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The Comparative Study of Complex Societies

1.

Most of mankind now live in complex societies and most of these societies are at present experiencing processes of change that promise to enhance their complexity. Such societies, variously labelled complex, heterogeneous, developing, developed, modern, modernizing, emergent nations or new states, are of manifest concern to all social scientists, but especially to sociologists and social anthropologists whose capacity to elucidate their variable structures, modes of operation and courses of development is no less important for the practical management of their affairs than for the creation of an empirically relevant and appropriate conceptual framework which might furnish a theoretical basis for the integration of these increasingly convergent disciplines. Curiously, however, very few sociologists or anthropologists have as yet attempted to define the category of complex societies or to delineate their essential or general characteristics. Instead, as Schneider observed over ten years ago,

the treatment generally accorded 'complexity'... consists mainly in simply referring to 'complexity' and then ignoring the matter. The fundamental problem is that of dealing with the range of different kinds of societies within the framework of a theory of society... It is a major problem which social theory has clearly failed to cope with, yet one of the most pressing of the problems before social theory at this time.

In reply to such comments, S. N. Eisenstadt, who had explicitly contrasted 'primitive' or 'tribal' with 'complex' societies, of which 'modern societies' were an imprecisely distinguished sub-type, casually remarks that 'both terms, to some extent, constitute residual categories', and says that his 'model' of the complex society 'was largely derived from Durkheim'. Accordingly to clarify the position we should first consider Durkheim's radical contrast between the undifferentiated 'primitive societies' ordered by relations of mech-

4. ibid., p. 220.
5. ibid., p. 220.
analical solidarity and the advanced, differentiated societies that depend on 'organic solidarity' for their integration, since this underlies so much subsequent work on the nature and development of complex societies. For example, Ronald Frankenberg employs this antinomy to contrapose rural society, characterized by its 'complexity', with urban society, characterized by its 'complication'.

In this generalizing and redefining Durkheim's contrasted models of primitive and modern societies as rural and urban, Frankenberg assimilates Durkheim's typology to that which Louis Wirth and Robert Redfield formulated in contrasting urban and folk societies as ideal-types. But clearly while most urban units, industrial and pre-industrial, are highly complex in their organizations, institutional operations and composition, such units by no means exhaust the range of complex societies, which nowadays include the 'emergent nations', 'new states', and developing societies of the 'Third World', among other forms. Neither does its rural condition always or necessarily exclude a sufficient degree of the organizational 'complication' which Frankenberg identifies by diversity of both occupational and other roles to substantiate his radical contrast. However, since such polar models are not disconfirmed by phenomena that contravert their assumptions, they continue to fascinate sociologists and anthropologists by their simplicity and dramatic oppositions, and thus obstruct the development of alternative approaches to the comparative study of complex societies as units that differ substantially in many particulars, despite certain common features.

Durkheim's powerful contrast between 'primitive' or 'undifferentiated' societies integrated through relations of mechanical solidarity, and other societies with an advanced division of labour that derive their integration from relations of organic solidarity, has continued to exercise an unfortunate influence on theoretical and comparative sociology. Durkheim presented these models as extremes in the evolutionary development of human society; and, as the title of his book indicates, in his view the most general and decisive index of the development and complexity of a society lay in its prevailing 'division of labour'. However, though inexplicitly, Durkheim does distinguish the 'division of economic labour' from other forms of 'social labour' or functional differentiation, when he cites Britain as a 'segmental' or relatively 'undeveloped' society in which the 'division of economic labour' was none the less highly advanced. Frankenberg's representative equation of Durkheim's concept of the division of labour with economic and occupational differentiation accordingly misinterprets Durkheim, although understandably so, given the opacities and tortuousness of Durkheim's thesis and its exposition. Evidently by 'the division of labour in society', Durkheim sought to encompass the differentiation of institutions and roles in other social fields as well as the economy, for example, in education, government, religion, family and law. By 'the division of labour in society', he thus attempted to embrace all levels and types of functional differentiation, and included institutional segregations and specializations in spheres of social organization other than the economy. Parsons, Eisenstadt and other structural-functionalists have employed Durkheim's criteria of functional and institutional differentiation as central indices of societal complexity and development. For example, Neil Smelser writes:

One point of contrast between simple and complex societies is the degree of differentiation of social structures. In an ideal-typical simple society, little differentiation exists between a position in a kinship group, (e.g. elderly men in a certain clan), political authority (since elderly men in this clan hold power as a matter of custom), religious authority (since political and religious authority are undifferentiated), and wealth (since tributes flow to this position). The social structures are undifferentiated, and an individual occupies a high or low position in all roles simultaneously. In complex societies, by contrast, a position in the age structure does not necessarily entitle a person to membership in specific roles in the occupational structure; a position of importance in the religious hierarchy does not necessarily give an individual access to control of wealth. Though some individuals may simultaneously receive great amounts of different rewards — wealth, power, prestige — these rewards are often formally segregated in a highly differentiated social structure.

None the less Smelser observes that 'many colonial societies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were intermediate between the simple and the complex. . . . An important structural feature of such systems is that economic, political and racial-ethnic roles coincide with one another.' On strictly functional grounds such coincident roles should denote the absence of differentiation in these colonial societies; but by distinguishing them from simple and complex societies as intermediate, Smelser recognizes that structural conditions regulate the coincidence or dispersal of analytically distinct activities, resources and functions. For Talcott Parsons, however, 'the increasing complexity of [social] systems, in so far as it is not due only to segmentation, involves the development of sub-systems specialized about more specific functions in the operation of the system as a whole, and of integrative mechanisms which interrelate the functionally differentiated systems'. Further, according to Parsons, 'the structure of a system is that set of

7. Wirth (1958); Redfield (1947).
9. Ibid., p. 286.
12. Ibid.
properties of its component parts and their relations or combinations which, for a particular set of analytical purposes, can both logically and empirically be treated as constant within definable limits. Such structures, being segregated analytically by functional criteria, correspond closely to those ‘analytic structures’ which Marion Levy defines as ‘patterned aspects of action that are not even theoretically capable of concrete separation from other patterned aspects of action’. Levy contrasts such ‘analytic structures’ sharply with ‘concrete structures’ described as ‘patterns of action that define the character of membership units involved in social action’. Clearly one central problem in the development of a sociological framework adequate for the analysis of complex societies is the relationship between such concrete structures or membership units and the analytical structures of ‘constructivist systems’ that social scientists segregate by functional criteria for intensive analyses of dynamic relations between phases, properties and parts of social units conceived as systems.

Durkheim, who perceived this problem, proposed a solution which, being either tautological or empirically invalid, is quite inadequate although widely accepted. To account for ‘the progress of the division of labour’, he asserts that

the segmental arrangement [of societies] is an insurmountable obstacle to the division of labour, and must have disappeared at least partially for the division of labour to appear. The latter can appear only in proportion to the disappearance of a segmental structure. The growth of the division of labour is thus brought about by the social segments losing their individuality, the divisions becoming more permeable. [This] gives rise to a relationship between individuals who were separated, or, at least, a more intimate relationship than there was. The division of labour develops, therefore, as there are more individuals sufficiently in contact to be able to act and react upon one another. If we agree to call this relation and the active commerce resulting from it dynamic or moral density, we can say that the progress of the division of labour is in direct ratio to the moral or dynamic density of society. But this moral relationship can only produce its effect if the real distance between individuals is itself diminished in some way. Moral density cannot grow unless material density grows at the same time, and the latter can be used to measure the former.

