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The Plural Society in the British West Indies
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To Mary
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In this essay I shall try to define the concepts and conditions of social and cultural pluralism and to indicate their importance for social theory and research. In order to focus attention on theoretical issues I avoid descriptive materials as far as possible.

J. S. Furnivall was the first to distinguish the plural society as a separate form of society. Furnivall was an economist with considerable experience of the colonial Far East. He summarized this experience as follows:

In Burma, as in Java, probably the first thing that strikes the visitor is the medley of peoples—European, Chinese, Indian, and native. It is in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market-place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit. Even in the economic sphere, there is a division of labour along racial lines.1

Anyone with Caribbean experience will recognize the force and value of Furnivall's remarks, but during the years since he introduced it the idea of pluralism has undergone little refinement or systematization, although the term "plural society" now enjoys wide currency. Perhaps for this reason sociologists have tended to shy away from the concept, yet it is essential for comparative sociology, it is easily developed and applied, and without it a rigorous analysis of certain societies is extremely difficult, if not impossible. I shall therefore try to give this concept a suitable theoretical form.

It was the plural economies of the Far Eastern colonies that attracted Furnivall's attention. He saw clearly that this economic pluralism was simply an aspect of the social pluralism of these colonies, and said so in the passage already quoted. However, I wish to take the argument
back one step further, since this social pluralism is also correlated with cultural pluralism, and since the plural society itself develops in rather special, although by no means unusual, conditions. Accordingly, I shall begin by considering the most general problems of social science, namely, the nature of culture and society and their interrelation. To do so I shall quote some recent thinking on these topics.

Ever since Tylor defined culture as all those "capacities and habits acquired by man as a member of society," there has been a fairly general agreement on the nature of culture. For the early anthropologists, culture was the proper subject matter of anthropology and, despite the work of L. H. Morgan, it was only with Émile Durkheim and his school that the nature of society and its relation to culture became an important focus of interest. By then Tylor's definition had become entrenched, and social organization was generally treated as one dimension of culture. The problem of defining society was thus complicated by the requirement that this definition should fit prevailing views of culture. For this reason, among others, Durkheim's method and theory at first failed to win wide support.

It is easy enough to define society generally, and Radcliffe-Brown's description of it as "the network of social relations" is perfectly adequate, social relations being distinguished by recurrent mutual adjustments. However, even this sort of definition tends to reduce society to social structure by telescoping quite different levels of abstraction. The real difficulty crops up when we try to define societies generally so as to distinguish between them. Since Tylor's view of culture implies that any particular culture is borne by a particular society, it is difficult to see how we can distinguish between cultures either, unless we have some agreed definition of societies.

By ignoring this anthropological concern with culture as primary and all-inclusive, sociologists tend to escape the difficulties of definition that arise from having to fit culture and society together; however, in trying to distinguish societies, they face much the same problems as do the anthropologists, and their solutions are not very different. Thus the current sociological preference for the study of social systems avoids the problem of defining societies themselves. Marion Levy makes this point very clearly, and bases his version of structural-functional theory on a definition of societies as theoretically self-sufficient systems of action, the members of which are mostly born into their respective units.

This definition has three features of special interest here. First, Levy's action has obvious affinities with that behavior that anthropologists regard as the content of culture. Second, the theoretically self-sufficient system is generally the most inclusive of its kind. Third, the view of societies as relatively closed reproductive units raises certain difficulties. In these terms, each Nuer tribe might well be a separate society.
Faced with this problem of distinguishing between societies, Radcliffe-Brown's response was an analytic evasion rather similar to the social system approach. In his view, "If we take any convenient locality of a suitable size, we can study the structural system as it appears in and from that region, i.e., the network of relations connecting the inhabitants amongst themselves and with the people of other regions." Radcliffe-Brown then equates "single societies" with the "structural systems observable in particular communities." Despite this, he constantly encountered the problem of differentiating homogeneous and heterogeneous societies. Since he chose to study structural systems rather than societies, and since he conceived these systems as functional equilibria, they were homogeneous by assumption, and so heterogeneity was ruled out. Nevertheless, Radcliffe-Brown offered a useful criterion for distinguishing structural systems. In a homogeneous system each status and role has a uniform definition. When identical statuses and roles are defined differently we have a plurality of structural systems.

