposition can be tested by checking if *both socialization costs and those of social control are higher for persons who have been socialized into roles in which their needs for affection and recognition are infrequently satisfied than for roles which offer more frequent satisfaction of these needs*. That is, we expect that, if one takes a random sample of persons of a given society or sub-society, (1)

⁴ We also hold that persons prefer particularistic and diffuse conduct over that which is universalistic and specific; the procedure in testing this statement would be the same as suggested here with regard to the preference for frequent over infrequent gratification.

more time, resources, attention, and manpower will be required to *socialize* persons into roles which provide less frequent opportunities for affection and recognition; (2) that more time, resources, attention, and manpower will have to be devoted to *social control*, i.e., to keep people adhering to the expectations of these roles once they have acquired them, so as to prevent them from seeking roles which are more satisfying, or from attempting to change the prescriptions of these roles to be more satisfying; (3) that the direction of the *pressure to change* will not be randomly distributed but will be indicative of the patterns which are more responsive. *And we expect these relationships to hold in whatever culture, society, or sub-unit of these, one chooses to study.*

We are not aware of existing studies which directly test these propositions, or the data of which have a direct bearing on them. Let us, hence, illustrate these propositions on an informal basis. Our impression is that it is more difficult to socialize people to roles which demand submerging the identity of one's efforts in a collective enterprise, i.e., a structure which inhibits individual recognition, than to socialize people to roles which allow for ample individual recognition. The impression one gains from observing children in *kibbutzim* or Soviet sport teams is that, despite strong ideological and social pressures to seek group rather than personal recognition, the symptoms of craving for personal recognition are evident. *Kibbutz* children refer to group toys as "mine"; Soviet football players are not immune from the temptation to play "solo." Over the years, collectivistic cultures seem to gravitate toward a relative increase in tolerance for individual recognition. The opposite trends are much less in evidence. There seem to be few signs that American children seek to insist on collective identities where an individual one is fostered, or that American football players object to "star" performance, when this is legitimated. More generally, we would expect that where collectivism is predominant, the rate of individualist deviance will be much higher than collectivist deviance in individualistic systems. (We discuss below the counter-argument, that these observations, although valid, are due to residues of prior individualistic socialization of citizens of collectivistic

societies and not to basic human preferences. It suffices to say here that, in experimental situations, we can randomly assign persons of the same general background to roles we expect to be more responsive and to those less so, and thus control for this factor.) It should be noted that to confirm our proposition it must only be demonstrated that in collectivistic systems there is a "demand" for individual recognition and not for an individualistic *system*; such recognition can be found within a collective system. What seems frustrating and "inherently" unstable is an exclusively or very highly collectivistic system. The Soviet Union seems to have found a place for recognition of individual achievements within the context of a collective culture. China still seems to be trying for more or less complete submergence of individuality (Townsend, 1967; Schurmann, 1966).

For reasons we have discussed elsewhere, socialization costs are inversely related to the extent of selection which precedes and accompanies socialization. Hence, if recruitment to one kind of role must be more selective than to the other, i.e., more persons must be screened before "suitable" ones are found, and if the criterion of selection is not special skill but ease-of-socialization or search for abnormal personalities, this is also indicative of the "unnatural" quality of the particular kind of roles, sub-structure, or sub-culture. (For additional discussion of the effects of selectivity, see Etzioni, 1961:155.)

In addition to differences in socialization costs, social control costs, and the direction of the pressure to change, we expect to find differences in the extent and intensity of personal "costs" charged against persons who carry out roles which are less suited to satisfaction of basic human needs as compared to those more suited. *Personal costs* are those inflicted on the actor who performs a given role, while those of socialization and social control are borne by others, such as his tutors or the police. Personal costs vary a great deal in degree and nature, including various forms of mental disorganization, psychosomatic illness, and psychological tensions.

Having dealt previously with recognition, let us draw now for illustrative purposes on the second need, that for affection. If our

central propositions are valid, an average isolated person, in all cultures and societies, will be more frustrated than one who has one or more regular source of affection. Thus, for instance, spinsters and divorcées, who are not integrated into a primary group such as a social movement "cell" or army unit, are expected universally to be more frustrated than married ones. This may be explained by social pressures against such statuses. But even where those are minimal, as in the oft-cited anonymous city, these statuses seem to be highly frustrating (Srole et al., 1962:185 ff.). Studies of the effect of isolation in prison camps ("brainwashing" studies) seem to lend some additional empirical support to this proposition (Schein, 1961; Lifton, 1966). Not all the limited data we have point to the same conclusion; for example, a study of highly homogeneous Hutterite communities shows basically the same prevalence of several kinds of mental illness as found in New York State (Eaton and Weil, 1955). While this finding alerts us that the isolation proposition is not without challenge, it suggests that our proposition can be tested in cross-cultural and societal contexts. We cannot account for the reason "deviant" data were found without conducting a new study of the Hutterite communities. It seems correct though to state that most of the available data support the proposition as stated here (Berelson and Steiner, 1964:332 ff.).