Durkheim then discusses three processes that may generate this ‘progressive [demographic] condensation of societies’ together with certain exceptions to his correlations of social volume (size, extent) and density, before concluding triumphantly as follows:

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19. ibid., pp. 199, 551.
22. ibid., p. 257.
23. ibid., pp. 260 ff.
24. ibid., pp. 262 ff.
27. Durkheim (1957), pp. 29-41.
by contemporary forms and articulations of corporate units within those societies, for example, trade unions, cartels, employers’ associations, political parties, civil and military administrations, religious, educational, scientific and other property-holding bodies, all independently seeking to pursue or protect their interests in an imperfectly regulated arena that mediated transactions of similar and differing values and kinds. None the less, in advocating the deliberate creation of these intermediate corporations to mitigate the strains of industrial society, Durkheim implicitly admitted the inadequacy of his ‘condensation’ hypothesis and its underlying general assumption of the functional determination of social structures, their development and integration.

One of the most decisive considerations against Durkheim’s criterion of functional differentiation as an adequate index and measure of societal complexity is the impressive evidence of structural divergence in complex societies of similar technological and institutional levels, such for example as the ‘archaic’ societies of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Assyria and Iran, and the more complex societies of imperial China, Japan, India, Carthage, ancient Greece and Rome, Byzantium, the medieval Islamic empires, Carolingian Europe, Renaissance Italy and Flanders. Though societies in each category share similar technologies and levels of occupational differentiation, and although in each category at different times and places some societies exhibited comparable degrees of ‘condensation’, the structural convergences and divergences between European and Japanese feudalism, the oriental despotsisms of China and Egypt, the Hindu caste society, the orientalized theocratic regimes at Byzantium, the Ummayad and Abbasid caliphates, and the republican city-states of ancient Greece, Carthage, Rome, Renaissance Italy and Flanders, indicate quite clearly the independent variation of concrete social structures from functional differentiation and demographic densities. The structural parallels of imperial China and ancient Egypt hold despite their differing forms and degrees of ‘condensation’; so do the parallels between Florence and Athens on the one hand, and feudal Europe and Japan on the other. We simply cannot account for such radically divergent though comparatively complex social structures as Hindu caste, Roman society with its various orders of free men and slaves, Chinese society, the Japanese and European feudalisms, Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Byzantium and medieval Islam, within the conceptual framework developed by Durkheim and espoused with various modifications and elaborations by contemporary structural-functionalists. Besides their comparable technologies, the most important features shared by all these societies were literacy, pre-industrial modes of production, stratification, and lability or dynamism, even in such apparently stable bureaucratic regimes as ancient Egypt, China and Byzantium. Yet were these societies in all particulars notably less complex than those of Russia and Latin America before their twentieth-century revolutions? And can we seriously pretend that the divergent structure of Hindu caste derives from rather than enjoins the prevailing forms and levels of functional differentiation in Hindu society? The Australian aborigines, Bushmen and Kwakiutl alike subsisted by hunting and gathering; but their social structures diverge radically, not merely in their forms but also in their levels of structural differentiation, without corresponding functional specializations. Likewise the Bedouin and the Tuareg herd camels and operate similar technologies in similar habitats; but again these populations differ sharply in the form and elaboration of their social structures, without complementary modes of functional differentiation. Ethnography could multiply such revealing cases a hundred times. Only if we choose to ignore the concrete particulars of social structure, or decide to subsume these structures in toto under that term, can we agree that ‘the division of labour’ underlies rather than depends on the forms of units of social organization. We must therefore attempt to sketch some of the ways in which concrete social structures generate or inhibit further differentiation; and in doing so I shall try to show how the conditions of structural generation regulate the processes, forms and levels of functional differentiation in human societies of diverse base and composition.

On behalf of Durkheim and his leading contemporaries, we must recognize the responsibility of our anthropological predecessors for their theoretical shortcomings. Durkheim, for instance, wrote at a period when the ethnographic and theoretical literature on simple societies effectively subsumed all forms of social organization under kinship and community. He accordingly lacked the evidence we now possess of the variety and significance of alternative types of social organization besides the hordes, segmental lineages or clans, castes and guilds, and modern forms of economic and occupational organization with which he was familiar. Today however we should take note as well of age-sets and regiments; military, political, recreational and ritual associations of differing sorts, both open and ‘secret’; corporate social strata such as estates of nobles, clerics, freemen, serfs and slaves; universities, temples and schools, fraternities, trusts and banks; productive and trading associations of such differing sorts as the Aztec pochteca, the medieval manor, Japanese shoen, ancient Greek oikos, Diola or Hausa trading enclaves, West Indian plantations, Hausa slave estates, Efik and Ibibio ‘canoe-houses’, as well as orders of office, law courts, administrative departments, councils or colleges of diverse composition and

28. For some examples see Forde (1934).
function, commissions of various kinds, and such differing forms of local grouping as bands, pastoral or herding groups, dispersed or nucleated sedentary communities, districts, provinces, towns, cities and nations.

All the units just listed — and this catalogue is far from complete — are corporate in their character, or 'segmental' in Durkheim's terms; and all involve or prescribe distinctive forms of social relations among and between their members and others. Most emphasize some set of functions or interests as primary, though few pursue these exclusively. All exploit some collective resources or privileges and rely on collective criteria for the recruitment of members, while most possess directorates to administer their affairs by procedures regarded as effective and appropriate. Those that lack such regulative councils or offices are thereby constituted as categories, collectively inert and accordingly subject to regulation either by other units or by traditional prescriptions and proscriptions, unless mobilized by some self-appointed charismatic leaders in situations of crisis. Collective structures of the kinds just listed present variably formidable obstacles to the differentiation of functionally specific relations and institutions within the societies of which they are part. None the less, in differing combinations and circumstances they may also facilitate or generate such differentiated units as concrete structures in Marion Levy's sense, endowing them with particular attributes, resources, personnel and functions. It seems appropriate then to look closely at such concrete units of social organization in our efforts to account for the development and diversity of complex societies; but before proceeding with this task, we should surely attempt to define both these terms, and at least provisionally to delineate the complex society by listing some of its central characteristics.

According to Parsons, 'a society is relatively the most self-sufficient type of social system' in that it 'internally integrates more of the requisites of independent existence' than does any other type of social aggregate organized as a distinctive unit. As 'a self-sufficient, self-perpetuating and internally autonomous system of social relations' a society also organizes a determinate population internally autonomous system of social relations and relations it involves are diverse in their basis, nature and range, the society is correspondingly complex. In so far as the units and relations through which the population is organized are uniform in their type and properties, a society may be described as simple.

3.