For Raymond Firth, "No society can be given a definite limit," and he holds that "fields of social relations, not clear-cut societies, must be the more empirical notion of social aggregates." On the other hand, Nadel, like Marion Levy, found it necessary to distinguish between societies, and he defines them as "the relatively widest effective groups," effectiveness being judged by "the quantitative range of institutional activities entered into by the group . . . and the nature and general relevance of these activities." Nadel then points out that "mostly, when we look for a society, we find a political unit, and when speaking of the former, we mean in effect the latter." There is an obvious correspondence between Marion Levy's "theoretically self-sufficient system of action" and Nadel's "relatively widest effective group"; both tend to be defined politically.

Since I am concerned with distinguishing between homogeneous, plural, and other types of society, I cannot avoid this problem of defining a society; neither can I ignore questions of the relation between society and culture. It is obvious that when societies are conceived as structural systems in equilibrium, their homogeneity is assumed, and heterogeneity is difficult to define, classify, or analyze. In consequence, one general model, namely, that of homogeneous structural systems, is applied to quite different types of society, thereby obscuring their differences, misleading their analyses, and blocking the development of social theory. It is perhaps worth noting here that the two main methods of field investigation, namely, community studies and sampling, both encourage assumptions of unity in the systems with which they deal.

Even so, their failure to distinguish societies has neither deterred anthropologists from distinguishing cultures nor from continuing to
define culture in terms of society and vice versa. The current view is neatly stated by Firth:

The terms represent different facets or components in basic human situations. If, for instance, society is taken to mean an organized set of individuals with a given way of life, culture is that way of life. If society is taken to be an aggregate of social relations, culture is the content of those relations. Society emphasizes the human component, the aggregate of people and the relations between them. Culture emphasizes the component of accumulated resources, nonmaterial as well as material, which the people inherit, employ, transmute, add to, and transmit.10

David Bidney, in his recent review of anthropological theory, shares Firth's view.11

Failure to develop an agreed definition of societies ultimately may have the same basis as the continuing definition of culture and society in terms of one another. Analyses based on notions of system tend to avoid the problem of how a culture and a society are related. As we saw, Tylor initially defined culture as behavior learned in society but, oddly enough, social organization, which was taken to represent society, was regarded by Tylor, Malinowski, and others as one dimension of culture. The modern view, as stated by Firth is equally unsatisfactory, since it implies that a culture and a society are always coterminous and interdependent. This view also obstructs the recognition and analysis of culturally heterogeneous units.

In discussing their interrelation, Nadel, like Firth, at first treats culture and society as coterminous. "Society, as I see it, means the totality of social facts projected into the dimension of relationships and groupings; culture, the same totality in the dimension of action."12 Nadel is here using the term "action" in much the same sense as Marion Levy or Talcott Parsons; but later on he distinguishes between the boundaries of culture, with its complex of language, idea systems, and activities, and society, with its complex of groupings and relationships. At this stage, culture and society cease to be coterminous for Nadel, since his category of "all-culture" includes forms of action such as language, building, or art styles, which are independent of social boundaries.

Nadel rests this distinction upon his concept of institutions as "standardized modes of co-activity,"13 for example, marriage, blood revenge, family, property, chieftainship, and the like. Although he claims that Radcliffe-Brown's definition of institutions is most like his own, it is probably to Malinowski that Nadel was most indebted for this concept. In fact, Nadel's institutions, like Malinowski's, involve a charter of values, a code of rules, set forms of social grouping and personal relationships, a set cycle of activities, a material apparatus, and a purposive character. These are the distinctive features of Mali-
nowski's institutions, regarded as the “concrete isolates of organized behavior.”

Nadel shows that ideas, activities, and modes of grouping are interdependent elements of institutions, that they form a common system, although they can be separated for analysis, and that their interrelations can be studied. He then distinguishes between “regulative” and “operative” institutions, between those institutions that are “compulsory,” “alternative,” and “exclusive,” and between institutional and residual or noninstitutional forms of action, which he groups in four categories, namely, unique historical events, autonomous idea systems such as language or art styles, recurrent abnormalities such as suicide, and customary conventions and mores. Nadel includes these noninstitutional actions in his concept of culture. For him society consists of institutional social relations and groupings, and the main body of culture is also firmly rooted in the system of institutions.

The correspondence between Nadel’s classification of institutions and Linton’s analysis of culture into core, alternatives, and specialties is clear. Linton’s core consists of Nadel’s compulsory institutions, and his specialties include Nadel’s exclusive institutions, but Linton’s scheme incorporates mores, conventions, language, and art styles as well.