While all statements made here pose some difficulties for the construction of empirical indicators of the concepts used and for the test of the relationships suggested, the concept of personal "costs" raises particular difficulties. First, socialization and social control costs are at least in part "external" while personal costs tend to be "internal" and hence harder to measure. Thus, it is obviously easier to determine whether it takes longer to socialize a person to a life of celibacy as compared to a priesthood which allows conjugal life than to measure his relative degree of mental health or even "happiness."

Secondly, the fact that our propositions do not lead us to expect a one-to-one relationship between a frustrating attribute of a given role and any specific kind of personal cost aggravates the measuring problem because all main costs must be assessed. For

instance, the Japanese, in their traditional culture, are said to have been afforded fewer opportunities for affection than traditional Mexicans. It is also said that ulcers were more common among the Japanese. Now this "operationalization" of one of our key propositions (less affection—more personal costs) is of limited interest because, even if the statement is proven correct, i.e., the Japanese ulcer rate was significantly higher and affection intake lower, the Mexicans may still be said to have paid higher personal costs of some other kind. Hence, if we follow this approach, at least all the major personal costs and gains must be measured—a very difficult if not impossible task.

Still the psychological proposition may be tested: (a) if one could construct a "global" (Lazarsfeld and Menzel, 1961) score of internal satisfaction or personal costs. Rather than attempting to measure each cost, e.g., frequency of ulcers, suicides, etc., and total them, one would seek to establish the general level of a person's psychic condition. (Industrial sociologists, faced with the fact that the satisfaction with one's job has many aspects, ask—in addition to questions about pay, work conditions, style of supervision—"global" questions, e.g., all said and done, how do you like your job?) (b) Instead of, or in addition to, attempting to construct a global measure one might compare a few major costs, such as rates of main types of mental illness and the main kinds of psychosomatic afflictions among role-holders. Thus, if those in Role X (or Society X) are found to be less frequently psychotic and neurotic, suicidal and homicidal, ulcer ridden and asthmatic, than in Role Y (or Society Y)—and we are not aware of any affliction which is distributed in the opposite way—this is of interest from the viewpoint of the question at hand, even though there still might be some affliction we did not cover, which is so heavily stressed in the opposite direction as to countervail all those we did measure. (c) Finally, and maybe most interesting, while we expect no one-to-one relation, we do expect some association between the kind of frustration and the kind of personal cost inflicted. For instance, we expect the "costs" of lack of affection to be "charged" differently than lack of recognition. While there are no studies which di-

rectly test this proposition, the kind of research we have in mind is illustrated by studies of the correlation between specific kinds of personal strains and prevalence of coronaries. (Friedman and Rosenman, 1959).

One major complication which must be taken into account in testing our core proposition, whatever measure is used, is the "rigidities" revealed by the personalities of those already socialized to a given role, societal structure, and culture. The proposition ought not to be considered weakened if a person socialized to a lowly satisfying role does not immediately prefer a more satisfying one when it is offered. On the contrary, where men socialized to one kind of role are introduced without anticipatory socialization, e.g., soldiers discharged suddenly when a war ends unexpectedly, we expect some time lag before social and personal costs will decline, even if the new roles are more responsive to basic human needs. Let us illustrate this point. An oft-cited study shows that children are more responsive to democratic than to authoritarian or *laissez-faire* leadership (Lippitt and White, 1952:340-355). This would suggest that participatory systems (which is what these researchers call "democracy") are more responsive to basic human needs than exclusive or non-participatory ones. But a fact which is rarely noted when this study is cited is that the children who participated in the experiments were recruited mainly from "democratic" families and neighborhoods of the American middle class. (One child, from a different background, the son of an army man, did not prefer democratic leadership (Lippitt and White, 1952:345)). That is, it may be argued that these children preferred participatory systems not because they were more responsive to their basic needs but because the children were "socialized" to them. Moreover, if the same experiments were to be conducted in an authoritarian culture and the children proved to prefer authoritarian leadership, this would not weaken the proposition that democratic leadership is more responsive so long as, after a given period of exposure, the children would come to prefer participatory leadership. Even if, in such a transition period, the social and personal costs would *increase*, e.g., the children would

find the democratic system bewildering, lacking in direction, and anxiety-provoking, the theory at hand would not be contradicted so long as, after such a period, they would come to prefer the participatory system, while the opposite experiment—exposing to authoritarian leadership children accustomed to democracy—would show *continued* higher social and personal costs.