However, simplicity and complexity constitute a continuum with several levels rather than a dichotomy. Parsons, for instance, like Smelser, distinguishes societies as primitive, intermediate or modern. Within the primitive category he further distinguishes the simple from advanced types; and within the intermediate range he distinguishes such 'archaic' societies as ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia from such 'historic empires' as China, Rome and the Islamic empire, and the two 'seed-bed societies' of ancient Israel and Greece. To this series we should certainly add medieval feudal societies, the many intermediate units created by colonialism, and the developing, modernizing or emergent societies that decolonization initiated; and at the modern pole we should distinguish the collectivist and individualist types of industrial society illustrated by the USSR and the USA.

Probably few would object to the following preliminary list of characteristics common to complex societies:

1. Sufficient levels of structural differentiation to ensure significant differences in the distribution of differentiated roles among adult men.
2. Some nucleated settlements with relatively large and heterogeneous populations.
3. The institutionalization of production for exchange, whether this is transacted by markets and money or by other means, with complementary specialization of some productive units.
4. Forms and degrees of social stratification that significantly differentiate the life-chances, experiences and orientations of categories within the society.
5. Differentially distributed opportunities for lateral (spatial) or vertical (social) mobility within the population.
6. Relatively clear separation of the private and public domains of social life.
7. Some traditions of literacy.
8. The allocation of an increasing number of public roles on criteria other than sex and age.
9. A significant number of impersonal and instrumental forms of social relation.
10. Significant areas of social relations and activity formally open to individual choice and initiative.
11. Diversity in the forms and units of social grouping.
12. An increasing number of alternative forms of secondary group in which communications are mediated through some intervening link or set of links.

30. See above, Chapter 7, p. 207.
Some commonly assumed attributes or conditions of complexity not listed above include political centralization, scale and size. However, we can neither deny the complexity nor affirm the political centralization of feudal Europe, Heian and Kamakura Japan, the Mozabite towns, the Swat Paktuns or Tuareg tribes. 34 Further, as employed by various authors, the term 'scale' corresponds so closely in its components and implications with Durkheim's ideas of functional differentiation that, having rejected the latter, we should avoid the former. 35 In addition, 'scale' is used to assimilate complexity and size, as in the contrast between 'small-scale' and 'large-scale' societies. The term is thus doubly ambiguous in its referents, and best avoided. Whether measured in territorial extent or population numbers, and although commonly associated with both, 'size' is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition of structural complexity and functional differentiation, 36 if only because the development and co-ordination of large units presupposes these features. Certainly many small units such as the Mozabite cities, eighteenth-century Montserrat 37 and contemporary Iceland and Cyprus greatly exceed the Tiv, Gusi and Somali in societal complexity. None the less, given its relevance, the relations of size to complexity are discussed further below.

Of the twelve characteristics listed above, six — numbers (1) to (4), (11) and (12) — refer directly to concrete social units such as groups and categories; and another six, namely (1), (5), (8) to (10), refer directly or indirectly to individuals; while five — numbers (1), (3), (6), (11) and (12) — relate to differentiation, mainly in the forms and units of social organization. The distinction between private and public domains isolated in item (6) of this list turns on the segregation of those interests, activities and relations which are matters of collective concern and regulation from others which are left for individuals and families to handle themselves. 38 Only one of these twelve characteristics, namely literacy, appears detached from all others; yet, like Parsons, 39 I believe that some level and form of literacy, indigenous or exogenous, is universally associated with complex societies, whether as an effect, correlate or condition of their development, I cannot pause to consider.

From this review of the characteristics listed above, it is evident that the two decisive foundations of social and cultural complexity are respectively the institutionalization of a sufficient number and variety of alternative types of social unit to ensure substantial diversity in the careers, life-chances, social networks, relations, orientations, rights, statuses and obligations of their members; and secondly, a sufficiently differentiated series of constraints, incentives and opportunities to oblige and permit an adequate and increasing number of individuals to select or to change their affiliations and occupations as circumstances suggest, even though these individual initiatives are distributed differentially among the various social categories and strata. Two correlates of such individual options are the individuation of adults by empirically distinctive combinations of social roles and interests, and individualism as a derived orientation and ideology. Yet even though such options are always unequally distributed within a human society, they assume and ensure corresponding measures of individual mobility, both lateral and vertical, and corresponding varieties of types of social unit that differ in their bases, functions and forms. These conditions in turn generate corresponding diversity and contingency in certain types of social relation, and, unless restrained, a progressive increase in the scope, resources and organizational complexity of the public domain which is the focus of collective interests and regulation, following its initial segregation from the private domain reserved for individual and familial action. In consequence of these associated characteristics, complex societies generate a competitiveness at individual and collective levels which in turn emphasizes the value of uniformity in their legal and civil administrations and in their criteria for the allocation of important public roles.

It is neither necessary nor useful at this stage of inquiry to attempt to indicate the approximate modalities or ratios of the various quantifiable characteristics listed above, since their combination defines societal complexity as a continuum, with the differing forms and degrees that reflect the variable values of these several components. Thus in the absence of one or more of these criteria, others might have effects disproportionate to their intensity, and may thus generate distinctive patterns and modes of complexity. What we can do at this stage, given the primacy of multiple concrete structures and individual autonomy in the genesis and organization of these complex societies, is to sketch a conceptual framework that may enable us to explore the relations of these two variables while reviewing the alternative courses by which societies of differing base and composition have historically developed complex structures of differing capacity and kind. However, before proceeding to these topics, let me stress that the entire discussion thus far has been based on the assumption of ethnic homogeneity as a general feature of complex societies. Historically, such ethnically homogeneous units are probably a fortunate but significant minority of complex societies. None the less, under Durkheim's influence, they have axiomatically furnished the ideal-typical contexts for theoretical discussions of their evolution. Thus, having sketched the evolution of...
homogeneous societies, we shall consider some alternatives and their development briefly below.

