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Author(s): M.G. Smith
CORPORATIONS AND SOCIETY
The Social Anthropology of Collective Action

M.G. Smith

Professor of Anthropology,
University College London

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In the absence of appropriate conceptual and analytic frameworks, the theoretical study of political change remains undeveloped despite current interests in the processes and conditions of 'political development' and 'modernization'. To excuse this deficiency, we cannot plead lack of data. Indeed, the range, volume and variety of historical records of political change present social science with materials of unequalled richness and importance. Neither is it true to say that these questions have hitherto escaped attention. From Plato and Aristotle to the present, we can trace a long line of illustrious thinkers whose preoccupations with the conditions and forms of continuity and change in political regimes have inspired their working lives. Social anthropology, sociology, history and political science all derive from these analytic interests; but to date historians have probably done most to advance our understanding by furnishing those descriptive accounts of political units and sequences which are indispensable for any comprehensive, theoretical study of political change.

Historians differ in their interests, methods and objectives. Probably most direct their studies towards narrative reconstructions of the development of particular social units or selected institutions and situations. Besides the accuracy, relevance and comprehensiveness of their primary data, such narrative histories also differ in the cogency of their arguments, in the new light they shed on familiar topics, and in their general significance for other inquiries. Historical treatment of such institutional systems as the economy, the church, the constitution or law, requires more explicit analytical conceptions and procedures than narrative representations of past developments. In differing ways and degrees these institutional histories apply or expound conceptual schemes which derive from general theories of the institutional systems or processes under study. Thus legal historians employ concepts drawn from their theories of law and studies in jurisprudence. Economic historians employ or examine categorical relations which derive from economic theory. Historians of philosophy or science are also guided by the interests, conceptions and relations that distinguish these fields. Thus the analytic frameworks that organize these institutional histories have extrinsic origins and referents, and rarely emerge from the historian's consideration of specific historical processes.
Although this quality is often implicit, history is inherently comparative in its reference. History which is explicitly comparative has two principal forms: 'universal’ histories or ‘philosophies of history’ such as those of Marx, Hegel, Gobineau and Toynbee; or comparative studies of more restricted phenomena such as feudalism, riots, revolutions, the classical city-state, archaic imperial systems and the like. Universal histories attempt to comprehend all ranges of social action within a single general framework, such as Toynbee’s processual model of challenge and response, or Marx’s theory of ultimate economic determinism. Neither alternative provides an appropriate basis for analytic studies of political change, since both assimilate political relations to other types of social relations and propose to ‘explain’ the development of these ensembles by abstractions of remote and historically contingent character. In any case, the formulas which universal history is said to demonstrate, whether processual or causative, are equally difficult to validate or to develop and refine for application in detailed studies of limited sequence and range. In effect, universal histories lack several essentials of analytic science.

Comparative studies of particular historical forms, such as feudalism or latifundia, or of specific processes such as colonization, bureaucratization, or dynastic decline, provide materials and insights of greater relevance for those students of political change whose interests are not restricted to contemporary problems of ‘modernization’ and ‘political development’. However, the principal merits and shortcomings of these comparative histories arise equally from their analytic concentration on specific processes, forms or contexts to the exclusion of all else. In consequence, their approaches and conclusions are at best only casually co-ordinate, though often inconsistent. It would seem then that, despite the varied and important contributions historians have made to the theoretical study of political change, the form and character of their inquiries has diverted attention from the essential preliminary task of developing appropriate conceptions and procedures.

In contrast with such historical inquiries, a scientific study of political change seeks to develop generalizations that are universally valid, precise in their reference, verifiable, capable of further refinement, and logically linked by their derivation from a common conceptual scheme. Such a study presupposes clear definitions of its subject matter and scope. It also requires a system of discriminating operational conceptions and analytic procedures. Thus, before proceeding to set out its central conceptions and analytic procedures, we should indicate the scope and character of our inquiry as well as its specific subject matter.

2.

Whatever their differences of subject matter, scientific inquiries have uniform character and proceed by analysis and observation. They seek to formulate general statements concerning relationships that regulate the structures and processes of the phenomena under study. Such generalizations constitute a theory if they form a logically coherent body of propositions. The validity of such scientific theories is measured by their correspondence with empirical events. This correspondence may take two alternative forms. In laboratory situations, experimental techniques allow for the verification or disproof of scientific hypotheses and the theories to which they attach by replicative experiments. In such sciences the empirical validity of a theory can be determined by experimental tests of expectations or predictions inferred from it. In other sciences which, by reason of their subject matter or stages of development, lack suitable experimental techniques, the empirical validity of a theory is commonly assessed by its capacity to accommodate novel data within its categorical system, while illuminating their structure, relations and development. Parsons and Shils correctly distinguish these two types of scientific theory as categorial and predictive.1 Categorial theories consist of logically developed conceptual schemes designed to order and comprehend all phenomena of a given sort without, however, generating specific hypotheses about their necessary relations which empirical research could verify. Predictive theory presupposes development of operational procedures to test specific propositions about given classes of phenomenal events based on abstract models of invariant relations within the categorical field. It is evident that scientific inquiry seeks to isolate invariant relations within particular fields of study, to formulate their logical connections, and to guide their further investigation. These objectives hold also for the scientific study of political change.

These objectives have certain implications. First, if ‘invariant relations’ are the principal goals of study, then scientific inquiries should range comprehensively throughout the fields in which such phenomena occur. Operationally, this means that generalizations must be validated by processes and relations observed at all levels of political action and within all varieties of political unit. In its indifference to such comprehensiveness, the theoretical structure of current studies in political modernization and development exhibits grave weakness.

If our object in studying political change is to formulate valid and verifiable general statements about it, then such changes are the sole

1. Parsons and Shils (1951a). See also Sheldon (1951), pp. 30-44.
subject matter of our study, and the generalizations we seek can only refer to relations inherent in the conditions and processes of political change. This objective has three implications. First, it necessitates generic criteria which will allow us to segregate political change from other phenomena in the social field. Secondly, it obliges us to distinguish as endogenous and exogenous those conditions or 'causes' of change that are intrinsic or extrinsic to the sequence of events under study, and directs our attention to endogenous relations and processes, that is, to those developed within the political unit or system. Finally, this objective identifies the inquiry as a search for invariant relations within the conditions and sequences through which political change occurs. Such analyses must initially exclude questions of causal determination, in order to investigate the formal properties of processes involving change. If we can adduce any invariant relations from the study of such processes, these generalizations should either specify uniformities in the relations of determinate political conditions or in the sequences by which these change. Such uniformities of structure and process can only express relations of logical necessity. No alternative foundation for such invariant relations is conceivable, given the enormous variability of political sequences, forms, contexts and units with which we have to deal.