The scope, intensity, and duration of the exposure to more responsive roles before social and personal costs decline are of course key variables in further specifying our core proposition. The problem would be simpler if we expected a unilinear progression, so that we could detect some decrease in costs after an initial period of exposure to a more responsive role. However, the dynamic involved may well take a dialectic or curvilinear form, or progress may be latent until a specific level of momentum (a "critical mass") is reached. What would be "sufficient" exposure to test our proposition is a question which we cannot answer in abstraction from a specific setting and human need, and the extent and length of time it was suppressed. But we may posit that when a new generation (the second in the societal "experiment") is raised in the new socio-cultural environment, e.g., in a *kibbutz*, and it reveals still higher rather than lower costs, the "new world"—until proven otherwise—is to be considered less responsive than the old one. The generational succession is the stage at which many Utopian colonies and movements have been tested. Austerity, for instance, including severe restrictions on the expression of affection, tends to "wash out" in systems as different as the *kibbutzim*, the Soviet Union, and Catholic orders, after no more than three decades, especially as second-generation members reach adulthood.

It may be suggested that the generational "wash-out" has the kind of causes emphasized in church-sect literature: the first generation "sect" is selective; the second generation, which the first incorporates with much less selection—the fathers being unwilling to "screen out" their sons—causes the diluting "church" effect. Or, the inter-generation struggle may be said to account for the second generation's search for a different "line" to follow. While these factors are at work, we hold that the pressure toward more re-

warding roles has an independent effect. This can be tested when two generations are compared in societal units whose culture is unresponsive vs. those whose culture is responsive, e.g., one whose taboos sharply limit sexual intercourse vs. one which fully legitimates lax standards. We expect some second-generation effects to set in, in both cultures, but to focus either on unresponsive elements which both may have, or be much more accentuated in the culture which is in general less responsive.

While waiting for a second generation socialized from inception to the new system (often not by the parents who are said to carry the "distortions" of the old regime but by a select group of educators who are believed to carry effectively the "new world") is the "ultimate" test, it is a rather demanding and long-run one. In many circumstances, comparative research provides a more practical approach, that is, comparing persons of the same backgrounds recruited into roles which differ in the opportunities for satisfaction they provide. Ideally, one may wish to assign men randomly to divergent roles under experimental conditions and compare their responses. For instance, we could randomly assign 100 students from lower-class background to training for coding, and 100 to essay writing about a topic of their choosing, and then repeat the same for 200 students of middleclass background. Other factors, especially early educational experience, would also have to be "controlled." The comparison of the findings should indicate, after background factors (as factors affecting prior socialization) are held constant, whether all groups still show a preference for one kind of role. Such roles may be said to be more responsive.

The basic proposition may be further tested by cross-cultural studies. Unlike comparisons within one society and culture, here observations of groups more independent of each other may be made (although the increased world-wide contacts and flows make such comparisons increasingly difficult). If, for instance, the multiple nations study Inkeles is now completing would show that men in similar roles in six divergent and separated cultures all show similar preferences, these might be indicative of a basic human nature (Inkeles, forthcoming).

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Assuming for a moment that a variety of studies would show that there is an "absolute" anchoring—that basic human needs have some given attributes and are not endlessly malleable—what revisions would this require in sociological theory, let us say of the Meadian or Parsonian gender?

Such findings would question the analytic focus on socialization and social control and the related assumptions that persons can be shaped to find satisfaction in most any role, and that those who do not are deviant. The findings would support those who view social action as affected by an interaction between basic human needs, their specific attributes, and the particular "outlets" society provides (or tolerates). *A person may be deviant, but so may be a society*, i.e., one which sets up and reinforces a network of roles which are highly frustrating and "in the long run" (as against only for a transition period). When we observe a measure of consumption of non-toxic tranquilizing items (such as alcohol or marijuana), adultery, homosexuality among consenting adults, and "premature" retirement from work, the question will no longer automatically be "Why did socialization or social control fail?" but also "Why does the society not legitimate these releases?" And, rather than ask under what conditions these deviants may be transformed into conforming members, we may also ask under what conditions a society may become more responsive to these needs and cease to consider them deviance—as, for instance, Sweden seems to have come to view some modes of premarital intercourse.