Of the criteria listed above, dense, heterogeneous settlements, regular and variably specialized production for exchange, some degree of spatial and social mobility and the allocation of public roles on criteria other than sex and age, are subsumed or entailed by the two generic conditions of multiple alternative concrete structures and individual autonomy. The functional differentiations of social units and relations, on which so much has been written, are simply inevitable correlates or consequences of increases in the number and variety of social units, that is, in the elaboration and differentiation of the societal structure. However, only beyond a certain indeterminate level of elaboration can a social structure generate conditions, incentives and opportunities that permit or require men to exercise choice and assume individual responsibility for establishing or maintaining social ties with other individuals and units; and on theoretical and empirical grounds it is clear that even under the most Utopian conditions all individuals in a given society can never be equally free to exercise such choice about all the categories of social relationship that their society permits, simultaneously or seriatim. The most we may reasonably expect is that many or most individuals may routinely be able to make certain choices in certain situations, while a progressively decreasing number of increasingly privileged persons will have opportunities for an increasing number of such decisions. In short, societies differ significantly in the affairs they open to individual initiative, in the scope and significance of the choices they enjoin or permit, and in the distribution of such constraints and opportunities among their members. Such differences simply reflect the definition and dispersion of alternatives created by the coexistence of differing and competing concrete structures in the public domain of the society. The more complex the society, the greater the number and variety of alternatives it opens to individual choice in the formation, maintenance and termination of social relations, and the greater the proportion of its population that can exercise such choice at equivalent phases in their life careers; but the number, distribution and scope of such individual choices themselves reflect the nature and articulation of the alternative concrete structures. The less complex a society, the greater the proportion of its members who are immobilized from birth till death by incorporation in social units of a single type, whether or not they are formally free to transfer their affiliation to some other unit of identical kind, as in those types of band-organized society discussed below. Not only do societies with such monotonous structures, which furnished the models for Durkheim's undifferentiated segmental type, restrict the freedom of individuals to alter their social relations and affiliations. They operate more importantly to obstruct the creation of new types of social unit and forms of interpersonal relations, thereby preserving their undifferentiated character. Yet if these component units, or segments as Durkheim calls them, effectively restrict individual freedom and initiative, they can do so only because they subsume all the functions and interests that are essential for the populations they organize. In consequence, in such societies no individual can either flout the rules of such units, or survive independently outside them. And since they regulate and provide all the culturally approved interests of their members, such units together subsume responsibility for routinely meeting all the functional requisites of human society, and are accordingly not merely multifunctional, but perduring social structures, with diffuse interests, resources and orientations manifested in the multiple role structures and interpersonal relations through which they organize and discharge their normal activities. Further, since all social structures rely for their perpetuation on perduring units of some sort, it is surely at this level that we must seek the conditions that generate or obstruct the development of societal complexity and differentiation.

4.

Besides roles, the dyadic relations they constitute, and the institutional statuses to which they are attached, social structures include various primary units such as the family, or groups of friends and workmates, which are ephemeral in that they dissolve with the death or withdrawal of their members. Though formally subject to regulations emanating from the public domain, these and other forms of transient primary groupings are clearly anchored in the private domain. In addition, all social structures normally include some variably institutionalized classifications of the population they organize by discriminating categories of male and female, infants, children, youth, adults and elders, the married, unmarried, social classes, and so on; and some of these categories may provide the basis for a patterned distribution of collective roles.

As societies normally depend on internal reproduction to persist, they are always heterogeneous in age and sex; and sex differences being immutable and central to reproduction, their elaboration provides a universal though variable basis for the division of labour, women commonly being privatized by their domestic and maternal functions, while men dominate or monopolize the arenas of public action and decision. Naturally societies differ in the ways and degrees in which they formalize such sex differences. They differ even more strikingly in the ways in which they pattern and emphasize differences of age, which only a few elaborate as frameworks of collective organization. In most societies maturation is periodized and celebrated ceremonially on an individual rather than a collective

40. Eisenstadt (1956).
Corporations and Society

Those perduring units that positively and/or negatively regulate human interactions and activities provide the frameworks and boundaries of societal organizations. They may be described as corporations: and, following Maine, we can distinguish initially two grand classes of corporations, namely those that require several members, the corporations aggregate, and those that can only have one member at a time, the corporations sole, each a unique and presumptively perpetual status that integrates a complex of differentiated roles. Corporations of either type are characterized by their unique identities, by the presumption of perpetuity, by precise rules of recruitment and closure and thus determinate memberships at any given moment.

However, the two classes separated by Maine must be further subdivided to yield a comprehensive discriminating typology of corporate units. To this end we should distinguish two major types of corporations aggregate, one of which is adequately described by the preceding list of corporate characteristics. We may call such units corporate categories to distinguish them from corporate groups, which possess, in addition to the characteristics already listed, representative or inclusive modes of organization, common but exclusive affairs that include their organizational and other resources, determinate procedures for the handling of these collective affairs, and sufficient autonomy to regulate them. As organized corporations aggregate, corporate groups have capacities for collective action that corporate categories, which lack the organizations essential for mobilizing and coordinating their members and resources, do not possess. None the less these categories are distinguished from other social categories as corporations by virtue of their closure and modes of recruitment, their presumed perpetuity, unique external identities, and determinate memberships which imply lifelong identifications of populations enrolled in such units, even though, as slaves, some might be manumitted, and as serfs, in opportune circumstances, some could seek the freedom of anonymity by flight to towns, as bilingual Indios in contemporary Guatemala convert to Ladino status by relocating.

As institutional agencies for their representative organization and administration, corporations aggregate may employ councils and offices, separately or together. If such councils are constituted as permanent organs within the collectivity, they will then possess the ordinary attributes of a corporate group, but should none the less be distinguished as a separate class of corporations which, following basis; but in many societies seniority by birth-order differentiates the statuses and life chances of same-sex siblings and their descendants in a progressively intricate organization by rank.

Besides the age-categories mentioned above, societies may institutionalize classifications by occupation, by social class, or on other grounds; but only if individuals are prescriptively and involuntarily enrolled for life in such categories can we designate them as corporate. Thus corporate categories preclude voluntary changes of social identification by their members. Accordingly in so far as individual optation and mobility prevail, as in regimes of class rather than orders of estates and caste, social categories, however important and institutionalized, are open rather than closed to individual movements, and allow some scope for individual initiative. In such cases one frequently observes those divergences between the subjective and objective identifications of individuals that correspond to Marx's distinction between true and false consciousness. Such divergences are absent or minimal among the members of corporate categories. However, as such categories lack the organizational preconditions of positive collective action, they also lack any common and exclusive affairs, any common regulatory procedures, and the autonomy requisite for such collective action. They must thus remain subject either to regulation by representatives of other units, as for example the manorial serfs and plantation slaves administered by their masters' agents, or they are governed by collective prescripts and proscripts of a traditional kind such as the rules that enjoin exogamy on categorical clans and endogamy on castes or on racial-ethnic and religious categories. Thus the regulations that govern the relations of members in corporate categories are generally imposed either by conventions and law or enforced by their superiors, by co-ordinate categories, or by the spontaneous action of some of their members. None the less even the prescriptive endogamy of serfs, plebeians, slaves and castes does not constitute such categories as corporate groups since it alone cannot furnish an appropriate and inclusive organization.

As bounded, presumptively perpetual units with determinate memberships, all societies, including those encapsulated or created by recent colonialism, are corporations aggregate. If centrally organized under inclusive or representative institutions such as councils and offices, they are thereby constituted as corporate groups, whether fully or partially autonomous. Otherwise, and whether polyecephalous or aceanphalous, such 'stateless societies' are simply the most inclusive kinds of corporate category. In either event, centralized or not, as the widest membership units with common organizational frameworks and institutions, societies derive their structures and perpetuity from the corporate organizations whose discontinuities demarcate their boundaries in space and time.