This review of anthropological thinking provides the background for my argument. I think the views and positions just quoted are as representative as they are significant. The theory of pluralism seems to develop naturally on this basis.

In my view, only territorially distinct units having their own governmental institutions can be regarded as societies, or are in fact so regarded. Delegation of authority and governmental function is quite general and has many forms, but we do not normally treat an official structure as an independent government unless it settles all internal issues of law and order independently. By this criterion we can identify delegation and delimit societies. It often happens that a subordinate population group is permitted to exercise certain functions of internal administration; one does not thereby distinguish it as a separate society. However, colonial governments that discharge the full range of governmental functions within their territories regulate societies quite distinct from those of their imperial powers. In northern Nigeria the scattered communities of nomadic Fulani do not constitute a single Fulani society, but belong to the various emirates in which they reside; likewise, the general concept of Hausa society breaks down into the separate Hausa societies of these emirates.

I hold that the core of a culture is its institutional system. Each institution involves set forms of activity, grouping, rules, ideas, and values. The total system of institutions thus embraces three interdependent
systems of action, of idea and value, and of social relations. The inter-
dependence of these three systems arises from the fact that their ele-
ments together form a common system of institutions. These institu-
tions are integral wholes, as Malinowski would say, and their values,
activities, and social forms are mutually supporting. The institutions of
a people's culture form the matrix of their social structure, simply
because the institutional system defines and sanctions the persistent
forms of social life. To define the social structure, we must therefore
analyze the institutional system. Likewise, to define a system of social
value or action, we must first identify and analyze the institutional
framework.

It follows from this that a population that shares a single set of
institutions will be culturally and socially homogeneous. Provided that
it is also politically distinct, it will also form a homogeneous society.
The homogeneity of this unit will be evident in the uniformity of its
social structure, ideational systems, and action patterns. To determine
the forms and levels of integration within such a unit, we must pursue
the method of institutional analysis.

It also follows that institutional diversities involve differences of
social structure, ideational systems, and forms of social action. These
differences may conceivably hold for a single institution, such as the
family, or for an entire institutional system. Territorially distinct units
that practice differing institutional systems and that are politically
separate are culturally as well as socially distinct. In short, institutional
differences distinguish differing cultures and social units. When groups
that practice differing institutional systems live side by side under a
common government the cultural plurality of this inclusive unit cor-
responds with its social plurality, and the network of social relations
between these culturally distinct groups is wider and more complex
than those within them. In short, culture and society are not always
coterminous or interdependent. We do in fact find societies the
component sections of which have dissimilar ways of life and modes of
social organization. Such societies exhibit cultural and social pluralism
simultaneously.

Institutions have been treated as cultural forms by some writers and
as social forms by others. Actually, they combine social and cultural
aspects equally. Their social aspects consist of set forms of groupings
and relations. Their systems of norm and activity, together with their
material apparatus, properly belong to culture. Although institutions
form the core of culture and society alike, they do not exhaust either.
For our purpose, the important thing to note is that a group's institu-
tional homogeneity involves its cultural and social homogeneity, while
institutional pluralism involves corresponding cultural and social
pluralism. A society the members of which share a common system of
basic or "compulsory" institutions but practice differing "alternative" and "exclusive" institutions is neither fully homogeneous nor fully plural. Such units are socially and culturally heterogeneous.

It is possible to compile an indefinite list of institutions if we adopt a very narrow definition. However, institutions dealing with the same phases of life tend to form a systematic cluster, and to forestall confusion I shall speak of these clusters as subsystems. Thus marriage, family, levirate, extended kinship forms, and the like, together constitute the kinship subsystem. Likewise, government is the subsystem of explicitly regulative institutions, such as law, parliament, police, and civil and military administration. Each of these institutional subsystems has many links with the others; thus the kinship institutions have prominent economic, educational, recreational, religious, and governmental aspects. We need not predicate any pre-established harmony of institutions, as functional theory has tended to do. The available evidence suggests that consistency, interdependence, and coherence are necessarily greater within each institutional subsystem than between them. This set of institutional subsystems forms the institutional system, and this can vary widely in its mode and level of integration and equilibrium. Societies differ in their complement and distribution of institutional forms. Some lack such institutions as the army, the priesthood, chieftainship, markets, or age sets; but any given institutional system tends towards an internal integration and thus some closure. Thus in a culturally divided society, each cultural section has its own relatively exclusive way of life, with its own distinctive systems of action, ideas and values, and social relations. Often these cultural sections differ also in language, material culture, and technology. The culture concept is normally wider than that of society, since it includes conventions, language, and technology, but the presence of two or more culturally distinct groups within a single society shows that these two aspects of social reality may vary independently in their limits and interrelations.

