GENERAL SOCIOLOGY

BY

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PREFACE

To justify the launching of one more general sociology text upon an already congested academic sea the author, at least, should be convinced that it offers something new, if not better. There ought to be some hope that it will meet the requirements of a number of teachers, and a much larger number of students, more exactly than any existing work. I sincerely believe that this book of mine has several rather important features that are distinctive—whether they are improvements or not remains to be determined by others whose opinion is important. Some of these involve unusual subject matter, but probably more of them are the result of novel emphasis, approach, or treatment.

To facilitate the appraisal of these innovations, some of the more important are listed below:

The significance and diversity of group relationships.
Classification of groups on the basis of volition.
The reciprocal and rotatory nature of social relations.
The prehuman character of society and its basic institutions, and the consequent exclusion of their origins from the field of sociological study.
Analysis of interests, and use of interests as the basis for sociological classification.
The nature and importance of belief in overt behavior and theoretical analysis.
The dynamic character of sociological theory, and the inclusion of the time element therein.
The significance of ultimate values, and their axiomatic character.
Analysis of applied sociology.
The concepts of normality and abnormality.
Analysis of the nature of social problems.
Distinction between social reform and social engineering.
The inclusion of economic relationships as a legitimate part of sociological analysis.

Analysis of the four basic factors in the material existence of society.
Fundamental character of population factors, quantitative and qualitative.
Idealization.

Let me repeat that it is not so much from the originality of these concepts that there arises whatever merit to consideration this book may possess, as from the composite of their interpretation, treatment, and integration. This is evidenced by the fact that, in spite of my recognition of the importance of novelty and without any special effort on my part to follow a pattern, this book does in fact conform very closely to the outline of the introductory course recommended by a committee of the American Sociological Society, of which Professor Cecil C. North was chairman, and accepted by the Society at its annual meeting in 1933.

This fact seems to justify my determination to omit from my text as much controversial material as possible. I have acted on the conviction that if we cannot find enough basic material upon which we are in general agreement to fill an elementary text we ought not to try to write elementary texts at all, and we ought not to apply the term "science" to our field of study. I have made every effort to avoid juxtaposing the opinions of Professor A and Doctor B. Important as these independent judgments are, and indispensable as they are to the progress of sociological science, to confront the beginning student with too large an array of them serves merely to confuse him unnecessarily, and to create an unwarranted impression of disunity and inconclusiveness. This does not mean that I expect complete agreement from my colleagues, or from students. The adoption of this principle involves a large degree of dogmatism in statement, and I should be greatly disappointed if my book did not evoke abundant challenge and opposition. Herein, perhaps, we may find one answer to the objections to the "standardization" of sociology texts; the use of reasonably uniform *books* does not by any means necessitate stereotyped teaching, or preclude free discussion, argument, and exploration in the classroom, and out of it.

Perhaps a special word of extenuation is needed for the large place given to the economic aspects of social life, and the inclusion of many analyses that are usually left to books and classes in economics. Personally, I regard this as one of the chief merits of my book. It has long seemed to me scientifically indefensible to omit from the scope of sociology some of the basic and determinative relations of men to their human environment, simply because a group of fellow scientists had previously devoted themselves to these phenomena and reduced them to a systematic analysis. In their truly *sociological* aspects, the phenomena of economic life seem to me to fall within the scope of such a text as this just as truly as those of the family, or of recreation, or of domination. Their inclusion makes possible a comprehensiveness, a consistency, of treatment, and a thorough exposition of fundamental laws and principles that cannot be attained otherwise.

The attentive reader will discover a considerable amount of repetition and overlapping in this volume. "As will be explained later," "As has been shown," "As we have seen," and similar expressions occur frequently on these pages, and the same themes turn up for consideration repeatedly. This seems to me both unavoidable and innocuous. The necessity for it seems to arise out of the nature of the material. The very pervasiveness of the principle of "reciprocalness" seems to make it impossible to systematize sociological material in such a way that a definite starting point can be chosen and then an orderly progression arranged that does not need to traverse any ground a second time. Fortunately, there seems to be a distinct value to the student in meeting familiar concepts and relations in new settings, and finding his tentative definitions and assumptions modified by new insights that he could not have acquired at the beginning.