42. Maine (1905), ch. 5; Durkheim (1957), chs. 13 and 14, pp. 145-70.
43. Tumin (1952); Beals (1953).
44. Weber (1947), pp. 360-73.
45. Geertz (1963); Worsley (1964); Lloyd (1971a); Almond and Coleman (1960).
Maine illustrated corporations sole by the example of office; but to this we may add a variety of quasi-corporations best described as commissions. Of these only one type requires notice here. As a unique perpetual status with specific conditions, rights, resources and procedures, an office is a unit that includes the criteria which govern its operations and transfer, and its relations with other units, corporate or non-corporate. By contrast, commissions of the type under discussion are normally asserted by individuals independently, even though the form of such assertions may be familiar and even institutionalized within their society. Thus the 'big men' of Melanesia, war leaders among the Cheyenne or the Iroquois, shamans among the Eskimo or the Tungus, prophets among the Nuer, Bakongo or Masai, marabouts and holy men in various Muslim societies, gurus in India and saints everywhere, all assert and establish their individual commissions to exercise certain distinctive types of regulatory power and authority on the basis of their charismatic qualities and performances. However, such individually asserted commissions are neither unique, presumptively perpetual nor transferable by collectively regulated procedures and rules, without their simultaneous conversion into offices. Moreover, while offices and colleges are always anchored in corporate groups as their regulative institutions, commissions of the kind instanced above commonly appear in corporate categories or other loosely structured aggregates. In some extreme situations such commissions may mobilize and co-ordinate these categorical units, thereby converting them into corporate groups at the same time that they themselves become offices. Conversely, when the central regulative agencies of a corporate group are dissolved or proscribed, the group loses its organization and status and becomes a category, dependent for its corporate boundaries on external conditions in its social environment.

Together these five types of corporation and quasi-corporation furnish the major units of the collective organization that encompasses and structures the public domains of human societies. It is their variety, bases and relations that constitute the organizational frameworks that order and delimit societies. It is also their resilience and perduring qualities that assure sufficient continuities of social structure across the generations to preserve the collective identity, form and boundaries of human societies. Further, it is within and between the corporate members of this societal framework that the various impermanent and primary groupings and relations occur, as elements of the private domain under conditions and limits set by the interests and requisites of the prevailing corporate structure. And finally, it is in response to chronic or situational inadequacies of these corporate units that the unsanctioned, uninstitutionalized and random conduct generally described as 'collective behaviour' normally occurs, and commonly precipitates or crystallizes new forms of corporate grouping through social movements directed by leaders who assert and exercise regulatory commissions. Thus the incidence, forms and scale of collective behaviour within societies can only be understood by reference to the perceived inadequacies of their corporate organizations in the situations that precipitate such phenomena, and while it is undeniable that the forms, occasions, scale and incidence of collective behaviour in primitive societies are significantly different and less than in modern industrial societies, we can hardly illuminate such societal differences by invoking the pattern-variables or 'four functional imperatives' that inform the analytic schema of current structural-functional theory, but must instead examine the articulations and capacities of the concrete macro-structural units to which these movements respond. In short, the conditions, situations, character, scope and limits of collective behaviour, and individual capacities for choice and innovation in social relation and actions, alike are set by the prevailing forms of corporate organization, and particularly by the variety, scope, bases and articulations of the corporate units that constitute their frameworks. It is thus necessary to show how such alternative forms of corporate organization generate and determine the differing levels, types and conditions of complexity in human society. In doing so, we may indicate how a conceptual scheme that gives primacy to these concrete perduring units can be employed to furnish a useful framework for the comparative study of societal organizations and developments at any level of complexity.

To be sure, all human societies include families, peer-groups, work-groups and various types of interpersonal dyads and networks, all ultimately reducible to combinations of specific statuses and roles. Such transient and primary relations and groupings constitute the micro-structure of human societies and characteristically fall within their private domains. Other units, such as neighbourhoods or social categories of differing kind and base, being relatively constant though flexible features of the society, fall at the intermediate levels of its organization. But since these and other units depend heavily for their institutional articulation on the scope, basis and complexity of the prevailing framework of corporate organization, this dimension can be usefully segregated for analysis as the macro-structure of societies, since it represents the widest units of collective organization, deploys the widest regulatory powers and resources, and claims the greatest assurance of continuity. For example, families

46. For an example see M.G. Smith (1966).
may or may not be formally incorporated in wider kinship units; neighbourhoods and age-categories may or may not be incorporated as units; peer-groups, dyads, work-groups, patrons, clients and factions can be found within as well as between corporations, or independently of them, and so on. But clearly the basis, variety, scope and articulations of the corporations within a society will significantly affect the autonomy and integration of these lesser types of social grouping, restricting their formations in some cases, their functions in others, or alternatively stimulating both, though invariably providing their conditions, means and objectives. Thus we need not dwell initially on the composition, autonomy and scope of these interpersonal dyads, ephemeral primary groupings and intermediate types of social units, since their range, form and significance are effectively governed by the conditions and necessities of the corporate organizations in which they are set. Accordingly to explore the criteria, determinants and conditions of societal complexity and individual differentiation, we should concentrate attention on the principal varieties of corporate organization that furnish the macro-structures and developmental moments of human societies. Only if the prevailing corporate organization permits or impels its members to establish novel forms of social grouping or relations can the society achieve levels of ‘moral density’ sufficient to enhance its functional differentiation. Thus the conditions and sources of functional differentiation in human society, to which the differentiation of institutions and roles correspond, are anchored in their corporate organizations. In this respect, the extreme antitheses are presented by societies organized on the basis of one type of corporation only, and others that have so great a number and variety of such units that they continuously require and generate new forms of organization to integrate their components. As we saw, Durkheim himself recommended the creation of ‘intermediate corporations’ under such circumstances and precisely for these ends.

Societies organized in bands and segmentary lineages furnish alternative instances of the simplest segmental type that approximates Durkheim’s model of undifferentiated aggregates dependent on mechanical solidarity for their integration. In both cases, these corporations are residential units that hold and exploit inalienable estates; but while segmentary lineages, being characteristically exogamous and recruiting their members by unilineal descent, depend on intermarriage to persist, many bands recruit their members by residence rather than kinship, and are not exogamous. In consequence, such ‘composite bands’ are theoretically capable of self-perpetuation by internal mating and by the incorporation of strangers. Yet although individuals are free to withdraw from one band and join another, since these units alone routinely fulfil all the essential processes and conditions of life in such societies, no family or individual can exist outside them. By contrast, exogamous segmentary lineages enjoin continuous co-residence of one sex-category among their members, normally males, while depending on affinal relations with one another for the spouses on whom their continuity rests. In such conditions individuals of either sex have little freedom to change their residence or immediate associates. They are thus even more intensively subjugated by the prevailing form of corporate organization than are the members of composite bands who retain the freedom to relocate. None the less, of these two types of corporation, the composite band is functionally more diffuse than the lineage, since not only can it perpetuate itself independently from its own ranks, but it subserves all the domestic functions of subsistence, shelter, socialization and technology, as well as the public functions of policy decision and implementation, rule-making and enforcement, allocations of resources and privileges, collective ritual, the administration and defence of its members and estate, and the conduct of group relations with other bands. Though the lineage also undertakes to discharge most of these functions for its resident members, being unilineal and exogamous, its continuity depends on affinal relations with co-ordinate units, which systematically differentiate its members in terms of their non-unilineal affiliations and require the orderly integration of autarchic, homologous units through intermarriages based on standardized definitions of the reciprocal obligations and rights of affinal groups, each internally differentiated by correlative genealogical and residential relations. Thus, despite its narrower functional competence, the lineage is structurally more complex and differentiated than the composite band, and commonly requires and exercises a more effective, rigorous and continuous control over the activities and relations of its members to secure their conformity with its operational requisites. Such control is achieved partly by the elaboration of lineage cults and rituals, partly by the political and legal stress that lineages place on their own and one another’s external unity and collective responsibilities as units, and, consequentially, by the lifelong, exclusive and immutable identification of individuals with their natal lineages, jurally, ritually and, for one of the sexes, residentially as well.