To analyze a society that has a single uniform culture, we must define the component institutions and their interrelations. As already pointed out, this procedure includes the analysis of action patterns, ideational systems, and social structure. To analyze a society that contains culturally distinct groups we must make similar analyses of the institutional systems of each component group and then determine their interrelations within the inclusive unit. The culturally distinct components of a single society are its cultural sections. They are distinguished by practicing different forms of institution. Generally these cultural sections are highly exclusive social units, each constituting an area of common life, beyond which relations tend to be specific, segmental, and governed by structural factors. Under these conditions the boundaries of cultural and social sections correspond, and the dis-
continuity of value systems is most extreme. However, it sometimes happens that some members of different cultural sections associate more regularly with one another than with the sections to which they belong. In such cases the social and cultural sections have somewhat different boundaries, and their margins may be dynamic.

This brings me to the problem of defining the type and level of institutional variation sufficient to distinguish cultural groups. It is obvious that modern societies are culturally heterogeneous in many ways. They contain a wide range of occupational specialties, they exhibit stratification and class differences, they often contain ethnic minorities, and their rural and urban populations have somewhat different ways of life. Some writers describe modern society as pluralistic because of its occupational diversity. I prefer to say that it is culturally heterogeneous, and to reserve the term pluralism for that condition in which there is a formal diversity in the basic system of compulsory institutions. This basic institutional system embraces kinship, education, religion, property and economy, recreation, and certain socalities. It does not normally include government in the full sense of the term for reasons given below. Occupations are simply specialties, in Linton's sense. The development of occupational groupings and institutions multiplies the host of specialties within the culture, but the resulting diversity leaves the basic institutional system untouched. Such a florescence of alternatives anchored in a common system of basic institutions therefore presents conditions of cultural and social heterogeneity without pluralism.

The same thing is true of class differences, which are differences within a single institutional framework. Their compatibility within this framework is essential for their comparison and ranking. Thus we can neither incorporate Hausa class patterns into our own system, nor can we amalgamate the two, simply because our own institutional system and social values differ radically from their Hausa counterparts. Class patterns represent differing styles of life, but the conceptual difference between such life styles and culture as a way of life is profound. Life styles can and do change without involving any change in the institutional system. Within class-stratified societies, such as those of the Hausa or of Britain, the various strata or classes hold common economic, religious, familial, political, and educational institutions; but the condition of cultural and social pluralism consists precisely in the systematic differentiation of these basic institutions themselves.

Within each cultural section of a plural society we may expect to find some differences of stratification or social class. These cultural sections themselves are usually ranked in a hierarchy, but the hierarchic arrangement of these sections differs profoundly in its basis and character from the hierarchic status organization within each severally.
The distribution of status within each cultural section rests on common values and criteria quite specific to that group, and this medley of sectional value systems rules out the value consensus that is prerequisite for any status continuum. Thus the plurality is a discontinuous status order, lacking any foundation in a system of common interests and values, while its component sections are genuine status continua, distinguished by their differing systems of value, action, and social relations. Accordingly, inssofar as current theories assume or emphasize the integrative and continuous character of social stratification, they may apply to each cultural section, but not to the plurality as a whole. In class systems, for instance, social mobility and acceptance presuppose adoption of Linton's alternatives, that is, of new class conventions, linguistic habits, and life styles; in conditions of cultural pluralism, however, intersectional mobility involves adoption of a new institutional system, and for that reason it can rarely occur within an individual lifetime.

It is especially important to distinguish between pluralism and "class" stratification because of the profound differences that underlie their formal resemblance. Whereas the assumption of integration may be valid for a class system, it cannot normally hold for a plural hierarchy. In general, social stratification occurs without corresponding pluralism as, for example, among the British, the Hausa, or the Polynesians. There is also no inherent reason why all cultural sections of a plural society should be ranked hierarchically. It has been shown by van Lier that the Javanese, Chinese, Indian, and Negro sections of Surinam have parallel social status. As I have pointed out elsewhere, status models must perform certain social functions, and they cannot do so if they are unduly complex. Consequently, the status structure of a very complex plurality will often equate two or more distinct cultural sections. The point here is that cultural difference and social stratification vary independently. Thus they can neither be reduced to one another, nor can they be equated. Cultural pluralism is a special form of differentiation based on institutional divergences. It is therefore a serious error to equate pluralism with "class stratification," as Lloyd Braithwaite and Raymond Smith have done for Trinidad and British Guiana, respectively.