To many, restrictions that focus our study on the formal features of sequence of change may seem unnecessary and mistaken, since they exclude the study of 'causes', or 'determinants'. Such objections are ill-founded for several reasons. First, although it is appropriate initially to exclude problems of exogenous causation in order to seek constant relations among the elements and processes of change, our framework neither denies the relevance of 'exogenous' causation, nor prohibits its study. Indeed, there is a clear advantage in basing investigations of the 'causes' of change on detailed prior analyses of sequences that identify their critical initial events and distinctive forms. Moreover, given the specificity of the socio-historical contexts in which political change proceeds, causal explanations inevitably consist in specifications of historically derived sets of contingent variables and circumstances. By their nature, they accordingly exclude the invariant relations that scientific study seeks in such phenomena.

Causation is more complex in character and demonstration than the formal analysis we seek to develop. In some laboratory sciences it may be possible to isolate specific causal factors and relations for direct study by replicative experiments in which variables are controlled and manipulated. This is rarely possible in sociological study, and never in history, which provides much of the basic material for theoretical studies of political change. In consequence, substantive causal analyses of historical processes that specify particular or general determinants are rarely verifiable and normally problematic, since the relative significance and connection of the relevant factors in all the different situations that constitute the sequence cannot be demonstrated conclusively.

Of all factors which have hitherto obstructed the scientific study of political change, preoccupation with 'causal explanation' is undoubtedly the most important. Even today many scholars reject analyses of social events as inadequate unless they are cast in causal moulds. However, given the variety of conditions and factors necessary to the occurrence of any event, assertions that a single factor or set of factors determined a specific occurrence are rarely verifiable or analytically illuminating. This reservation holds whether the asserted 'cause' is an impersonal condition or force, or individual or collective motivations, imputed or actual. Unless such 'causal' analyses invoke an ultimate universal determinant, as in Marx's theory of historical materialism, the isolation of proximate 'causes' merely initiates an endless regression to identify their determinants and the antecedents of these determinants, indefinitely. This regression is logically necessary in order to demonstrate the causal principle or principles at work and their efficient conditions; but at each step in such regressive analyses the speculative component increases as the empirical declines, so that the initially problematic postulate loses its value as the derivative of this speculative chain.

In seeking to avoid these difficulties some writers postulate universal and ultimate determinants of social phenomena. However, it is then necessary to demonstrate the decisive influence of such ultimate factors in any particular sequence, either immediately or by regressive speculations. Alternatively, if regressive inquiries into the genesis of proximate causes are excluded, the inquiry is restricted to the identification of immediate determinants. 'Causal explanations' of this latter type must thus illustrate the determination of events and processes either by a single 'cause' or by a variety of 'causal factors' in similar and different situations. Once again, analyses of the first sort can rarely be restricted to the universal proximate 'cause', despite assertions to the contrary. Now while explanations of the second type, which appear to demonstrate the variability and multilateral character of 'causation' of similar and different events may possess superior plausibility, they exclude illumination by presenting apparently arbitrary images of contingent determinants. Moreover either type of causal explanation also leaves unresolved various substantive problems by predicking their uniform or diverse determinants in similar and dissimilar historical situations. Thus, neither model of causal explanation can justify its claims of necessity, nor does either possess any evident superiority to a strictly formal analysis that seeks to identify uniform relations among the elements, conditions and processes of change. Indeed, given the historic failure of 'causal' theories of political change, it is appropriate and necessary to approach this subject from a different angle and with differing questions and aims.
3.

To orient our inquiry, we must first examine with care the notion of change. Analytically, change and continuity are complementary and mutually exclusive concepts that serve to define one another. Empirically, continuity and change are often, perhaps typically, concurrent in social affairs, which appear always to exclude absolute novelty or perfect stasis. Thus, continuity and change are relative terms that indicate certain dimensions or aspects of social process.

Change may denote alteration in the state or relations of any object or objects, or it may denote the processual context and events in which such alterations develop and are manifested. The first meaning identifies change as observable modification, the second as the process through which such modification occurs. These alternative emphases are quite compatible and complementary, providing they share identical criteria of modification. However, uncertainties arise when modifications are latent rather than manifest, or when they proceed through events that imply, or even obscure, instead of exhibiting them. Such possibilities direct attention to the need for clear criteria and conceptions in order to identify change objectively.

Any event may be loosely identified as an instance of change, even if the only change involved is an expenditure of energy. Often routine transactions characteristic of a given system are plausibly treated as moments of change, since they effect redistribution of some components. For example, the replacement of one official or age-set by another may be perceived as change by the actors and by the communities involved; but if these are their only features, such events may also with equal or greater validity be cited as evidence of continuity in these societies. That it is possible and common to find two apparently opposing classifications of the same events as evidence of continuity and change, indicates the need for clear criteria to distinguish these conditions. In the situations just cited, to determine whether or not the event represents change or routine circulation, we need further data on the nature of the polities concerned, and especially on their operational processes. It is of course accepted that for the individuals involved these status movements do represent change; but this merely emphasizes that our unit of reference is neither the individual nor the community, but the system of social relations in which these events occur. By change, then, we mean either some alteration in the state of a system of social relations, or the processes by which those alterations occur.

This reformulation merely raises the question whether any and every modification in the 'state of a social system' constitutes its change. Since social systems have temporal duration, they commonly experience expansion and contraction of their memberships as well as the simple circulation of members in roles. We may therefore ask whether any alteration in the numbers or composition of the members or in the material resources and capabilities of a social unit constitutes evidence of its change. Concretely, this question requires distinctions between the social system as a system of social relations and its demographic, economic or technological dimensions, each of which can be conceptualized as an analytic system and examined for evidence of persistence or change. While it is likely that beyond variable limits, changes in their demographic, economic or technological bases and characteristics may destabilize or modify social systems, as yet we neither know these limits precisely, nor can we determine their implications without considerable information about the nature and ecological context of the societies in which these developments occur; but prima facie, mere changes in its number of members or gross domestic product or urbanization ratio need not directly entail modifications in the nature or structure of the system itself. They may indeed manifest its continuity and routine growth.

We should accordingly distinguish such developments from others that entail or express modifications in the nature or structure of the social system with its population, economy and technology remain unaltered. To distinguish these developments from system change, we can classify the former as extensive. By change, then, we do not mean merely extensive alterations in the state of a system or the processes by which such alterations occur. Rather, we mean those alterations in the structure of the system which involve changes in its characteristic processes and operational conditions. In short, we seek initially to segregate structural change from those conditions or processes that involve mere changes of extent, while recognizing that in many contexts both processes go together. For us, the decisive criterion of change is modification or transformation of the structure of the system concerned.

By structure, we mean the set of units and their interrelations which gives a system its characteristic perduring form, boundaries, and operational modalities. The two critical components of structure are discrete units and the relations that hold within as well as between them. The precise character of these established units and their relations will vary with the unit or system under study. As a system, the family has a structure which articulates a complementary set of statuses and roles; but often such family units are minor components of larger aggregates, which constitute the major structures of their societal systems. In short, these conceptions of structural components are equally applicable at any level of social organization. In addition, these conceptions are closely connected. Systems conceived as more or less viable units composed of interacting parts depend on their structures for organization and boundaries. Structures, as persistent articulations of determinate parts, presuppose specific contexts and processes for their develop-
ment, existence and modification. Structure and system are thus complementary abstractions through which the continuum of social processes may be conceptualized for analysis. Social structure consists in those enduring relations and units manifested in recurrent processes of social action; while by a social system I merely mean a set of interconnected social processes and the structures they engage and sustain or modify. Accordingly, changes in system structure develop and are expressed through changes in the processes and conditions that constitute these concrete units and articulate them to one another as operational structures.