When a segmentary lineage constitutes the local community by exclusive occupation of a compact block of land, its local divisions may correspond so closely with its genealogical segments that social and spatial distance are integrated, each local segment being an autonomous and compact corporate group for certain purposes. The articulations of such segments within the wider unit will then consist largely of the situationally shifting alliances and oppositions that reflect their conflicting or converging interests as expressed in disputes or ties between their members. In such milieux, relations are.
more prescriptive and particularistic in base and form, more functionally diffuse or multiplex in scope, and more heavily laden with collective orientations and affect, than in composite hands.

When a number of such segmentary units are brought together in a common community, although each forms a discrete segment of identical base and type for religious, economic, educational and similar internal purposes, including the control of its members, relations between those genealogically discrete lineages cannot be exhaustively defined in terms of kinship, despite their partial integration by intermarriage, inter-familial and interpersonal links. Accordingly these inter-lineage relations must be regulated and justified by other means and on bases other than community of descent. Characteristically the central problem of such multilinear communities is the preservation of internal peace; and this must often be achieved without impairing the parity or autonomy of their lineage constituents in other spheres, including external relations. Two common responses to such dilemmas include the elaboration of communal shrines, rituals and priestly offices, particularly cults of the earth or community which taboo intra-communal violence, and the development of representative councils to co-ordinate communal interests, to adjudicate or arbitrate inter-lineage disputes, to allocate community land, and perhaps to regulate relations between the local unit as a collectivity and other units elsewhere. Other and complementary solutions include the development of one or more corporate associations that enrol, singly or together, men of all lineages, the development of a structure of age-grades or sets that incorporate the youth of all lineages, or the institution of a central office, whether predominantly secular or ritual; moreover, whereas in monolineal communities such alternative structures as age-sets may be simply assimilated and subjugated to the prevailing framework of lineage loyalties and identification, as for example among the Gusii and the Nuer, in various pastoral East African societies, the scope and significance of lineage organization and loyalty diminishes in multilinear communities as the scope and significance of the alternative age organization expands. Such age-set structures characteristically assimilate youth irrespective of lineage and locality, regulate their relations with one another and with their seniors and juniors, adjudicate disputes, restrict or prohibit lineage feuds, provide the framework for collective rituals, individual security and freedom of movement, establish a permanent and well-defined framework of collective roles for successive sets, and furnish a broader, more efficient means for the rapid and orderly mobilization and direction of the unit’s manpower for military or civil ends. In some societies such as the Kipsigi, Masai and Galla, these age-corporations also generate sets of functionally differentiated offices to regulate community affairs.

These sketches indicate that as societies generate new forms of corporations aggregate, differentiated in their bases, scope, resources, range, autonomy, requisites, entailments and articulations with similar and differing units, they correspondingly elaborate more complex role-inventories at both the individual and collective levels, distribute their functional tasks differentially between these corporations, and consequently enhance the scope for individual options in social relations by differentiating and dispersing autonomy, resources, personnel and responsibilities among the various corporate units within their organization, which then commonly require for their integration some structures of councils and/or offices that characteristically develop at the initiative of individuals or sub-corporate groups. For example when kinship and affinity cease to provide the sole adequate and indispensable basis for enduring social relations, exchange, relieved of these constraints, may be pursued in other channels and for other ends, including political support, ritual assistance, the pursuit of prestige and strictly economic advantage. Markets may thus emerge even before market-places, together with varieties of part-time occupational specialists serving one another and a common clientele. However, such developments may obtain only to the degree that the regulative authority for the performance of essential social functions and for the co-ordination of their members’ interests are effectively dispersed among corporations of diverse base and kind within aggregates unified by such institutions as councils, offices, associations, age-set systems or structures of other base and kind, whose distinctive characteristics and articulations demarcate the boundaries of the collectivity they unite. If some collective structure manages to establish its pervasive dominance over the rest, as for example, the Poror or the Ekpe secret societies among the Mende and the Efik, or if some bureaucratized central chiefship does likewise, these institutions will rapidly elaborate the complex internal organizations their resources and regulatory roles require at the expense of autonomous developments in the structures of the units they dominate. In consequence, individual initiatives and mobility will be redirected or repressed to fit the requirements of the dominant corporation. In such cases the denial of adequate autonomy to other social structures effectively restricts their capacities to increase the scope and range of their activities or to modify their internal organization and external articulations. In effect, the dominance of any single corporation or type of corporate structure, whether an office or a corporate group, effectively inhibits tendencies for new forms of social grouping and relations to develop independently in other social organs and spheres.

51. Evans-Pritchard (1940a), chs. 5 and 8; P. Mayer (1949), pp. 9-10, 22-3.
53. Little (1949, 1965-6); Simmons (1956); Jones (1956).
none the less, as, for example, with the creation of the chartered companies that pioneered European colonialism from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, or the monastic orders and foundations of medieval Catholicism, they normally depend on the tolerance, support or enterprise of the dominant institution for their creation and/or continuity. Thus, in seeking to perpetuate and extend its scope and power, a dominant corporation may effectively arrest the further development of the society it regulates by eliminating or repressing significant alternatives outside its organization. The effect is to restrain individual options and initiatives by restricting opportunities for the creation of alternative structures and role differentiation to the dominant corporation. If successful, the dominant unit will stabilize its regime as a truly traditional order, as occurred in ancient Egypt, China and Byzantium, irrespective of demographic densities, dynamism and the high levels of differentiation and specialization these societies allowed in politically marginal or regulated spheres of action.

6.

Although most pre-industrial societies, including such large complex civilizations as China and India, rest on bases of unilinear kinship with its numerous prescriptions and mechanisms to regulate individual conduct, according to G. P. Murdock, about 37 percent of human societies lack unilinear descent and exogamy. 54 Most of these latter have variable rules of post-marital residence. The composite band instanced above illustrates nicely the conditions and implications of this familiar type of kinship system. 55 While some bilateral kinship systems restrict individual variations and direct individual initiatives by embedding nuclear families within more extended units, by instituting polygamy, or by other means, the formal equivalence such kinship structures normally prescribe for the relations of genealogically equidistant kin obliges individuals to choose between these competing claims and to define their contents appropriately in diverse situations. Thus bilateral kinship systems provide substantially greater scope and incentive for the independent action of adult males in certain spheres, primarily by reducing and dispersing the kin-based collectivities that regulate individual choice and relations in unilinear systems. However, by the same token, bilateral kinship systems normally lack those mutually exclusive unilinear blocs whose competition as units for autonomy and parity of status generates the mediating or superordinate alternative structures mentioned above. In consequence, the egalitarian assumptions, emphases and supports for collective responsibility and parity that figure so prominently in undifferentiated unilinear societies are minimized in bilateral ones, where individual status differences and mobility accordingly have greater prominence and free play.