Within the realm of the prevailing sociological theories, we are told to expect that the more socialized and controlled a group of men is, the more they conform and the lower their personal "costs." High levels of anxiety, mental disorganization, alcoholism, divorce, and so forth are all said to be signs of imperfect socialization or inadequate social control. By the revised view, this would hold only for roles, and more broadly social structures and cultures, responsive to human nature. In those which are not, people *less* socialized and *less* controlled are to be expected to pay a *lower* personal cost. Thus, the middle-class executive is expected to

show more anxiety, neurosis, etc., than the lower-class "bum," although he too is not expected to be free of the effects of an unresponsive society. (Hollingshead and Redlich, 1958:248).

Theories about societies, however formalized and "neutral" in their terminology, tend to have a normative impact on those who rely on them for their tools of social analysis. (The preceding as well as the following statements regarding the sociology of knowledge are of course given to empirical verification and are not logical or methodological in nature.) Theories without a conception of human needs (which have specific attributes of their own) are open to a conservative interpretation, of individuals and groups that are expected to adapt to the society as it is. Theories which assume autonomous human needs provide an independent basis with which to compare societies to each other, as more or less consonant with basic human needs, and they lead one to expect pressure to change existing societies and cultures toward more responsive ones. This may leave the impression that whatever theory one chooses, one is choosing on ideological grounds. But we suggest that a theory which expects pressure to change toward more responsive systems will be able to account for much more of the variance of social and personal conduct and in this technical sense is a more valid one. Moreover, it seems to us incorrect to hold that the sociological pictures—images of what societies are like and how they transform—conveyed by different ideologies are equally valid from an empirical viewpoint, although it would take us far beyond the confines of this paper to try to demonstrate which withstands better the test of evidence.

Several specific questions may find their answers in studies of the kind suggested above, questions which are central to our assessment of the quality and future of mass society, mass production, and mass culture. For instance, sociologists have argued for decades whether an abundance of consumer goods and the typical television fare is what the "average man" *really* wants, or whether it is what the mass society (or capitalist society) fosters in him. (Shils, 1957:587-608; Fromm, 1955:152-162; Berger, 1960:102.) This seems to us to be a question that

cannot be fully conceptualized outside the kind of framework advanced here, for, if a person has no basic needs independent of those that socialization instills in him, his only source of disaffection may be prior socialization which makes him out of step with recent cultural demands, or the result of socialization and social control efforts which are not coordinated with each other in terms of the standards they impose. This would suggest that in principle disaffection can be overcome by more and better harmonized societal efforts, which would make one expect that totalitarian regimes—at the height of their socialization efforts—will prove to be the most satisfying regimes, disregarding the substance of the socialization efforts in terms of the extent to which the norms and expectations instilled are responsive. This seems to us to fly in the face of the Chinese, Soviet, and Nazi experience.

In attempting to answer these questions, reliance on survey data, at least of the standard variety without projective or probing questions, is not satisfactory because, as practitioners of this method themselves assert, it assesses the relative, manifest, and in this sense superficial levels of the personality (Selltiz et al., 1959:280-314; Hyman, 1955:103-104). Since our proposition does not suggest that a person be either aware of or explicitly state his disaffection, we must turn to tools of social science which prod deeper—such as unfocused or stress interviews, and projective techniques—to seek if, underneath the apparent euphoria (where it is encountered), there is not a high degree of personal suffering. Keniston used TAT and intensive interviews in his study of university students (Keniston, 1965:1-206). Friedenberg used depth interviews and projective procedures in his study of high school students (Friedenberg, 1963:51-154). Actually, even survey studies that prodded beyond "Are you satisfied with your work?" and similar "straight" questions find considerable alienation (Seeman, 1966a:353-367; Nettler, 1957:670-677). Twenty-eight percent of adult Americans, over 33 million, were found to feel alienated, according to a Harris poll released on December 16, 1968. (See also Brenner, 1967.)