I am indebted to my colleagues C. G. Dittmer, R. E. Baber, E. A. Hoebel, W. C. Headrick, and P. A. Robert, who have read parts of the manuscript and made valuable suggestions. I am under special obligation to Mr. Headrick and Mr. Robert for rendering invaluable assistance with the Bibliography. I also

desire to express my hearty appreciation of the courtesy extended to me by various publishers in permissions to quote, and particularly to the firms of John Wiley and Sons, Harper and Brothers, and The Macmillan Company for permission to draw liberally on certain books of my own published by them.

H. P. F.

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March, 1934

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Chapter I

GROUP REALITIES. INVOLUNTARY GROUPS

On a certain page in "Who's Who in America" there appears a sketch of a man who in many ways might be considered a representative American—representing the best that is in American life, perhaps, more than the average man, but still truly typical. He is recorded as being a member of the following groups: Cabinet of the United States, United States Senate, Loyal Order of Moose, Liberty Bond and Mortgage Company of Pittsburgh, Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers of America, Masons, Odd Fellows, K. P., Elk, Americus Republican Club, Duquesne Club, Pittsburgh Athletic Club, Chevy Chase Club, Congressional Club. There were doubtless many others not mentioned.

Group Affiliations

Most of us do not have as rich and varied group affiliations as this man, but there is none of us in whose life group connections do not play a continuous and important part. These relationships are such an integral part of our existence that we seldom stop to think of them, and if we were to sit down and draw up a list of the different groups to which we belong we should probably be surprised at their number, and even so we should probably miss several of them, including some of the most important.

Yet our membership in groups affects practically every incident in our daily lives, and conditions every feature of our careers, from the most superficial to the most fundamental. Not one of us would be the same person he is if any one of these group relationships were to be altered or removed—not to speak of the whole of them. Historically speaking, most of these group divisions and connections of humanity have grown up without deliberate planning or management. They are a

part of the products of social evolution. They have not until relatively recent years been subjected to any considerable amount of objective study or rational analysis. But as soon as man's mental development reached a point where he was capable of analyzing himself and his activities somewhat critically, the subject of his relations with his fellow men came in for no little attention, as some of the finest examples of classic Greek and Roman literature testify. But for a long time these researches were largely speculative and philosophical, and the conclusions inclined to be rather dogmatic and arbitrary.

With the dawn of the age of science, however, and the rapidly intensifying desire to submit all forms of knowledge to treatment by the scientific method, the question arose in the minds of certain leaders of thought, and became steadily more insistent and wide-spread, whether human group relations were not included in the legitimate field of scientific research, and whether it were not possible to express these relations in the forms and terminology of established science. This attitude has expanded until today the study of social science, or the social sciences, occupies a very prominent place in the intellectual life of modern societies.

As a first step in entering into this field of thought and study, it will be helpful to review some of the basic facts of group affiliation, and to consider some of the commoner and more important types of groups that exist or have existed, beginning with the most general, that is, those that affect the largest number of individuals. As usual in dealing with a diversified body of data it will be useful to subject them to some form of classification. Indeed, classification, as we shall see, is an essential part of the scientific method. Several classifications of human groups have been worked out, each with its own peculiar merit.[1] Suppose we start with a very simple and comprehensible classification based on the element of choice or will that governs membership in the group.* This is a particularly appropriate basis, because the element of choice or will, as ordinarily understood, is distinctively human.

* For a discussion of the concept of choice and will, see below, pp. 127-138.

Classification of Groups

On this basis, all human groups may be divided into three categories—the involuntary, the semi-voluntary, and the voluntary. The first class includes all those groups in which membership is determined entirely without the will of the individual. The second includes those where the will plays a minor or delayed rôle. The third includes those groups which the individual joins as the result of a definite decision on his own part.