In such situations the general absence of corporate kinship groups facilitates nucleated settlements organized on other bases, namely through councils, headmen and their retainers, religious fraternities, associations of diverse base and function, or by some incipient stratification, separately or together. Unless restricted by conditions of political status, individuals are thus formally free to move socially and spatially as far as their fortunes permit or require. Frequently both types of movement concur, as for example when a man leaves his native community to become a client or trader in some other.

The principal reasons why many cognatically based populations remain undifferentiated, despite possession of an adequate technology, are first, their failure to form corporate units at and above the level of the community; secondly, their failure to institutionalize a chieftainship or central regulative agency; and, finally, their adoption of forms of social stratification and succession to status that emphasize individual seniority, rank and mobility rather than collective solidarity and status differences. However, under favourable conditions, the intrinsically individualistic orientations and alignments generated in these kinship systems facilitate instrumental exchanges of goods and services, unequal distributions of power, influence and wealth, relations of patron and client, master and bondsman, and the incorporation of alien individuals and families, in differing degrees and ways. Such developments all enhance the structural complexity and heterogeneity of the aggregates concerned. Tendencies for corporate strata to crystallize in such bilateral societies are intensified by conquest or defeat, by commercial exploitation, and by such institutions as debt-bondage among the ancient Greeks, punitive taxation as in Nara Japan, 56 enslavement by purchase, individual appropriations of public resources, and by other means.

Given favourable ecological and demographic conditions among sedentary populations, bilateral kinship facilitates individuation, stratification or ranking, and a sufficient concentration of political power in the hands of a minority to stabilize hereditary inequalities of wealth and prestige. In these respects, which are crucial for the development of societal complexity, bilateral kinship contrasts sharply with segmentary unilinear structures in its implications. However, certain other types of unilinear and ambilinear descent systems that differentiate individuals and descent lines cumulatively by seniority and rank lend themselves readily to stratification and commensurate degrees of political centralization, although simultaneously restricting the options open to individuals by criteria of kinship and status. 57 Unfortunately we cannot pause to consider the developmental implications of these latter structures here.

7.

Instead let us briefly consider how three dominant characteristics of complex societies, namely, increasing impersonality in social relations, increasing reliance on secondary communication, and increasing volume or size, typically relate to the unilineal and bilateral alternatives sketched above. All three characteristics presuppose extensions of the social aggregate well beyond the level of the local community to incorporate relatively large areas and numbers of people. Alternatively, enforced concentrations or 'condensations' as in the synoecisms of Mesopotamia or ancient Greece, may generate impersonality and secondary communication structures, provided that the populations thus condensed are neither unilineal and exogamous nor unilineal and endogamous in advance. When people organized in unilineal exogamous groups are obliged by military and other considerations to concentrate in large multilinear settlements, they will probably develop some mixed consociational regimes, as among the Yoruba or the Baganda. On the other hand if the compacted population was originally organized as a series of unilineal endogamous groups, then this condensation may precipitate a structure of caste or caste-like orders as in ancient Rome, India or among the Wolof. In either event, such demographic compressions may merely reinforce the mutual exclusions of the original segments, thus maximizing the rigidity of the mass, while generating secondary communication structures, interests and interdependence without corresponding impersonality in social relations. The effect of such developments is thus to restrict severely the opportunities and scope for innovations by individuals and small groups to channels that are fully consistent with the consociational or stratified order. An alternative illustrated by the Zulu, Chinese and Arabs is for one unit to establish its superordinate status by dominating the others, thus generating a regulative structure which canalizes individual mobility and initiatives within itself. None the less, in so far as such compressed aggregates require various integrative structures to diversify and co-ordinate their segments, some structural and individual differentiation is unavoidable and necessary to the degree that the consociated components cannot maintain their former autarchic levels and cannot therefore regulate the activities of their members uniformly, totally and exclusively. Any selectivity and internal stratification of the concrete structures that accompany or follow such synoecisms accordingly introduces corresponding differentiation and complexity in the social structure; and in all contexts of this kind, some such developments cannot be avoided.

58. Lloyd (1971b); Southwold (no date).

As the secondary groupings and communication structures that promote impersonality in social relations presuppose relatively large populations or multi-community aggregates, the demographic and/or territorial size of societies correlates positively with their complexity, although the relationships involved remain contingent. Of the four routes by which societies may achieve extensive volume, whether territorial or demographic, namely, through natural increase, through the assimilation of immigrants recruited freely or otherwise, through voluntary and negotiated union with other units, or by conquest, the latter, as Spencer and others have stressed, has been historically the most common and important process in the formation of massive population units or extensive territories. However, with moderate populations and area, such new countries as the USA, created by immigrants, were already complex before conquest extended their territories. Likewise, sundry other European colonies in the New World, such as Barbados, Jamaica, Martinique or Surinam, owed far less of their complexities to conquest than to combinations of voluntary and forced immigration.

As implied by the preceding sketch of alternative courses of structural development among populations ordered by differing types of kinship systems, by itself sheer natural increase or territorial expansion contributes indifferently to the complexity of the social organization, even in sedentary societies. Nomadism, which emphasizes heavily the advantages of patrilineal groupings and virilocal marriage, further inhibits the development of differentiated impersonal super-community structures of communication, even in such ramified rank-differentiated societies as the Mongols. Further, as we have seen, synoecisms of exogamous or endogamous unilineal populations are likely to generate less structural development than those that concentrate bilaterally organized aggregates in which case stratification, centralization, and their ancillary institutions should elaborate rapidly.

8.

However, thus far, following Schumpeter's example, we have restricted our discussion to ethnically homogeneous societies. We have further excluded units differentiated by religion, culture and social organization, even within a common ethnic bloc, the phenomena of Hindu caste being congruent with these self-imposed conditions. By contrast, conquest and immigration, whether voluntary or forced, commonly generates a population which is heterogeneous as regards its ethnic and/or racial composition, native languages, cultures, and, at least initially, religion. Commonly the

60. Spencer (1969), pp. 159-527.
amalgamated stocks operate technologies of differing capacities and kind, and differ also in the forms, levels and capacities of their social organizations. Perhaps the most frequent issue of a consolidated conquest is the differential incorporation of the conquered as a subject category under the exclusive, direct and rigorous control of their masters. This necessitates the elimination, suppression and proscription of any autonomous organization among the conquered, thereby converting them into a corporate category, typically fragmented under several jurisdictions. Alternatively, as was the case of Greek Orthodox dhimmini administered by the Ottomans through the agency of their church, or the Muslim emirates of Northern Nigeria under the Indirect Rule of Lord Lugard, the corporate organization of the defeated is preserved as an instrument for the victors' manipulation and control, thus creating two tiers of officials, of whom the superior commonly exercises authority on secular, the inferior frequently on ritual grounds. A third alternative that conquerors may adopt on the margins of their homelands is to affiliate the conquered as tributary or satellite states under their ultimate control; but this arrangement excludes the conquered from the society of the conquerors by preserving their distinctive organizations.