Ultimately, continued exposure to two kinds of sociocultural systems, at least to two

roles, may be necessary to test the basic proposition. That a worker says that he prefers to work at the assembly line in order to be able to buy a second automobile and that he likes to watch 2.9 hours of TV a day proves relatively little. The question is whether or not *continued* exposure to less routine work, consumption not prodded by the mass media, and higher-brow culture, will still leave him preferring the "mass society" ones.

BASIC NEEDS, ALIENATION, AND INAUTHENTICITY

Reducible vs. Irreducible Alienation. In the preceding section we asked what revisions the conception of autonomous basic human needs entails for works in the main-streams of modern sociology, such as those of Mead and Parsons, works sometimes referred to as in the "integrationist" mode. The concept, though, is not much more popular among many members of the alienation school, especially those who subscribe to Marxist or neo-Marxist traditions. Still, the concept does provide a bridge between what is considered two alternative approaches, the integration (or functionalist) and the conflict approach.

Before this bridge can be charted, a conceptual distinction within the alienation school must be introduced, namely the difference between reducible and irreducible alienation. Alienation, in the terms of reference used here, means a social situation which is beyond the control of the actor, and hence unresponsive to his basic needs. Now our statement that some societies are more responsive to human nature than others is not to suggest that there can be a fully responsive society, one free of alienation. Only if we assume a limitless malleability of human nature can we expect a fully "happy" society, one in which each member is fully socialized *and* satisfied with his social roles.⁵

⁵ Even within the context of an over-socialized conception of man (Wrong, 1961), one may hold that a society must answer a variety of *societal* needs and these cannot all be fully answered because these needs are partially incompatible. Thus a fully integrated society is not feasible, and members will be socialized to conflicting expectations, i.e., there always will be some *societal* source of alienation.

If we proceed with the assumption that there is a set of autonomous human needs, we face first an irreducible source of alienation in the tension among these needs—responding fully to one, such as the need for security, is incompatible with fully responding to others such as the need for variety and creativity. Second, because at the root of satisfaction of each single need is some deferment of gratification, some build-up of tension to be released, dissatisfaction cannot be eliminated.

Most of the alienation, however, seems to result from sources which are reducible, most directly from socio-cultural patterns which can be made much more responsive to basic human needs than they are, or reducible by changing the distribution of alienation within a system by altering its allocative and power structure. Most systems provide many more opportunities for gratification to a selected few than to the majority of the members (Lasswell, 1958). A more egalitarian allocation of resources, status-symbols, sexual freedoms, knowledge of the system, and access to its controls, can significantly reduce the total level of alienation.

Here it has been argued, following Durkheim, that needs are infinitely expandable, and that frustration is a function of the level to which a society allows them to expand, and not just the chances of satisfaction it provides. Rising expectations and relative deprivation may cause more frustrations in an egalitarian society than in a steeply stratified one. In response we would like, first, to stress the difference between alienation and a subjective sense of frustration.⁶ The average member of a more egalitarian society is more able to share in shaping its structure and norms than one in a less egalitarian one because the share of assets is an important source of control. Since alienation is defined as incapacity to share in control, it follows that more egalitarian societies are less alienating, even if this is not reflected, in short order, in subjective feelings.

It should also be noted in this context that the frustrations resulting out of egalitarian relations (and the demands of participation, such as attending to more public

⁶ Robert Blauner (1964, especially chapter 4) shows such a difference in the case of textile workers.

life) must be deducted from the increase in satisfaction generated; we suggest that the *net* gain will be very considerable. Focusing on the new frustrations in disregard for the new satisfactions would thus provide a highly skewed picture, if the rise in frustration were taken as indicative of the total character of the change rather than one element of it.

Last but not least, the great concern with marginal increments over peers, and comparisons to remote groups, rather than attention to the extent to which one's own basic needs are responded to, are signs of the alienating (or, we shall see, inauthentic) society. They have not been reported for societies which are highly integrated, for viable communities, or for those whose central values are collective projects (such as social movements) rather than individualistic materialistic achievements. Hence what has been occasionally treated as a universal finding, i.e., that satisfaction rests more on relative rewards than on absolute level of satisfaction, may hold chiefly for the alienating societies, a result of their unstable social relations and lack of political bridges to collective life, i.e., of their unresponsive nature. And thus as these societies became more egalitarian and responsive, more participatory and collective, we would expect their members to focus more on absolute rather than relative levels of satisfaction, and on satisfaction derived from participation rather than from the possession or consumption of material objects.