Like social classes, the rural and urban populations of a given society tend to differ in their life styles rather than in their institutional systems. However, as Redfield has pointed out, the institutions of a developing urban population may come to differ sharply from those of the rural folk. This is a rather special case that involves pluralism only if the basic institutional system is affected. Otherwise the result is a condition of social and cultural heterogeneity.

The problems presented by ethnic minorities are somewhat more
complex, largely because this term has been ambiguously applied to racial, national, linguistic, and cultural groups. Let us therefore consider specific cases. The Greeks, Italians, and Irish of New York each have their own religious and family practices, perhaps their own languages and sodalities also. If their institutional systems diverge from the general American model so as to be incompatible with the latter, then they must be regarded as cultural sections. Institutional incompatibility is indicated by differences of grouping, norms, activities, and functions. We have simply to ask, for instance, whether the paternal or maternal, the judicial or the priestly status and role have the same definitions and institutional contexts among differing groups, and whether these role incumbents could be exchanged without violating social practice. If they can, the groups share a common institutional system; if they cannot, the groups do not. Differences in the definitions of these specific statuses and roles imply differing forms of social grouping, of institutional action, and of ideational system. They cannot occur in conditions of institutional uniformity.

By this criterion, it seems clear that marriage and the family vary among Greeks, Italians, and Irish in content rather than in form, in their affective quality rather than in their social function, sanctions, and norms. Likewise, the Greek, Italian, and Irish variants of Christianity share common basic forms of organization, ritual, and belief. Their compatibility is evident as well in their common origin as in these common elements. We do not normally distinguish groups that observe different totems, or the same totem in different ways, as practicing different systems of totemism, and I think there is no case for treating Christianity otherwise. Unless ethnic traditions present incompatible institutional forms, they are, like social class patterns, stylistic variations within a common basic way of life, analytically similar to Linton's alternatives. Thus ethnic variations, like class styles, may produce cultural and social heterogeneity, but do not involve pluralism.

In certain parts of the United States it is possible that the Negro population practices a distinct institutional system in my sense of the term. There is evidence that certain Negro communities in the South differ sharply in their social, religious, and economic organization from those of the adjoining whites. Assuming this to be the case, we must regard such Negro-white populations as plural communities. They are communities, but not societies, even if they embrace entire member states of the Union. As events in Little Rock, Arkansas, have shown, these member states are not independent units, and therefore do not form separate societies. The point here is that federalism permits the presence of plural communities within a nation state that may not itself be a plural society. I discuss this point more fully below.
The whole process of Negro acculturation in the United States, the Caribbean, and other parts of the New World presupposed basic institutional differences between Negroes and whites. It stands to reason that some sections of the American Negro population will now be less fully acculturated than others. As a result, the American Negroes are culturally diverse and may be subdivided institutionally into two or more sections, the acculturated extreme consisting of those who have adopted white American culture as far as the present color-caste arrangement permits, while the opposite extreme consists of those whose religious, kinship, economic, and associational institutions are furthest removed from white norms. It follows that the American Negroes do not form a separate cultural section. They are a subordinate social segment of a culturally heterogeneous society, and may differ among themselves institutionally. Some groups of American Negroes belong to plural communities; others do not. Such a complex situation cannot be handled adequately in terms of race relations alone; pluralism and its alternatives must be defined institutionally rather than in racial or ethnic terms. Cultural heterogeneity has many forms and bases, while cultural pluralism has only one, namely, diversity of the basic institutional system. Plural societies are by no means the only alternatives to homogeneous societies. The United States and Brazil are heterogeneous societies that contain plural communities and evince pluralism without themselves being plural societies. Neither color-caste nor class stratification implies basic institutional differences and, in my view, the term ethnic minorities should be reserved for those national groups that share the same basic institutions as the host society, but preserve distinctive styles.

Several other points should be made before we leave this subject of institutional variation. As we have seen, each institutional subsystem tends to be integrated with other institutional subsystems. For this reason, it is rare for the institutional differences between groups to be limited to one particular institution. If these differences are at all significant, they will generally be associated with like differences in other institutions, and the cumulative effect will be basic cultural and social differences between the groups concerned. Such differentiated groups form separate cultural and social sections.