Forced immigration, outside contexts of synoecism, normally involves the recruitment of immigrants by purchase or by nominally free contract, but it may also proceed by the assimilation of individual captives into the families and kinship groups of their captors. Alternatively forced immigration may proceed by collective enslavement, as among the Hausa, Ibo, Efik and Fon of Dahomey, the captives being organized under private or corporate ownership and settled in villages or on estates. Certain forms of voluntary indenture and contractual labour recruitment differ mainly from slavery in being formally time-limited, while servitude differed primarily in the inalienability of the serv from the land. Two further alternatives, although inadequately known in their full particulars, are the debt-bondage of ancient Greece and the clientage that bound plebs as famuli to patrician lineages in early Rome.

One consequence of either of these two latter modes of societal increase, conquest and forced immigration, is the crystallization of relatively rigid and exclusive collective barriers within the society, mitigated only by relations of clientage and asymmetrical connubium. Each section, the rulers and their subjects, is thus constituted as an endogamous, biologically and culturally discrete unit of radically differing status. Naturally, in such situations, unless collectively restrained, males of the ruling stratum exploit females of the subject category. Characteristically, the rulers also maintain the essential organization of a corporate group to secure and extend their

63. For Hausa slavery, see M.G. Smith (1965c), ch. 6; for the Ibo see Jones (1956), pp. 148-57; on Dahomey see Angyle (1966), pp. 142 ff.; on Ibo slavery see Horton (1954).
component aggregates, juridically, occupationally, ethnically, and in other ways. However, as Smelser remarked in the passage cited earlier, such complexities in the collective organization normally immobilize the subordinate sections as units and restrict the individuation of their members by excluding or restricting the development of significant alternative structures, contexts and forms of social relation among them. In consequence, and particularly among the subordinate sections who typically form the majority of these plural societies, individual scope for the exercise of initiative and choice is generally restricted to those spheres of social action allocated by the rulers as appropriate for subordinates while marginal to the stability or further development of the inclusive society.

It is apparent that societies with such compositions and structures present a different type of complexity from those which are ethnically homogeneous even though stratified; for in such plural societies, even while the dominant section may exhibit high levels of internal differentiation in structural and functional terms, as for example in South Africa, differentiation within the subordinate sections is repressed, together with their organization and capacities. In consequence the dominant section in such societies is obliged to elaborate and specialize various regulatory institutions and agencies that frequently extend their interference into the private and public activities not only of the subordinate majority, but also, by witch-hunting for dissidents within its own ranks, among the rulers as well. Thus in certain respects plural societies that commit themselves to the perpetual subjugation and dehumanization of the subordinate section exhibit various significant structural distortions and institutional specializations that distinguish them as a class from comparably differentiated societies of an ethnically homogeneous base, with the possible exception of those in which some institutional group such as a dynasty, church, or totalitarian political party seeks to aggrandize its scope and to entrench its unchallengeable domination over the mass.

It will be obvious from this review that the levels and forms of societal complexity correlate with the diversity of collective structures and with the distributions and degrees of collective autonomy to pursue interests of the same or different kinds in similar or different ways. Further, such dispersions of collective autonomy simultaneously determine the limits and spheres within which individuals or transitory groups are free to initiate new types of social relation and action, and reflect the conditions of the prevailing corporate organization. Finally, it is evident that the autonomy these corporations enjoy, severally and together, ensures complementary differentiation of their members' relations, resources, activities and interests while reflecting the bases, scope, internal organization and external articulations of the corporate units themselves as the concrete perduing and regulatory bodies whose relations constitute the macro-structure of human societies. Thus the diverse bases, scope, range, resources, autonomy and articulations of such corporations decisively define the options that are open to individuals, the available alternatives, and the resultant complexity of societal structure. These dispersals of corporate autonomy and resources themselves reflect the bases, form, articulations and scope of these units. Such distributions normally express the effects of struggles within and between these corporations for autonomy, resources, control and dominance.

Notably, as South Africa illustrates, a Spartan society of masters and helots may replicate the organizational capacities and complexities of ethnically homogeneous modern industrial societies within its dominant section; but only by rigorously excluding the subordinate from participation in such activities. Cases of this kind also refute the general thesis of Durkheim and other functionalists that social differentiation proceeds inexorably under the pressure of functional forces that replace inappropriate antecedent structures by more appropriate ones, particularly in modern industrial societies.

Again, as contemporary Holland and Britain illustrate, the antecedent organization of an ethnically homogeneous industrial society is considerably complicated by its incorporation of substantial alien minorities of differing language, culture and race. As our familiar assumptions that equate complexity with functional differentiation are unable to illuminate these phenomena, to develop an objective comparative study of the variety and characteristics of complex societies that will elucidate the conditions of their development and organization, we should concentrate instead on the bases, properties and articulations of their concrete structural units; namely, at the macro-level, on the corporations that order the domain of public affairs; and at the micro-level, on the variety and distribution of interpersonal relations and roles available for individual selection. We need also to determine the congruence and relations of the structural elements at either level with one another and with those of institutionalized intermediate units. To this end we may first isolate the preconditions and implications of the maintenance of units at each level, and then explore their congruence and their contributions to the persistence or development of the actual social structure.

It will be noticed that throughout this discussion there has been no need to assume that societies or their structures constitute systems, whether analytical or constructivist, natural, moral or

67. L. Kuper (1965); van den Berghe (1967); UNESCO (1969).


symbolic, open or closed, homeostatic or other, nor to what degree or under what conditions. Such metaphysics are only essential in functionalist analyses of social situations and processes; but instead of furthering our understanding of concrete social phenomena, those conceptions merely obscure them.

9.

Race and Stratification in the Caribbean

It is said that the Caribbean includes over fifty societies; and perhaps there are almost as many ways in which we might discuss their interracial patterns. Since David Lowenthal’s recent account of these patterns cannot be faulted, I shall try to carry forward the analysis by seeking to isolate those conditions or factors which have regulated the allocation of differential status among racially distinct stocks within Caribbean societies. Although the data and discussion concentrate on Creole societies, I shall cite sufficient materials from Hispanic units in this region to indicate that the analysis applies to them also. To pursue these goals I shall first indicate the nature of stratification and race, and, then outline the variation and development of Caribbean societies with special attention to their population compositions and histories. In conclusion I shall briefly relate these data and findings to the general theory of social and cultural pluralism.

1.

To investigate the relationship between differences of status and differences of race in Caribbean societies, we need equally objective conceptions of stratification and race. Stratification is often identified as an evaluative ranking of social units; and some writers assert that, being an institutionally necessary response to a requisite of any social organization, it is a universal feature of all social systems. However, such assertions appear to be unfounded and at variance with ethnographic fact. In any event, since the evaluations that constitute a stratification are neither random nor contingent, their criteria must be institutionalized within the social structure, and for this reason evaluative rankings will express principles that underlie and regulate social organization. We may therefore defer this ideological conception of stratification in favour of one that is more concrete and empirically demonstrable.

Concretely, stratification is manifest by and in the differential

1. Lowenthal (1960b).
2. Lowenthal (1967).
3. See above, Chapter 5.
4. See above, Chapter 5.