It is interesting to note, in passing, that among members of an involuntary group there is community of interest because they belong to the same group, whereas in the case of voluntary groups the members belong to the same group because there is community of interest. For instance, the general group that we call "Japanese" is an involuntary group. The individual Japanese is sympathetic with others of the group because he recognizes that he and they are all Japanese. It is membership in the group that creates the unity. On the other hand, a choral society is a voluntary group. The individual members join with each other and form a group because there is community of interest—they want to sing together. The significance of this point will become clearer as the nature of interests is better understood.

Involuntary Groups

In the first category, the most important group is humanity itself. Indeed, this is much the most important group of any type whatsoever. It is membership in the species somewhat optimistically designated *Homo sapiens* that underlies and conditions affiliation with any of the other groups. Any being which falls outside this group is automatically excluded from the field of study in question. It needs no argument to prove that membership in this group is wholly involuntary. No one yet was ever asked in advance whether he wished to be a man, or a chimpanzee, or a skylark, nor even whether he wanted to *be* at all. There is no invitation to join, no period of rushing, no pledging in this fraternity.

The second most important group in this category is sex. Membership in the species *Homo* necessitates membership in either the group man or the group woman. Here again there is obviously no element of choice. No one has the opportunity to decide whether his group will be a fraternity or a sorority. In many primitive tribes, to be sure, there is a very formal ceremony of initiation into full sex-hood, but it is only a ritual confirmation of a status that already exists. And yet what a tremendous influence this membership has upon the life of every individual! How completely different his career as a male must be from what it would have been as a female. And the idea of group unity in this particular is by no means fictitious, but very real. The phrase "sex solidarity" is not at all a fanciful figure of speech. Nor, indeed, is "sex antagonism." The manner in which these alignments display themselves, and the degree to which they influence social relationships, vary greatly among different societies, but they are never entirely absent.

The third group in the first category is race. This is a category much less well understood, though just as truly universal, as humanity or sex. Every human individual is a member of some race, though it is very rarely that he can tell precisely what race it is. This subject is both so difficult and so important that it requires somewhat extended discussion, which will be presented a little later. For the moment, it will suffice to recognize that race is a matter of physical descent and kinship. In the familiar but rather inaccurate phrase, members of the same race are more closely united to each other by "blood" than they are to the members of other races.

There thus emerges the rather striking fact that all of these involuntary groups are strictly biological in character and origin. They are expressions or consequences of man's character as an animal. As such, the study of their origin and development does not strictly belong within the field of sociology. This is quite in harmony with their involuntary character. For, as will be pointed out later, all the phenomena which furnish the true data of sociology are volitional in character. Nevertheless, these groups constitute some of the materials

with which sociology works, and consequently some knowledge of their basic character and qualities is indispensable to progress in that study.

Gradation

Every group has characteristics which distinguish it, as a group, from other groups. Usually the differentiation from some groups is less marked than from other groups. That is, the principle of *gradation* is characteristic of pretty much all of creation as we know it. This is in harmony with the general essence of evolutionary development. Very frequently, also, the gradation between two related groups is so gradual that it is difficult or impossible to discern any sharp dividing line between them. This, as we shall see frequently, is particularly true of the field of human affairs. In the relations of men with men it is very seldom possible to draw a hard and fast dividing line, so that all the units may be definitely set on one side or the other. The division between human categories is usually an area, not a line. This often leads to the assumption that classification in human relations is either impossible or insignificant. Thus, for example, we often hear it said that there is no use in talking about races because there are no pure races, and there is no sharp dividing line between one race and another. This attitude is both unscientific and misleading. It would be foolish, for example, to say that there is no practical use in making a distinction between water and milk because some of the liquids that are sold in milk bottles or cans have had such an intimate acquaintance with the back-yard pump that it is impossible to say whether they are milk or water, and are in fact neither.