It may be noted in passing that the upper classes, which tend to receive more of whatever the society allocates than other members, are not exempt from the personal costs of a highly alienating structure. If the society is a highly oppressive one, the elites are as "free" of the consequences of suppression as the guards of prisons: they are the targets of open or suppressed hate and must experience anxiety because their position, if not their life, is never secure. If the society is a highly commercialized one, the business elites cannot but extend some of the pervading instrumental orientation to fellow-members of their elite and, ultimately, to their view of themselves. Only where men treat each other as members of a community, as having the status of goals—a state which cannot be fully realized but can be approxi-

mated—is the leadership itself relatively free from that alienation which is reducible.

The preceding propositions concerning the elites are as testable as, and do not involve more methodological difficulties than, most other nontrivial propositions concerning social phenomena. Bales operationalized the differences between instrumental and expressive orientations of group members and leaders; this allows one to establish empirically whether the prevailing orientation is one of means or of goals (Bales, 1953:111-161). Psychological tests of guards of high-security prisons can be compared to those of guards in prisons which run effective "therapeutic communities," or of the same guards as a prison shifts from a custodial to a therapeutic management (Gilbert and Levinson, 1957:197-208). Similarly, elites of various countries may be compared to each other, possibly over time, and to non-elites, with regard to their personal costs (Raser, 1966). Thus the effect of alienation—of unresponsive structures—on the elites can be empirically assessed.

The concept of basic human needs, we suggest, calls attention to alienation which may be reduced, if the social structure is being made more responsive, as distinct from irreducible alienation whose sources are not structural. We see next that a whole category of structures, which appear as if they were responsive, may actually be highly alienating, with their participatory facades adding some alienating effects of their own to the underlying, unresponsive, structures.

Alienation and Inauthenticity. In asking to what extent a society is responsive to its members' needs, the differences between appearances and underlying realities must be taken into account. We find on the personality level a *surface* conformity coupled with an *underlying* rejection, e.g., when open rejection seems dangerous, under a Stalinist regime (Milosz, 1953). We find on the institutional level *appearances of participation* (or of other aspects of responsiveness)⁷ covering *underlying exclusion*. For

⁷ The relationship between participation and responsiveness ought to be indicated: maximal societal responsiveness will be attained under the Utopian condition in which all members participate in the shaping of all aspects of their societal life. Even this condition would be expected to encounter

instance, workers are offered, under a Human Relations program, participation in managerial decision-making while actually management (following "leadership" or "sensitivity" training) is expected to lead the decision-making sessions to those conclusions favored by management. More macroscopically, the same cleavage between appearance and underlying reality is found in those democratic systems which maintain two or more political parties and regular elections—a participatory institutional shell—while in reality the parties offer only limited alternatives in terms of the differences between their policies, and the choice among leaders they offer is restricted to a choice among candidates who are all members of the same class and who represent similar viewpoints and interests.

To formalize these conceptions in the form of definitions, one may refer to a social condition as: *authentic*, when the appearance and the underlying structure are both responsive to basic human needs; as *alienating*, when both the appearances and the structure are unresponsive; and as *inauthentic*, when the underlying structure is unresponsive but an institutional or symbolic front of responsiveness is maintained. (Cf. Sartre, 1960:92 ff.). (The fourth combination, of an alienating appearance covering a responsive reality, is rare and unstable. It may be referred to as a latent authentic condition.)

Since the distinction between surface (or "front") and underlying structure is essential for the concepts just defined, the development of measurements of this difference is essential for the operationalization of these concepts. When an actor is conscious of the difference between his public position and private self, operationalization is relatively

easy, because he may express privately, in an anonymous questionnaire or to an interviewer he trusts, his private feelings and views. When the cleavage runs deeper, and the person's consciousness is part of that which is split off his subconscious and basic needs, we must rely on projective techniques or behavioral indicators for what he "really" prefers (Janis and Hovland, 1959:1-6, 16-26; Bettelheim and Janowitz, 1950).

Institutions are easier to study from this viewpoint. Decision-making can be fairly readily coded as to the degree to which it is shared with lower-ranking men, and as to the extent that the decisions shared are only the marginal or include also the central ones. The amounts spent on public relations and other facade activities, as compared to that invested in activities related to the stated goals of a given organization, are another indicator. Typically the advertising budgets of corporations producing new products which are at most marginally different from existing ones are much higher than those for corporations whose product is substantially different. Producers of the first kind depend almost entirely for their slice of the market on "image-differentiation," i.e., on persuading the consumers that the new product is much more different from existing ones than it actually is. Well known examples are the manufacturers of various brands of instant coffee, cigarettes, and toothpaste. For organizations whose goals are political, medical or educational, differences between the real goals and policies known to insiders, and the stated ones, presented to wider circles of members or outsiders, have often been ascertained (e.g., Selznick, 1959, 113 ff.).