These conceptions enable us to distinguish simple circulation of personnel through social positions from superficially similar movements which none the less involve or generate modifications in the criteria or procedures of allocation and in the scope, status and relations of the positions concerned. Circulation that does not express or entail structural modification illustrates the continuity of system routines. If the circulation of personnel directly or otherwise modifies the procedures, criteria, properties and relations of the statuses concerned, it manifests, initiates or implies some structural change. This change may be limited in range and discontinuous in time; or it may be otherwise. Change may thus develop in one component without immediate or wider effects. Change may be either episodic or continuous.

Structural change of any kind develops by processes or series of events through which initial structural arrangements undergo greater or less modification. Without at this stage attempting to specify exact criteria, we can usefully distinguish transformations, which involve major reorientations of structure, from other developments which may illustrate internal adjustments and/or external adaptation. Transformations may proceed abruptly, episodically or radically, with or without violence; or they may develop gradually through processes of some historical duration. In either event, a structural transformation may be challenged and revoked by counteractive processes. If the structure alternates between two contrasting poles, as for example the gumlao and gumsa regimes among the Kachin, it illustrates pendular transformations. If the system recurrently develops a series of three or more differing types of structure, it illustrates self-generating cyclical change. If the alternative structures develop in fixed succession, as in classical models of ancient Greek polities, the cycle can be described as stable, even though its transformations proceed violently. Unstable cycles are those in which the structural alternatives succeed one another irregularly for various reasons. In both pendular and cyclical transformations, possibilities of structural change are limited to those alternatives which are consistent with the character and capacities of these systems in their specific contexts. In effect, though the decisive moments of structural transformation in pendular and cyclical systems are episodic, structural change proceeds continuously with them, within limits set by certain ineluctable conditions and features of the systems concerned.

Without evolutionary or developmental implication, we can distinguish those courses of structural change which are neither pendular nor cyclic as linear or vectorial. These terms merely indicate that the sequence of such changes appears to trace a path distinct in outline from pendular or cyclical schemes, though generally irregular in its rate and direction. Phases in a process of linear change may form a structural series, or they may be episodic and discontinuous. Episodic change may either be institutionalized as a feature of a restabilized structure, or it may be nullified by some counteractive process. Systems subject to periodic restabilization after episodic changes may achieve transformation through such successive modifications. The events that express these episodes of change may be radical or casual, violent or peaceful, similar or dissimilar, unique or widely distributed. They may be generated within or outside the system.

Two terminal situations of structural change relate to the processes by which systems emerge as distinct units with clear boundaries and constitutions on the one hand, or dissolve, disintegrate and lose their distinctness, boundaries and internal cohesion on the other. As regards social systems, both alternatives may develop internally by the normal processes of structural change, or they may be mediated by historic events such as conquest and consolidation, the formation and dissolution of empires, or the political abolition or creation of units. Though these historic and genetic processes can be assimilated, it is useful to distinguish them, since the former operate abruptly and discontinuously to generate or dissolve systems by drastic revisions of unit boundaries, scope and autonomy. To the subjugated system, such terminal change is always exogenous; but to the dominant unit, the new system based on its domination is endogenous in generation.

As outlined, structural change is neither synonymous nor cotermi-

2. Leach (1954).
A Structural Approach to the Study of Political Change

Since change of state develops as a process, that is, by a series of events, some events will manifest or initiate change while others which are also relevant to the understanding of these developments may not reveal their import directly. We have, then, to treat events and conditions in which change is latent; and to demonstrate and analyse the structural implications of these events, we need discriminating criteria derived from appropriate conceptions of the system under study and from the processes of change itself.

In studying change, although events provide our data, the analytic units are processes or events of variable form, scope, span, simplicity, direction and length. Occasional sequences provide 'natural' units, as for example in revolutionary movements. Yet even in such cases, the criteria and value of periodization vary with the purpose and level of our inquiry; and it is advisable in analysing change to periodize an event, series of process successively into sequences of diminishing span and range for increasingly intensive analyses. If the processes by which political structures change are structurally uniform, being characterized by invariant relations among their elements, then such re-analyses of progressively smaller sections of a common sequence of change should yield sequences of identical analytic structure, despite substantial differences of detail. In chemistry or physics, such re-analyses of limited parts of process or substance provide important confirmations and further insights into their structures; and perhaps in studying social change, we may benefit likewise from a similar procedure.

4.

The generic unit whose processes of structural change we seek to analyse is the political system, which consists of those activities and relations by which public, that is political, affairs are regulated. Political events are the incidents by which this regulation of public affairs proceeds. The elementary components or principles of political action are authority and power, authority being the right and obligation to take appropriate actions subject to conditions and procedures set out in precedents or rules, while power is the capacity for effective action, despite material and social obstacles. Though power presupposes the framework of precedents and rules which distributes capacities to secure support and compliance unequally among individuals and social aggregates at any moment, its bases, modes and application are not entirely circumscribed by these norms and rules, since these institutions retain their legitimacy for relatively long spans of time until superseded, whereas the distribution of power tends to be labile, instrumental in its bases, modes and objectives, and open to the influence of many variables, without prescriptive legitimacy.
Political relations in the strict sense are relations that mediate and express the distribution of power. Administrative relations express and mediate the forms and operation of public authority. Together these relations of power and authority, of politics and administration, constitute the regulatory processes of government that identify the political system and delimit its social boundaries. In short, all systems of public regulation combine forms of public authority with distributions of public power. Differences between political systems can thus be reduced to differences in the forms and scope of public authority within them, and in the distributions, bases and modes of their public power, together with the conditions produced by the combination of these two structures.

The social unit to which the political system attaches is generally described as a polity; but in its narrower meaning, this term denotes the political system as a discrete, continuous system of regulatory activities. From Aristotle's day to ours, the term polity has had these dual referents; to the form of the system of political action, and to the social unit such action regulates. Often a social unit maintains a particular system over long spans of time. In other cases, for example France, a continuing social unit may experience different political systems in fairly rapid succession. In yet other cases, such as the Tswana or Hausa, populations that share a common basic form of political organization maintain their boundaries by mutually exclusive political systems. It is appropriate, none the less, to regard these Hausa or Tswana societies in some analytic contexts as having a common polity or type of political system. In another context, although their polities are centralized, Hausa and Tswana societies remain subdivided into a plurality of internally autonomous units comparable with nation-states in the modern world. Thus political centralization may unify a society or subdivide it into replicative segments; and it may also subordinate several societies to domination by one. It is thus inappropriate to equate centralized polities and societies, or to assume that politically segmented societies must always be stateless.