Humanity

Accordingly, when we undertake to identify the most important of all the groups that affect our lives, humanity itself, we discover first that the basis of identification is certain traits which are characteristic of men in general, as contrasted with all other groups, whether closely or remotely related, and second, that many, if not most, of these traits are not

exclusive to man, or are exclusive only in the extent to which they are developed. In other words, the distinguishing features of *Homo sapiens* are almost universally human only in the relative sense. There is very little that man possesses, in himself, that is not possessed in greater or less degree by some other groups, particularly certain of the higher animal species. So true is this that in the case of some of the most primitive types of man that have ever been discovered—*Pithecanthropus erectus,* for instance—it has been difficult for the scientists to determine whether they were men or apes; probably they were neither, just as the dubious liquid referred to above is neither water nor milk.[2]

In brief, it is quite impossible to define humanity in simple positive terms—to say that man is the creature that has this or that trait, or combination of traits. Virtually every portion of the human body, bone, muscle, or vital organ, has its counterpart in the body of other animals. Even the human mind, or intelligence, is not a thing entirely apart from that of other creatures. The distinctively human traits are characterized almost solely by the degree of their development. If the general theory of evolution in its human application is accepted it implies that these traits were originally not appreciably different from those of man's closest non-human ancestors, but that for one reason or another they proceeded to develop to an unparalleled degree. Four of these traits may be selected as of particular importance. These are erect stature, an opposable thumb, vocal organs, and foremost of all, a flexible and expansive thinking apparatus.

No one of these traits, as a distinct concept, is exclusive to man. Some of the apes have opposable thumbs, many of the other animals possess the rudiments of speech,[3] penguins stand erect in their own fashion, and all the higher species of animals have brains. But the vicissitudes of the evolutionary process determined that the progenitors of man should not only possess these traits in a special combination, but also that the traits themselves should be capable of a progressive development and refinement such as have not even been approximated by any other species. No other creature has an

extremity capable of such accuracy and delicacy of manipulation as the human hand; no other animal stands so erect, and has such ease and scope of movement upon its lower limbs alone, leaving the upper pair free for other uses, as man; no other being is endowed with a means of expressing so effectively such a wide gamut of thought and feeling, and certainly none other has a comparable equipment for carrying out mental processes, and experiencing such a rich variety of thoughts and feelings.

Along with the development of these four salient traits have gone a perfection, specialization, and refinement of many other characteristics to a degree unparalleled by any other animal. It is the combination of all these features that makes man. Not all of this development, it should be noted, is advantageous to man. Some of man's most characteristic and cherished traits carry undesirable concomitants with them. Thus, man's upright posture is by no means an unqualified blessing. The structure of the human torso, and the arrangement of the vital organs, are much better adapted to a horizontal than a vertical posture, and many of the ills to which human flesh is heir are caused or accentuated by the strains occasioned by keeping a body erect that was not originally designed for that position.

So far we have been discussing the biological and psychophysical traits of man. It must be recognized, now, that many of the characteristics that distinguish humanity most sharply from all other groups are not inherent in its bodily structure at all, but are the cumulative products of this unique equipment that it enjoys. They are the artifacts, the cultural constructs, the ideas and knowledges, the arts, literatures, and philosophies which only man has created. Though external to the human body, these can hardly be thought of otherwise than as integral portions or aspects of humanity itself, and are at least as much the objects of study in social science as the immediate physical features.

Membership in the group *Homo sapiens* automatically sets the individual man in certain alignments, enlists him in certain

types of struggle with nature, creates in him certain loyalties, and imbues him with certain purposes and interests common to other members of the group. This composite of affiliations, as already observed, is more important than that associated with any other group to which a human being can belong.

Sex

The next most important of the involuntary groups is sex. Long before man actually appeared upon the earth it was predetermined by the evolutionary process that humanity, when it did appear, should belong to the bisexual type of animal. Sex is itself an evolutionary product, and is both an evidence of, and a means to, the attainment of a high position on the evolutionary scale. The significance of sex is, of course, primarily connected with the reproduction of the species. Its basic evolutionary utility is that it provides for a higher degree of variation, and therefore more extensive specialization, than is possible on the asexual basis.[4] Accordingly, the distinctive traits that differentiate the sexes into two groups are mainly centered about the reproductive systems, and determine that the rôles of the male and the female, respectively, in the perpetuation of the species shall be quite different. But associated with these primary traits are numerous other features, some physical, some intellectual and emotional, that make man and woman two very different creatures, thereby providing for an exceptional variety, interest, and richness in human life and experience.[5] In the present connection, the point of importance is that these sex realities create two of the most important of all groups, to one or the other of which every human being is inescapably and irrevocably assigned, and membership in which has a predominant influence on his or her whole career.*