Persons in "pure" alienating conditions and those who are involved in an inauthentic relationship, e.g., a pseudo-Gemeinschaft—neither responsive to their needs—are expected to be "charged" different personal costs, due to differences in the management of frustration both conditions generate. The alienated person's aggression is likely to be focused and have one or more external targets, e.g., "the Establishment." The aggression of a person in an inauthentic condition will be diffuse and at least in part internalized and "bottled-up." Studies of families of schizophrenic children provide empirical descriptions of both the underlying unrespon-

some alienation, the result of the fact that not all members' needs are mutually complementary, and thus the compromises inevitably worked out leave each less than fully satisfied. Participation, however, provides the most effective way to reach such compromise; any other procedure, e.g., a wise and open-minded monarch, taking his country's needs into account, would be expected to leave a greater residue of alienation than broadly based participation would. This is because, under such a system, upward communication of members' needs would be both more accurate and more powerful than under any other system.

sive orientation in the context of parent-child relations, i.e., where the expectation is for responsive orientation, and of the inner emotional condition of a person caught in the conflicting streams of supportive surface and rejecting substructure.

The mothers of schizophrenics are seen as catching the child in a "double bind," wherein the mother verbalizes love and warmth but rebuffs the child's tendencies to respond to her words.

S: Well, when my mother sometimes makes me a big meal and I won't eat it if I don't feel like it.

F: But he wasn't always like that, you know. He's always been a good boy.

M: That's his illness, isn't it doctor? He was never ungrateful. He was always most polite and well brought up. We've done our best by him.

S: No, I've always been selfish and ungrateful, I've no self-respect.

F: But you have.

S: I could have, if you respected me. No one respects me. Everyone laughs at me. I'm the joke of the world. I'm the joker all right.

F: But, son, I respect you, because I respect a man who respects himself." (Clausen and Kohn, 1960:305. See there also for references to other works.)

If one reads the father's last completely unresponsive response, it is easy to empathize with the son, who must feel unable to get across *and* unable to blame the father because he is (like the mother) verbally supportive. Seeman, one of the very few contemporary sociologists to draw on the concept of inauthenticity, points out (1966b) that one of the two main outcomes of a man being in an inauthentic condition is for "role-inversion" to take place, in which impulses are turned into "coolness," preventing their expression and release, e.g., among middle-class Negroes (Broyard, 1950:56-64). Seeman's own study (1956:142-153) shows that intellectuals refer to themselves as a minority (which puts them in an inauthentic state, by his definition) and his study shows that those who are less inclined to accept this self-definition are more creative, as ranked by their colleagues (Seeman, 1966b: 71).

More generally, we expect that, when persons in relatively pure alienating conditions are compared to those in highly inauthentic ones, systematic differences will be found in

the rates of various kinds of mental and psychosomatic illness. For instance, illness typically associated with a high level of anxiety, e.g., neurosis, is expected to be more common among those in inauthentic conditions, persons unsure of their self-identity and social position, while those who are purely alienated are more likely to exhibit the symptoms of withdrawal or excessive aggression, depending on their reaction to the forces which excluded them.

Much study is necessary if we are to establish the differences in the personality levels which are affected, the differential effects on each level, and on a person's total psychic costs, as well as the kinds he is charging others. For instance, we expect interpersonal violence to be more common in alienated relations and suicide in inauthentic ones.

We do not claim that there is sufficient evidence to hold that pre-industrial societies were less alienating than modern ones, or that modern societies have become less alienating as they moved from early to late industrial stages, but it does seem safe to conclude that large segments of the citizens of contemporary industrial societies feel powerless and excluded, and are uninformed about the societal and political processes which govern their lives (Kornhauser, Sheppard and Mayer, 1956:194). The proportion of those who feel they can influence local and national political occurrences is 44 percent in the United States, 53 percent in the United Kingdom, 55 percent in West Germany, and 29 percent in Italy (Almond and Verba, 1963:226). "About one-third of the American adult population can be characterized as politically apathetic or passive; in most cases, they are unaware, literally, of the political part of the world around them. Another 60 percent play largely spectator roles . . ." (Milbrath, 1965: 21).