As a formally distinctive system of political relations and activities, the polity is coextensive with the society it incorporates and delimits. Societies conversely owe their boundaries and order to the structures and processes that distinguish their political organization. As indicated above, these structures and processes are closely identified, political processes being adaptive and articulative operations that are generated by political structures and modify or sustain them.

The primary units of a political system are identified by the exclusive regulation of certain affairs for their members. Such units are always corporate groups which, despite important differences in their bases, scale, organization and other qualities, all share certain common features, being presumptively perpetual aggregates with unique identities, determinate boundaries and memberships, and having the autonomy, organization and procedures necessary to regulate their exclusive collective affairs. While some corporate groups or publics lack corporate subdivisions and may or may not form parts of larger groups, others often contain two or more such divisions, which may or may not differ in their bases, scope and organization. Thus, communities and nation-states represent corporate groups which include other corporate groups of diverse type and span. At the opposite extreme, in the simplest societies, the corporate band is a unicellular autonomous group that does not form part of a larger one. These examples illustrate extremes in the range of polities whose change we seek to study. In nation-states the polity embraces a public organized as an inclusive corporate group under a distinctive institutional system. In a society based on corporate bands, the polity contains a number of discrete units of identical form and character without any wider collective structures to co-ordinate them. While the ‘centralized polity’ is a self-contained unit, the decentralized polity, despite generic homogeneity, contains a series of homologous units whose articulation and boundaries derive from their similar structures, compositions and conditions of interdependence. To apply common conceptions and procedures to the analysis of changes in systems of either type, we must first identify and distinguish their structural components, and then examine the evidence of change in these structures at the widest or at any subordinate level of organization. This procedure applies equally to polities organized as corporate groups and to those decentralized polities constituted as corporate categories.

Polities, or any perduring social units that lack comprehensive organization and effective arrangements for the co-ordination and regulation of relations among their components, represent corporate categories. Having presumptive perpetuity, determinate boundaries, identity and memberships, such corporations are constituted as categories by their lack of the organization, procedures and capacity necessary to regulate the common affairs of their collective memberships. While corporate groups and categories are both 'perpetual' aggregates, groups possess the co-ordinative organization that categories lack, and in consequence they have the requisites for and the need of continuous regulative action. Unlike corporate groups, which are thus always units of public regulation, corporate categories, whether societal or sub-societal, are structurally incapable of common action to regulate common affairs, since both presuppose the comprehensive organization that would convert these categories into groups.

A corporate group such as a community or a nation-state may include members of different categories, for example the various caste categories that cross-cut Indian villages, or the jural categories...
that cross-cut feudal manors. Conversely, some categories such as clans, slaves, races or age categories, may contain a plurality of corporate groups without losing their categorical character. Decentralized polities illustrate corporate categories which are normally subdivided into a plurality of corporate groups.

Within corporate groups, we often find collegial units constituted as presumptively perpetual decision-making bodies in which only a minority of the group membership participates. Such colleges or councils are governmentally specialized corporations that should be distinguished from the corporate groups they regulate on various grounds. To organize and administer their collective affairs routinely, all but the smallest and most intimate corporate groups require specialized regulatory structures of corporate character, which must thus be determinate, unique, and presumptively perpetual. Colleges provide one possible agency of such public regulation, offices provide another.

Offices are corporations sole, which possess the four formal and four operational features that distinguish perfect corporations such as groups or colleges, and endow them with capacities for continuous regulatory collective action. Characteristically, the office, like the college, is attached to and embedded in some corporate group as a regulatory organ. Often, however, a single corporate group is simultaneously regulated by one or more offices and colleges, having more or less appropriate divisions of authority and function among them. Corporate categories lack colleges and offices as co-ordinative agencies, and thereby lack the requisites of corporate groups; but occasionally corporate categories may be converted into corporate groups by a charismatic leadership which mobilizes and co-ordinates their collective action; and even more rarely the category, under favourable circumstances, may constitute itself as a group by establishing a college to regulate its affairs.

Charismatic leadership illustrates one type of commission, another being represented by military, magisterial, ecclesiastical and bureaucratic commissions which are organized into 'perpetual' ranked series of identical and substitutable units of indefinite number and duration. Unlike such serially organized commissions, charismatic leadership is a unique self-authenticating organ of collective regulation, which accordingly lacks prescribed procedures, organization, spheres of action and authority. As Max Weber showed, a charismatic commission often mobilizes its own public and establishes its own procedures and structures which may later dissolve, fragment or be 'routinized' by conversion into an official hierarchy. Yet a third type of unique discontinuous commission, characteristic of centralized polities, is a statutory commission created by presidential or parliamentary action to investigate or regulate a particular subject, or in republican Rome, to deal with a critical emergency. On completion of its task, the statutory commission normally ceases to exist, though it is sometimes perpetuated by conversion into a college or an office. Until then, it generally enjoys a wide discretion to achieve its purpose.

Commissions, organized in ranked series of indefinite extent, are important units of administratively specialized corporate hierarchies under the direction of superior units; and in consequence these hierarchic structures have the characteristics of a corporate group. However, commissions differ from offices in certain ways. Precise rules, conditions and procedures of succession are essential components of office, to regulate the recruitment of successive incumbents and secure the unit's perpetuity, while maintaining its unique identity. The commission, however, lapses with the individual who creates or receives it, either on his assumption of office or on his promotion to a higher rank, as for example from captain to major. Moreover, while offices normally attach to specific corporate groups, serialized commissions operate as agents of the office or corporate group that creates and gives them authority. Unlike self-generated commissions, offices are subject to the rules and traditions that constitute and perpetuate them. Unlike statutory commissions, they operate continuously and routinely regulate recurrent affairs. None the less, there are many situations in which commissions operate like offices, for example in the direct administration of colonial territories by District Officers and/or District Commissioners. To the units administered, the commission, being apparently permanent, appears like an office, though in fact each attaches to the individual official who administers the area on behalf of the colonial government, rather than to the community itself. Indeed, administrative boundary changes are notoriously frequent in colonial administrations. Such ambiguities in the character and status of commissions amply illustrate their utility as organs of public regulation. However, autonomous discretion is normally restricted by rank in serially organized commissions, and by the allotted tasks of statutory ones. In simpler societies, self-proclaimed commissions such as shamanism may be institutionalized within corporate categories or groups, in which case they operate discontinuously, conditionally and in limited spheres without mobilizing the collectivity as a whole.

These corporate units of political organization may be classified in two ways: by the number of their members, or by their differential capacities. The first criterion distinguishes groups, categories and colleges as varieties of corporation aggregate from offices and commissions of either type which represent varieties of corporation sole. Under the second criterion, groups, colleges and offices are distinguished as perfect units endowed by their structure with capacities for continuous regulatory action from categories and commissions which lack one or more of these properties. All societies are politically incorporated as categories or as groups; and colleges,
offices and commissions alike presuppose corporations aggregate as their contexts. For clarity we may distinguish these varieties of corporations as alternative forms or types, noting their possibilities for mutual conversion.