* It is true that even in the matter of sex the principle already alluded to, that group divisions in human affairs are seldom absolutely rigid, holds good. Not only are there those rare individuals, known as hermaphrodites, whose reproductive structure combines the traits of both male and female, but also there are more numerous persons in whom the emotional and affective characteristics lean strongly toward those of the opposite sex. Modern psychology is revealing many unanticipated facts in this field. There is even at least one apparently well-authenticated case of an actual change of sex with the aid of modern surgery.[6]

Race

The third of the chief involuntary groups is race. This is a differentiation almost as generally recognized, and commonly mentioned, as humanity or sex. Many of the most acute and perplexing problems of modern life revolve more or less directly about the realities of race. And yet, unfortunately, the true nature of race is very poorly comprehended even by many who assume to write authoritatively about it, and is subject to the widest variety of misconceptions and confusions on the part of the general public. Almost every one is ready to talk more or less dogmatically about race, to assign various specific traits to different races, and to express his preferences for this race or that. But if you ask him to give you a definition of a race, or to tell precisely what kind of a group he has in mind when he refers to race, he usually looks at you with amazement or resentment, and flounders hopelessly if he undertakes to answer.*

Race, in its strict sense, is purely a biological concept. To get a clear notion of its precise meaning, the simplest way is to approach it from the evolutionary point of view. Let us think of man in the earliest stage of his distinct existence. Humanity, in this epoch, was represented by a single group of creatures, with a uniform physical ancestry, closely akin to one another, and highly similar in their physical and intellectual traits.† This small group probably mated exclusively, and without important restrictions as to choice‡ within itself, thereby preserving its homogeneity of type. It grew slowly

* A remarkable instance of this situation was furnished in connection with a study of "race distance" that was undertaken some years ago by a group of prominent sociologists. Their list of races was a most curious hodge-podge. When asked what definition of race was adopted in the study, one of the leaders replied, in effect, "Why, we have no definition of race. Whatever people think of as a race we regard as a race." And this was supposed to be a scientific study!

† For a somewhat different interpretation, see below, p. 47. This is of no great importance, in the present connection, for the adoption of the polygenetic theory of man's origin simply throws the beginning of the basic races of man back into the prehuman era. It does not in the least affect the meaning of race, or the basic process of its formation.

‡ Assuming whatever rudiments of family organization there may have been; see below, pp. 56-57.

in numbers until finally its original habitat or range became completely occupied, and any further expansion meant spreading out into new, and more or less different, habitation areas.

Race Formation

It is the nature of every living species, driven by the implacable reproductive urge,* to increase to the maximum numbers. Every possible resource will be tried, and every opportunity for increase offered by such resources will be availed of. But the limits of such expansion, set by nature itself, are definite and rigid. They inhere in the familiar principle of adaptation to environment. The nature of life on this globe is such that each species of organism is fitted to eke out its existence in a particular physical environment, characterized by certain features of land and water, temperature, rainfall, elevation, wind, etc. Every-day observation abundantly confirms this truth. Not only do we take it for granted that a fish cannot live on dry land or an apple tree grow in mid-ocean, but we do not expect a sperm whale to survive if transported to Lake Champlain or a polar bear to thrive on Miami Beach. Consequently, the numerical size, or population, of every species is limited by the extent of the available area to which it is organically adapted, and the features of this environment dictate the essential characteristics of the species. Thus the physical environment both limits the expansion of any species and preserves its organic homogeneity and conformity to type. The only way by which a species can expand beyond its appropriate environment is by making whatever physical adaptations are necessary to enable it to survive in a different environment. If the new environment is sufficiently different to constitute a really new habitat, the adaptations that are required to enable the organism to survive in it are usually so great as to transform it into a new species.

The human species, almost certainly, went through the primary phases of this process. Originally a single, homogeneous group, it expanded in response to the universal reproductive urge, until its original habitat was crowded with as

* See below, pp. 307-308.