Institutional differences vary in degree, even when the institutions under comparison also differ in kind. Thus the kinship institutions of West Indian folk and elite form two distinct kinds of system, but the difference between these two systems is less than that between one based on patrilineal descent and polygyny and another based on bilateral kinship and monogamy. Although both paired comparisons reveal differences in kind, and thus belong to the same order, one set of differences exceeds the other. Clearly, the more obvious the set of institu-
tional differences, the easier their identification and analysis. In this sense pluralism is a dimension, some societies being more sharply divided than others or having more subdivisions. Likewise, within a plurality, two sections may differ less obviously from one another than from a third; provided they all have different systems of basic institutions, however, all three are structural units of identical analytic status.

Since institutions are integral units, the elements of which are activities, ideas, and social relations, their differences involve differing systems of idea, action, and social grouping. To determine whether such differences exist in a given population is a simple matter of empirical research. Such study focuses on the institutional forms of grouping, idea, and action within the population. It seeks to determine their uniformity or difference by the criterion of compatibility already discussed and then to define their distribution. Given precise indices and hypotheses, the problems of social integration and change are also open to field study.

Even in a plural society, institutional diversity does not include differing systems of government. The reason for this is simple: the continuity of such societies as units is incompatible with an internal diversity of governmental institutions. Given the fundamental differences of belief, value, and organization that connote pluralism, the monopoly of power by one cultural section is the essential precondition for the maintenance of the total society in its current form. In short, the structural position and function of the regulative system differ sharply in plural and other societies. Institutionally homogeneous societies develop a variety of institutional motivations toward conformity with social norms; institutionally split societies lack these common motivations and tend to rely correspondingly on regulation. The dominant social section of these culturally split societies is simply the section that controls the apparatus of power and force, and this is the basis of the status hierarchies that characterize pluralism. Since the units of this hierarchic arrangement are the cultural sections, ranking applies initially to sections rather than individuals, and within each section it is therefore governed by other status factors.

In such situations the subordinate social sections often seek to regulate their own internal affairs independently of their superiors. Thus, in Grenada the peasants traditionally avoided the official authorities by settling their disputes through local “peacemakers” or magicians, by ignoring official forms of land transfer, marriage, divorce, wills, registration, and the like, and nowadays by appealing to their sectional leader, E. M. “Uncle” Gairy, for assistance in the most varied circumstances. Such evasive adjustments are not necessary among the Bantu on South African reservations, who have their own officials appointed and controlled by the dominant whites. These Bantu are permitted to observe
their traditional law as long as it does not conflict with the Union law. In Grenada, where there is only one legal code, the problem of the lower section is to maintain its customs by systematic evasion; the people there are fairly skillful in this respect, but it still remains true that, even within plural societies, we shall not find two equal and independent sets of governmental institutions.

Cultural pluralism is not confined to plural societies, although it is their basis. Furnivall noted this point long ago: “Outside the tropics a society may have plural features, notably in South Africa, Canada and the United States, . . . but in general these mixed populations have at least a common tradition of Western culture. . . . There is a society with plural features, but not a plural society.” 23 This passage reveals some theoretical confusion; it would be difficult to name a more extreme case of a plural society than contemporary South Africa. Moreover, Furnivall seemed to think that plural societies were confined to the tropics. Nevertheless, I think that his main point here is very sound; in Brazil and the United States we have societies that evince cultural pluralism, but that are clearly different from plural societies. In Canada the French dominate Quebec, while Anglo-Saxons control the other provinces. Even if the French and British Canadians practiced different institutional systems, their provincial separateness would mean that the Canadian Federation is an association of groups differentiated territorially and institutionally. If this unit were dominated by a distinct cultural minority, it would then present a special form of plural society, the critical feature of which is that within it the cultural sections live side by side, a condition that in the Union of South Africa has given rise to apartheid.