In synchronic studies of political systems, these various corporate forms, groups, categories, colleges, commissions and offices between them subsume all units whose properties and relations constitute the political structure. Whether the community under study is a polity or some segment thereof, and whether centralized or not, in diachronic studies these corporate forms and their relations also constitute the structure whose persistence or modification is under review. Accordingly, the forms of corporate organization institutionalized in a polity represent the primary units whose modifications of content, type and articulation or relationship provide the basic data in which invariant relations of process should be sought. It is therefore essential in every case to detail the particulars of this corporate organization before attempting a diachronic study of the structure and its transformation.

5.

To develop these conceptions of corporate organization in ways that may advance the analysis of change, we should first seek their general and specific requisites and implications by isolating the principles on which they are based. Corporate groups or categories may be based on descent, ethnicity, ritual and belief, locality, sex, age, occupation, property, jural status, or on association of persons for various purposes. Separately or in various combinations, these alternative principles constitute the logically possible bases of unit incorporation, since they govern the recruitment and differentiation of members and the exclusion of others. All corporate groups are based on some selection and combination of these alternative principles; and differences in the structures and operations of corporate groups are partly reducible to differences in their respective bases of incorporation, partly to the articulations with their social contexts. The conditions and criteria that govern the recruitment and standing of their members accordingly differentiate the major types of corporate groups in form, resources, interests and scope, organization, external articulation and capacity alike. This relation holds equally true for corporate categories and colleges. Within as well as between societies, similarities or differences in the structure and properties of corporations of the same class reflect identities or differences in their membership, bases and conditions on the one hand, and the external articulations of these corporations on the other. Because this is so, we are able to make systematic comparative studies of particular types of corporate units such as lineages or age-sets, guilds, professional associations, secret societies and economic corporations, cult groups and political parties in differing milieus; and since other classes of corporation, such as colleges, categories or corporations sole differ inter alia and inter se in the principles on which they are based and recruit their members, these may also be studied comparatively in structural terms. In such inquiries, having initially identified the type to which the particular corporation belongs by the formal and functional criteria given above, we should first analyse its structure and scope to isolate the specific principles on which it is based, that is, the minimal criteria that constitute and segregate it as a unit. These criteria are expressed in the rules and conditions that govern the allocation, tenure and loss of membership in the corporation. Accordingly, we should examine with care all procedures, rules and conditions that exclude non-members and regulate the admission and status of members, while prescribing and distributing their obligations, rights and privileges, uniformly or differentially in various ways. We expect uniformities in the conditions that regulate the recruitment and expulsion of members in corporations aggregate of any type, since this is essential to maintain the unit’s boundaries, identity, continuity and form. However, uniformity in the criteria of membership is quite consistent with internal differentiation of members on other criteria.

Uniform conditions of allocation are also requisite for those commissions that are organized in ranked perpetual series of indefinite extension, since commissions of any single category in such structures are formally and functionally identical. Other commissions which are characterized by uniqueness and discontinuity in their incidence and operation can also be distinguished by differences in the principles on which they are based. Thus, charismatic leadership is based on its own claims to superior authority, while shamanism manifests its ritual base in specialized activities, and statutory commissions are clearly constituted for specific purposes by corporate bodies that have political authority to do so.

Office, the perfect form of corporation sole, is especially sensitive to change in its bases of allocation and in the conditions and spheres of its routine activity. An office is a corporation perpetuated through a series of single individuals who hold the position and exercise its functions in succession. Accordingly, the succession rules and procedures by which incumbents are recruited to offices bear critical relations to their structural persistence or change. Yet notwithstanding the elaborate rules and procedures devised to regulate official succession uniformly, given their political significance and variable contexts of transfer, their bases, scope and relations with other units are frequently modified through succession struggles and processes. If such offices none the less persist with marginal change in their scope and character, despite changes in the formal principles

5. Goody (1966a).
that regulate their allocation, this indicates that their relations with other corporations in the system have not been radically altered by these changes in the conditions of succession. To legitimize such innovations, the ideology that prevails should translate and justify them as the restoration or fulfillment of some antecedent or superior norms. Hereditary offices are especially subject to structural change through modifications or adaptations of succession procedures; but perhaps such recurrent deviations are essential to the vitality of these regimes and, moreover, given the structural centrality of office and the differing situations in which succession proceeds, such variability is perhaps unavoidable over adequate time spans. Their systemic implications may be illustrated briefly by comparing the contrary cases in which non-hereditary offices are pre-empted by descent groups, a process by which patrimonial regimes are fragmented and multiplied, with those in which initially hereditary offices are appropriated on other grounds. Such changes in the principles of succession have equally important implications for the organization and continuity of the political unit in which the office is central, and for the character and operation of the office itself. Accordingly, these developments are important indices of processes of structural change in such regimes.

The basis on which a unit is incorporated can be represented as that set of principles which specifies the criteria that regulate the recruitment of members and exclusion of others. These criteria define the unit's boundaries, its essential interests, and the conditions of its continuity. Consequently, units constructed on different sets of incorporative principles differ in their bases, interests and requisites.

Any principle on which a unit is incorporated has certain logical requisites and entailments which can be identified by logical analysis. Logical requisites are those conditions which are logically or conceptually necessary for the formulation of a specific principle. For example, the principle of unilineal descent presupposes identification and differentiation of paternal and maternal relations and of genealogically successive generations. Entailments or implications are immediate logical consequences of a specified principle. For example, the principle of unilineal descent entails differentiation of some kind between kinsmen who share common descent and others who do not. It also entails the institutionalization of appropriate procedures for the identification of those who share common unilineal descent.

Though this is normally the case with corporate categories, I have not found any corporate group constituted on the basis of a single principle. Since corporate groups are the generic species of political unit, being inevitably concerned with the regulation of their own collective affairs, it is necessary to treat their bases and properties with particular care. Since corporate groups are constituted on a plurality of incorporative principles, whereas corporate categories may be based on one alone, it may seem that the fundamental differences between these categories and groups have their source in the number of principles on which units of either type are incorporated. Clearly, if a series of principles such as descent, locality and property are combined to demarcate and constitute the corporate unit, besides their formal or conceptual consistency with one another, their combination generates operational interrelations of a substantive kind. The formal and substantive requisites and entailments of each principle represented in the set that forms the basis of a unit must therefore be integrated with those that attach to other principles. In consequence, a set of incorporative principles as a set exhibits two kinds of entailments and requisites, the substantive as well as the formal; and these substantive requisites and entailments together define the operational conditions on which these principles can be viably combined to perpetuate a distinct unit. However, while the substantive requisites and entailments that attach to a specific set of clearly defined incorporative principles indicate their conditions of integration and continuity, they also appear to determine the form of the corporate unit based on that set. Thus, for example, unilineal descent, age differences, or locality may provide bases for the incorporation of units of differing form, such as categories or groups, each having distinctive requisites and implications; but such differences of corporate form inevitably qualify the specific principles selected and the mode of their combination. The differing properties and operational conditions of these corporate forms may therefore qualify the substantive accommodation of requisites and entailments of the principles that constitute them as corporate units and prescribe their relations to the wider system of which they are part. It is convenient to distinguish these substantive requisites and entailments and the alternative forms of corporation that entail or generate them from the basis, or set of principles, on which the unit is incorporated. The particular form of a corporate unit accordingly in part reflects its mode of incorporation; and provisionally, both mode and form prescribe certain substantive conditions that must be met by the combination of particular formal principles that constitutes the corporate unit.