A historical trend? The rise of alienation is often associated with the emergence of the industrialized economies, bureaucratic nation-states, and the age of rationalism and science. In short, alienation and modernization are said to go hand in hand. World War II, it may be added, may mark the initiation of a new period, post-industrial or post-modern, in which inauthentic elements are arising. While societies as far removed as an-

cient Egypt or China had some manipulative mechanisms to cover up naked vested interests and power relations with ideological fig leaves, we suggest that it is a mark of the post-World-War-II industrialized societies that they devote a major part of their endeavors to "front" activities. The numerous indications of this process include: the rise in the technologies of mass communication devoted chiefly to "escapist" communication (especially television sets, found in 8,000 households in 1946 as compared to 45,500,000 by 1959); the increased investment in mass advertising and public relations—\$2,874 million in 1945 as compared to \$11,117 million by 1959, on advertising alone in the United States (Machlup, 1962: 251); the improved quality of social sciences used in manipulation of consumer tastes, work relations and political campaigns (Kelley, 1956); and the increased weight of "other-directed" values (Riesman et al., 1950; see also Lipset and Lowenthal, 1961).

In addition, one can make a fairly strong case that there is a trend toward less outright exclusion and more reliance on pseudo-participation through societal-managerial techniques in various specific societal institutions as divergent as work, education, and politics. For instance, workers in early industrial society were quite openly shut out of participation in the political system, and explicitly forbidden to organize themselves in the plant. While the church and the dominant culture did promote some notions of "status-acceptance," there was relatively little deliberate ideological activity to "cool out" workers and engineer "co-opting" outlets for their protest. This has changed in the inauthentic period, where workers' attention is mobilized by management or the mass media and the activities it promotes, and "co-opted unions" as well as other forms of pseudo-participation are offered (Bendix, 1956:308-318; see also Baritz, 1960). Similar analyses have been advanced of other institutional spheres. (In education, Friedenberg, 1963; in politics, Levin, 1960.)

Finally, a change in the composition of protest—one indication of needs not responded to—may also be indicative of the historical trend we "hypothesized." The left protest in capitalist societies, which is typically anti-alienation, is appealing to those

who seek a share in controlling their collective fate and the transformation of society to be more responsive, at least to their needs. The bohemian (beatnik or hippie) protest, which was present in the industrializing society but seems to have been growing since World War II, adds a reaction to inauthenticity; there is more stress on society as a lie, and on a search—in part Utopian—for truth and for authentic relations, rather than merely for a share of power and of the control of allocative processes. The fact that the structure which underlies an inauthentic participatory front is an alienating one explains in part the fact that bohemian and left-wing protest are often mixed and not viewed as mutually exclusive but rather as complementary. Whether either provides a design for a society responsive to basic human needs which is able to function, is a question which need not be discussed here; but it seems clear that both do point to real unresponsive elements of the existing society. One may reject in detail or even *in toto* the diagnosis and prognosis of these positions, but they—and the conditions they point to—cannot be adequately understood and analyzed by frames of reference which exclude the concept of basic human needs.

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A POVERTY CASE: THE ANALGESIC SUBCULTURE OF THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS

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Social planners have been unable to understand and deal with widespread, apparently "irrational" recalcitrance among the people whose lives they are attempting to "improve," because they hold an essentially rationalistic view of man. Actually, the origin, development and continued survival of many "problem" subcultures can be explained in terms of nonrational responses to environmental circumstances. Drawing on observations of frustration-instigated as distinct from motivation-instigated behavior in Maier's experiments with rats, and on speculations by Toynbee, the author maintains that, to explain, predict and alter the behavior of people in such subcultures, one must recognize the extent to which it reflects that institutionalized nonrational response to frustration which is here termed the "analgesic subculture." The assertion is exemplified by reference to the folk subculture of the Southern Appalachians.

DESPITE the presence of a tradition of vigorous dissent and considerable evidence to the contrary, conventional sociology still tends to assume an essentially rationalistic view of man. Reminiscent of the eminently cool and calculating "economic man" of classical economics, the model of modern "sociologic man" is on the order of an almost perfectly programmed android, op-

erating in accordance with the dictates of his culture. Any injudicious behavior on his part is typically attributed to "conflicts" or conditions of "anomie" in the cultural program, and only ritualistic lip service is paid to Thomas's (1928:572) early emphasis on the idiosyncratic "definition of the situation," to Wrong's (1961:187-193) more recent criticism of the "over-socialized conception of