In Brazil and the United States the culturally and politically dominant tradition is that shared by the overwhelming majority of the population. Under such conditions, even culturally distinct groups are minorities at the national level, although they may well include some local majorities. As national minorities, they present no threat to the current social order and, as long as their customs are tolerated by the dominant majority, these minorities may persist undisturbed. It is therefore necessary to distinguish such societies as Brazil and the United States from another and far larger group in which the dominant cultural section constitutes a small minority wielding power over the unit as a whole. Under such conditions, this dominant minority is inescapably preoccupied with problems of structural maintenance and economic and political control. For this reason it may actively seek to discourage acculturation among the subordinate majority, since the current incompatibility of their institutional systems is held to justify the status quo. This has happened in the British West Indies on several occasions, and is in 1960 the major issue in British East and
Central Africa. It is this latter group of societies that should be distinguished as plural societies. They are structurally peculiar, and they form a field worth special study. Federal constitutions may modify the significance of community pluralism when the sectional proportions of the community are reversed at the national level. They do not modify the effect of pluralism in the Union of South Africa because the dominant whites are a minority at both levels.

It is probably best to summarize my argument before proceeding. I have tried to show that the institutional system that forms the cultural core defines the social structure and value system of any given population. Thus populations that contain groups practicing different forms of institutional system exhibit a corresponding diversity of cultural, social, and ideational patterns. Since any institutional system tends toward internal integration and consistency, each of these differentiated groups will tend to form a closed socio-cultural unit. Such pluralistic conditions are far more widespread than are plural societies, the distinctive feature of which is their domination by a cultural minority. Pluralism is quite distinct from other forms of social heterogeneity, such as class stratification, in that it consists in the coexistence of incompatible institutional systems. Plural societies depend for their maintenance on the regulation of intersectional relations by one or another of the component cultural sections. When the dominant section is also a minority, the structural implications of cultural pluralism have their most extreme expression, and the dependence on regulation by force is greatest. A society whose members all share a single system of institutions is culturally and socially homogeneous. A society having one basic institutional system in a number of styles or one basic system and a number of institutional alternatives and specialties is culturally and socially heterogeneous. Since social integration develops institutionally, the structural conditions of societies vary according to their homogeneous, heterogeneous, or plural characters. Thus pluralism has three aspects of special significance for us: (1) on the theoretical plane, it directs attention to the need for refinement and variety of analytic models by presenting conditions that cannot be handled adequately with conventional models of homogeneous equilibrium systems or integrative stratification orders; (2) methodologically, there are the problems of studying such units holistically rather than in community segments, of classifying them structurally, and of assessing their relative integration in objective terms; and (3) analytically, the functional organization and development of such units also pose special problems that require historical study.

How do plural societies and other culturally pluralistic units originate? Furnivall thought that they were limited to the modern colonial tropics and were products of Western economic expansion. However,
the Norman conquest of Britain, and the Roman conquest before it, certainly established plural societies, and there are many other instances that cannot be attributed to Western economic activity. Thus in Maradi, Niger, the former Habe rulers of Katsina, after being driven out by the Fulani in 1807, established a successor state that is also a plural society, since its Moslem rulers form a minority controlling pagans whose kinship, economic, magico-religious, educational, military, and political institutions are quite distinctive. In Uganda we also find plural societies founded before the Europeans arrived on the scene. Modern economic forces may account for colonial pluralities, but these are not the only ones. Perhaps the most general answer to this question of origin is migration, which also accounts for the development of ethnic minorities. This migration may be forced, as in Habe Maradi or West Indian slavery, or semivoluntary as in the movement of indentured East Indian labor into the West Indies, or voluntary as in the British penetration of Kenya and Burma, or the Dutch colonization of South Africa. It may involve conquest and consolidation, but this is not always the case.

It is a major error to conceive the conditions and problems of pluralism directly in terms of race relations. To do so is to mistake the social myth for reality, and thus to miss the structure that underlies it and gives it both force and form. It is quite true, by and large, that modern plural societies are multiracial, and that these racial groups tend also to be culturally distinct, but this is by no means always the case, as the cultural diversity of the American Negroes and the distinction between évolué and indigène in Africa makes clear. It often happens that racially distinct groups form a common homogeneous society, as for instance among the Hausa-Fulani of northern Nigeria. Conversely, we sometimes find culturally distinct groups that belong to the same racial stock expressing their differences in racial terms. This seems to be the case in Guatemala, Haiti, and among the Creole folk and elite of the British West Indies. History provides us with many other examples, such as the Normans and Anglo-Saxons, the English and the Scots or, most recently and most elaborately, the Nazi ideology. Race differences are stressed in contexts of social and cultural pluralism. They lack social significance in homogeneous units. As the Caribbean slave literature shows most clearly, the function of racism is merely to justify and perpetuate a pluralistic social order. This being the case, the rigorous analysis of race relations presupposes analyses of their context based on the theory of pluralism.