Any set of rules or conditions has certain logical requisites and entailments, logical or conceptual requisites being those conditions or concepts which are necessary for the formulation of the rule, entailments being its intrinsic implications. Since the institutional components of social systems consist largely of rules and regulative procedures valid for all units within the system, the requisites and entailments of incorporative rules distinguish units of similar and different type, and regulate the collective and individual interactions of their members. Some of these implications and requisites refer to conditions internal to the units constituted by the principles to which they attach. Others refer to external relations of the unit
concerned. Thus, the requisites and implications of determinate units can also be distinguished as external and internal by the relational spheres to which they refer.

For example, in a corporate group that recruits members by unilinial descent and forbids their intermarriage, special provisions are necessary to maintain the latter rule within the group and to arrange and regulate the marriages of members with non-members. Some of these provisions are internal entailments, others are external. Both sets of provisions are direct implications of the exogamous rule that binds the unilinear unit. It might be argued more remotely that this rule also implies the presence of nearby aggregates with whom the unit’s members can intermarry; and that it also requires some rules to regulate the residence of spouses after marriage. However, neither inference involves an entailment. Conunubium with others is not an implication but a requisite for exogamy as the characteristic of a corporate unit; and exogamy is neither requisite for nor entailed by unilineality, though very frequently associated with it. Moreover, unambiguous residence rules for married couples, however common and valuable, are neither requisite for nor entailed by exogamy or unilinear descent. To determine the foundations of these residence rules, we have to examine the forms and articulations of the intermarrying groups, paying special attention to the logical bonds between their internal constitution and their relations with one another.

It is analytically useful to distinguish the internal and external articulations of a given corporate form by segregating the internal and external requisites and implications derived from the principles that constitute it. Articulation simply denotes relations that hold between components within a given unit or between units in a given system.

Like its components, the system as a unit has its own incorporative principles, requisites and entailments, and its own internal and external articulations, which vary with its structure and context. Among the obvious requisites of systemic articulation are viability, boundaries, capacities for self-maintenance, structural congruence, and adequate levels of internal consistency and operational efficacy of its processes and parts. Systems, social or other, vary empirically in the degrees to which they fulfill these requisites; and they differ also in their forms, compositions, contents, characteristic operations and properties. Since political anthropology has to treat decentralized and centralized polities as varieties of a common general category, it clearly recognizes the variability of social systems. If we treat these systems and their components as units incorporated on differing principles and having diverse modes of articulation, we can analyze all as viable systems based on different principles and possessing different requisites and implications.

While the external requisites of a system vary with its nature and properties, they always specify its relations with its environment. So do the system’s external implications. Together these external requisites and implications embrace the greater part of the continuing adaptive interactions or articulations that relate the system to its environment. For its operation and continuity, given a particular form and content, the system presupposes a minimal set of environmental conditions; and its operation generates others that may in turn react upon it, as Malinowski perceived. Together, these external requisites and implications define the minimal external articulation of the system and its environment. Thus, unless specific developments in these external relations generate structural developments within the system, we may assume their provisional equilibrium and classify them as exogenous in order to segregate relations and processes within the unit for initial analysis. Moreover, even when external conditions do generate or restrict intra-systemic changes, these extrinsic relations should be segregated for analysis from the structural changes that indicate their effects upon this system.

The internal articulation of a system has certain operational implications for all its component units. Whether loosely or tightly articulated, the continuity of the system as a clearly bounded unit presupposes viable accommodations among its constituents and the complex triple congruence of their entailments and requisites with the principles on which these units are based, with the operational requirements of other units in the system, and with the viable external articulation of the unit or system as a whole. Systems vary in their coherence and viability with differences in the structural congruence and capacities of their components.

Clearly such conditions of systemic articulation have numerous implications for the units within them. However, without adequate data on these components and their properties, we cannot specify the precise implications entailed by their articulation in a single self-sustaining system. None the less, two points are clear: (1) on logical grounds, units of identical basis and form in a common system should have identical and mutually congruent requisites and entailments, while units with differing bases or forms should differ correspondingly; (2) systemic articulation has uniform and specific implications for all units of identical bases and form; accordingly, units of diverse bases and form are governed by different specific conditions of systemic articulation. Such uniformities and differences distinguish varieties of corporation as units of different status and scope within the system.

As indicated above, we can regard all units of identical form within a social system as systems whose immediate environment is the wider societal framework with which they articulate through their external requisites and implications. In this case, the internal

artication of each unit consists in the relations between its components. These should be mutually congruent and harmonized with the requisites and entailments which attach to the unit as an operational system. It is thus evident that the same analytic model, conceptions and procedures apply equally to the most inclusive system, the society, and to all its corporate components. Accordingly, analytic procedures and generalizations appropriate at one level of organization should also hold at others.

6.

Relations between the principles on which a corporation is based, their requisites and their implications, are complex, but especially significant for the study of social change. A unit, \(U\), having properties \(X_{1-n}\), may be based on some specific set of principles such as locality, sex, descent and age, which might be written \(Pa-d\), and which together involve certain requisites, \(R_{1-n}\), and implications, \(I_{1-n}\). Each principle generates its own specific entailments and requisites which must be integrated with those of others within the set to constitute the unit as a viable structure. Thus, requisites \(I-n\) must be consistent with \(Pa-d\) and with \(I_{1-n}\), the entailments of the set. Moreover, as we have seen, some requisites and entailments govern the unit's articulation to its environment, that is, to the inclusive system, while others govern the articulations of the unit's component parts. We can therefore distinguish these two sets of conditions as external \((E)\) and internal \((I_n)\) respectively. An obvious internal requisite is mutual congruence of the constitutive principles on which the unit is based to form a viable set.

Thus, given \(Pa-d : R_{1-n} + I_{1-n} : (RE_{1-n} + RI_{1-n}) + (E_{1-n} + I_{1-n})\).

The state of stationary equilibrium for the unit \(UX_{1-n}\) based on \(Pa-d\) requires the routine fulfillment of all these conditions. Such a state indicates more than the mere mutual congruence of requisites and entailments. It also suggests their asymmetrical transitivity. By this I mean merely that external and internal requisites may stand in certain functional relations to one another and to their linked implications such that changes in either term may involve changes in the values of others without, however, prescribing their precise directions or proportions. It is thus possible that relatively minor changes in one sub-set of the series may be linked with extensive adjustments in one or more others. Such multilateral asymmetric responses in the set of implications and requisites may insulate the principles to which they attach from formal change by modifying certain properties of the unit, particularly its status or scope. We may therefore distinguish as major those changes in either of these requisites or entailments which generate changes in the form of the unit or in the set of principles on which it is based. Such changes may involve unit dissolution, absorption, or reconstitution on differing bases either by the amendment or repeal of a previous rule or by conversion of the unit into a different corporate type. In either event the unit's alteration of form or capacity will be expressed in its altered articulation with other units and the inclusive system of which they are part.

The major units of societal structure and articulation are corporate, as are the agencies that regulate them. Despite important differences and widely variable combinations, these corporations constitute societies as aggregates that have distinctive compositions, structures and modes of articulation. Societal articulations vary in looseness or tightness along distinct dimensions of centralization and functional interdependence. They vary also and more importantly in mode as societies are incorporated on universalistic, consociational or differential principles.

Corporations of any class have certain qualities, properties or conditions, namely persistence, unique identities, rules that regulate their membership, internal and external articulations. In addition corporate groups, colleges and offices possess set capacities for positive action to regulate particular affairs for particular aggregates by virtue of their organization and articulation in particular collectivities. Some commissions display autonomous regulatory powers while others are clearly subordinate agencies of the superior organization that creates and directs them. Of the five types of corporations and quasi-corporations described above, only categories lack autonomy, procedures, organization or common affairs reserved for their collective regulation. Even when subdivided into a plurality of corporate groups, a category lacks capacity for collective action as a comprehensive unit, being without the requisite means of inclusive or representative coordination. Being thus constitutionally incapable of undertaking routine actions to regulate any distinctive affairs, and whether or not subdivided into groups of variable scope and continuity, categories are either regulated by abstract rules which specify particular proscriptions or impose disabilities on the members, or they are subject to positive regulation by other units. A corporate category whose members by virtue of their categorical status remain subject to regulation by others is differentially incorporated in the society in which those who regulate it are characteristically organized as a corporate group. For example, conquerors commonly reconstitute the widest corporate groupings of the conquered people as categories by destroying their organization in order to incorporate them differentially into the wider society.

Categorical clans, which are subject only to regulation by abstract rules, though incapable of inclusive action, illustrate the opposite of such differential incorporation. The organizational incapacities shared by such clans indicate their equivalence as subdivisions of a society in which all individuals are incorporated directly and on
identical terms. This mode of societal incorporation is explicitly universalistic.

A third, consociational mode of societal incorporation may be illustrated by societies organized in bands or segmentary lineages or as confederations. To enjoy the status of citizen, consociational modes of incorporation presuppose individual membership in one of several corporate groups of identical status and form whose union constitutes the common society. Individuals are thus incorporated in such societies indirectly and by virtue of their prior membership in one or other of these constitutive units. Individual affiliations are thus intermediate, indirect, and both formally and substantively equal under consociational structures, whereas under conditions of universalistic incorporation they are immediate, direct, and formally, though not necessarily, substantively equal; and under differential incorporation they are basically unequal in form and substance, intermediate and direct for some, but not for others. Briefly, under differential incorporation, the subordinate category is in the society but not of it.

Although analytically distinct and mutually exclusive as regards any particular regulative sphere, these three modes of incorporation may be combined in various ways to generate polities of differing structure and type. For example, consociational and universalistic modes of incorporation are combined in modern federations by arrangements that segregate the spheres of federal and state activity and simultaneously incorporate individuals in the federation and its member-states. Such regimes are structurally similar to those of the simplest societies organized in corporate bands, for example, Pygmies, Bushmen or Shoshoneans, since, although free to attach themselves to other bands, individuals can only participate in these societies as members of some band. Such classic confederations as Switzerland, Ashanti or the Iroquois are correspondingly similar to societies based on segmentary lineages, for example, the Tallensi, Lugbara or Tiv, since in either consociational regime individual membership presupposes identification with one or other of the primary corporate groups. In like fashion, societies based on universalistic modes of incorporation, such as France or the Plateau Tonga, share certain features, including the direct admission and formal equivalence of all individuals who participate in the collective life as members of the society. Thus, universalistic and consociational regimes are equally compatible with political centralization or decentralization; but whereas all centralized polities as corporate groups maintain very clear boundaries, societies incorporated categorically on universalistic principles vary in this respect. With few exceptions, uncentralized

7. Turnbull (1965); L. Marshall (1965); Steward (1938).
8. Busia (1951); Morgan (1851), 1962 ed.; Fortes (1940); Middleton (1965); L. and P. Bohannan (1955).
superior and inferior by reference to their differential political status, and excludes intersectional mobility. The status structures of uncentralized consociations are thus radically different from systems of social stratification in which collectivities or individuals are the units of rank-differentiation. In the consociation, corporations of identical form are status equals, and so are individuals of the same generation and sex by virtue of their corporate membership. Thus the principal alternative forms of social stratification are directly correlated with those differences of mode by which societies are incorporated and constituted as groups under centralized administration, or as categories without it. Political centralization introduces stratification of individuals into formally unstratified consociational or universalistic regimes.

Differential incorporation automatically constitutes societies as amalgams of closed sections or segments that differ in rank, resource, obligation and privilege. It simultaneously proscribes intersectional mobility. Conversion of such an order into a universalistic regime can only proceed by eliminating these collective distinctions of rank and citizenship while individuating the criteria and distributions of status. Clearly, any changes in the modes of incorporation, or in the corporate status of an aggregate as category or group, entails many far-reaching changes in its political arrangements as well as in the forms and conditions of social stratification.¹⁰

Even societies that share identical bases of incorporation may differ widely in the complexity and character of their corporate organizations. Analytically, even the simplest societal system characterized by replications of a single corporate form presents at least two organizational levels that require detailed attention, namely that of the inclusive unit and that of its modal components. The internal articulation of such simple systems thus consists in the interconnections of these component corporations; and being identical in their bases, form, structure, resources and capacities, these units must also have identical requisites and implications, procedures, autonomy and scope — that is, those affairs and activities reserved for their routine regulation. In consequence, their relations with one another will be uniform and symmetrical, since all have congruent and identical requirements and entitlements. Such uniformities necessarily prevail among all corporate units that have identical bases and modes of incorporation within the same milieu. Thus, units subject to differential incorporation differ correspondingly in their autonomy, resources, articulation and scope, even if they share identical bases, as in pre-colonial Ruanda;¹¹ and in so far as units having identical bases of incorporation articulate with one another asymmetrically in a common society, these differential relations indicate their status differences, which may also involve differences in their modes of incorporation. Thus any event that initiates or expresses novel asymmetries in the relations of homologous corporations indicates or illustrates structural changes in the polities of which they are part.

Since units incorporated on identical bases and modes have identical requisites, properties and implications, they should also have identical types of relations with corporations of similar and different form, base and mode. Corporations accordingly differ in their articulative networks in correspondence with differences in their form, bases and modes of incorporation. Such differences in corporate units and their alignments will naturally complicate the structure of a political system and increase or decrease its cohesion in correspondence with their congruence.