In class-stratified societies deference is demonstrated or exacted interpersonaliy, while in plural units it is often generalized by the dominant group and enforced on the subordinate sections. Such generalized obligatory deference is an important mode of social con-
Control. Normally, dress, manner, or speech serve to place individuals sectionally but, where racial differences obtain, they usually act as the most general indicators, being the most resistant to change. In this way the dominant minority seeks to perpetuate its dominion and the plural structure simultaneously. Racist ideology seeks to symbolize and legitimize intersectional relations.

Another common sociological error is the reduction of cultural and social pluralism to social stratification. Such equations misstate the character and implications of institutional differentiation where this is not entirely ignored. Thus the Haitian literature debates whether the Haitian cultural and social sections are castes or classes; Braithwaite applies both labels to the sections in Trinidad; Tumin treats the Ladino and Indian sections of Guatemalan society as castes; and Lord Olivier treats the Jamaican cultural sections as classes. Both Tumin and Olivier presented accounts of smooth change within well-integrated societies. Both analyses were discredited by violent upheavals in Guatemala and Jamaica shortly after the publication of the two works. The recent development of racism in Trinidad also questions Braithwaite’s analysis. We cannot adequately analyze plurality as an integrated stratification order.

It is also misleading to suppose that the persistence of plural units is due to the predominance of common values between their cultural sections. Such common values and integrative mechanisms can hardly be claimed for societies like Kenya, Hungary, the Union of South Africa, British Guiana, Algeria, or Nyasaland. However, before their current disorders, did the value cohesion and regulative systems of these populations differ significantly from the present? Social quiescence and cohesion differ sharply, and so do regulation and integration but, if we begin by assuming that integration prevails, it is virtually impossible to distinguish these conditions. Here again, pluralism indicates the need for greater refinement in our structural models and social theory.

It is especially difficult to isolate the positive effect of common values in culturally split societies that owe their form and maintenance to a special concentration of regulative power within the dominant group. In the Congo the Belgians tried to solve the problems of political control and social justice intrinsic to these conditions by neutrality in its most extreme form. Accordingly, they denied all cultural sections the franchise, and this appearance of cultural impartiality was highly applauded for the stability it seemed to offer. The reality was somewhat different, as the Belgian legislation affecting polygyny shows clearly, and recent events have shown the total inadequacy of this solution also. Whatever the form of the political system, the differing sectional values within a plural society are a profound source of in-
stability. Since stratification is now assumed to be an integrative order, it is therefore misleading to represent the intersectional relations of a plural society in these terms.

Since the plural society depends for its structural form and continuity on the regulation of intersectional relations by government, changes in the social structure presuppose political changes, and these usually have a violent form. In desperation, the subordinate cultural section may either practice escapist religious rituals or create a charismatic leadership as the organ of sectional solidarity and protest. This sort of leadership develops only where people are desperate in the face of overwhelming odds. We have numerous examples of charismatic leadership in the West Indies.

The consequence of this mode of political change is often an increased instability, since the uncircumscribable powers of charismatic leaders are incompatible with modern bureaucratic organization and Western parliamentary practice. Either the charisma is routinized by ministerial roles and bureaucratic procedures, in which case the people may lose their leader, or both will probably proceed along the dictatorial path.

Recently the British have created several regional federations by uniting colonial pluralities. It is hoped that these federations will provide favorable conditions for the development of their populations, but these federal associations permit the elite minorities of formerly distinct societies to assist one another in controlling their subordinate social sections, as recently happened in Nyasaland, for example. Federalism may modify pluralities if these are absorbed into larger units with a different structure and composition, but these new colonial federations have much the same sectional compositions as their constituent units. Thus they face two critical tests. First, it remains to be seen whether the associated colonies will transfer decisive governmental power to their federations and thus cease to be separate societies. Second, it remains to be seen whether the federal form and association will facilitate structural changes within the component units.

Since institutional systems tend to be integrated, societies that include two or more institutional systems differ structurally, functionally, and in their modes of development from those that do not. Social science cannot ignore such societies, nor can it deal with them fully if they are treated as homogeneous units. Since the sociology and cultural constitution of these societies are unintelligible separately, both must be studied together to provide an adequate analysis. In this paper I have tried to put forward a theory of pluralism that may serve to guide field work and analysis alike. The utility of this theory depends on its capacity for development.