The Yakö illustrate a polity that combines a variety of corporations, patriclans and patrilineages, matriclans and matrilineages, wards, ward-associations of various bases and types, age-sets, councils and offices in all these units, village associations of diverse bases, scope and character, and a village council under a ritually senior office. This Yakö village polity articulates its diverse corporations by distinguishing their criteria of membership, levels of organization and spheres of operation, and by segregating and ranking them casually by differences of scope, range and autonomy, while distributing offices and collegial memberships unequally among their senior members drawn from the different lineages and wards to form a graded structure of overlapping directorates that proves effective for village communication and control.¹² Kikuyu, Yoruba, Ibo, Cheyenne, Kipsigis, Hopi, Kwakiutl and Canella illustrate other combinations of diverse corporations, articulated as among Yakö, partly by the structural segregation of corporate memberships and their operational spheres; partly by assigning individuals multiple memberships in units of differing scope, type and level; and partly by hierarchic gradations that align corporations according to differences in their scope and range.¹³ In such complex political organizations, units of identical basis, requisites and implications have identical status, autonomy, scope and articulations with one another, with differentially constituted corporations, and thus with the system as a whole. Conversely, units of diverse base differ in their properties, requisites, interrelations and articulation with the milieu. Inductively and a priori, the principles by which such structurally heterogeneous aggregates are co-ordinated include: (1) differentiation of corporations by basis, form, scope, range and status; (2) differentiations of regulatory spheres and their distributions among several agencies of diverse base, form, range and scope; (3) dispersal of individual

¹⁰ Southall (1956); Winans (1962).
¹¹ Maquet (1961).
¹² Forde (1964).
¹³ Lambert (1956); Middleton and Kershaw (1965); Forde (1951); Forde and Jones (1950); E.A. Hoebel (1960); Peristiany (1939); Egan (1950), pp. 17-138; Boas (1940), pp. 356-69, 379-83; Nimuendaju (1946).
memberships in corporate groups and colleges, and simultaneous attachment of many persons to several units of differing base and type; (4) recognition of the validity of each unit's operation within its customary sphere; (5) simultaneous identification of all individuals with certain corporations such as lineages, age-sets and wards, as necessary conditions for societal membership and eligibility to enter others; (6) procedures for generating new corporations by collective action, subject to requisites of their compatibility with those already extant, and adequate congruence in their modes of articulation.

7.

The simplest human societies are identified by corporate units of a single uniform type. These societies are accordingly dependent for their internal order, cohesion, and continuity on the character and properties of their articulative structures. Characteristically, these articulative structures inhere in the symmetrical balanced requisites and entailments of the corporate units in which such populations are organized. In consequence they are diffuse, and contingent on individual interactions for expression and validity. Rarely are there any superior organs vested with responsibilities and resources for regulating the relations between these corporations; and where such organs as offices and commissions exist, there is generally little that they can do even in collective emergencies, given their lack of authority and resources. Thus, in the normal case, the societal structure represents a fine but discontinuous network of individual ties channelled by criteria of kinship, locality, generation and sex across unit boundaries. Individuals are normally free to transfer their affiliations and residence from one unit to another; and, being status peers, individuals of the same age and sex are members of corporate units with formally identical rights and properties. Social order is thus pervasively egalitarian, despite individual differences of status based on kinship, generation and sex, and less clearly on relative seniority within generations. Authority and power are thus dispersed with hardly any differentiation among individuals, even though the adult males may be organized in age-groups, or, as among Turkana and Karimojong, primarily in categories. In consequence, individualization of this undifferentiated authority and power inhibits endogenous changes in the political structure, since differences in their distributions remain individual, situational, and therefore unstable. Even in situations of collective crisis, this distribution normally frustrates collective action under local leadership, since individual authority is equalized in type and span within corporate groups. While such categorical modes of organization may permit sporadic collective action, they inhibit institutionalization of differential roles among individuals. Since individual autonomy is preserved through freedom to transfer from one group to the next, responsibilities and authority remain vested in individuals, despite the structural requirement of group membership. Accordingly, despite individual mobility, groups are invested with residual and legitimating rights, and so provide enduring frameworks for the societal structure and for individual action alike.

Such a system accordingly admits three possibilities for endogenously generated change. Either some individual may establish his superior authority within a group by subordinating the autonomy of his peers on some continuous basis, or one or more groups may dominate others; or groups may dissolve, together with the societal requirement of prior individual membership within them. Either of these two last developments alters the mode of societal incorporation from the original consociation to a differential incorporation in the one case, and to a universalistic incorporation in the latter. Moreover, given the emergence of a dominant individual capable of imposing his will on other members of his group by ritual or other means, three courses of development are possible. Either the group may dissolve or be reduced below its viable threshold by the departure of those who question the validity of this personal domination, though unable to avoid it as members; or the leader may stabilize the group and his authority without further repercussions during his lifetime; or on various contingencies the group may engage in conflict with others, leading either to stalemate, to dissolution of the leadership, or to further and perhaps progressive extensions of its domination in variable forms and degrees.

In the normal case we should expect the authority of a gifted individual in such a context to operate discontinuously, contingently, situationally, and with reference to specific spheres such as ritual or hunting. It should also proceed by persuasion and consent rather than constraint. Its range should thus be limited by the context of grouping, and its span by the lifetime of the individual who generates it. These expectations are grounded on the egalitarian mode of individual incorporation which entails identical autonomous rights for persons of the same sex and generation in all spheres not subject to kinship regulation. Thus the establishment of personal ascendancy or dominion under such conditions must either restrict individual autonomies, thereby contravening the norms of this status structure, or the leader must extend the range or scope of activities and relations for the members of his unit without thereby reducing their traditionally individual autonomy.

Extensions of range in social relations will normally involve expansion in the scope of social action for at least some individuals and units. However, extensions of scope without range would seem to require cultural innovations that increase the set of individual interests and capacities, and may thus be difficult to develop and institute. None the less, since its social organization presents the

at any moment a political structure, societal or subsocietal, consists in a finite set of relations among or within corporate units of determinate form, basis, scope and number. The hypothetical equilibrium of such a structure consists in the relations that harmonize the requisites and implications of its individual units, thus preserving their autonomy, forms, and relations without change. If the system actually exhibits such an equilibrium, so will all its component units, since their articulations will integrate the requisites and entailments of the principles on which each is based.

In corporate groups, colleges and offices, as already observed, there are recurrent occasions and specific procedures by which regulatory roles are transferred, and there are often also special provisions for altering institutional arrangements. Such arrangements are commonly validated by a mixture of elements, by the unit's organization and history, by its current internal and external relations, by beliefs in the appropriateness of such changes, by correspondences between these forms and the duties and capacities of the unit, by correspondences of such alterations with the practice of other units of identical basis, status and type, and by their objective or perceived instrumental values. In turn, such constitutional arrangements, developments and procedures authorize and modify the current distributions of role, responsibility and resources within the unit, and its corporate relations with other units of similar or different type. Any alterations in these internal or external relations that are effected by and consistent with the institutional procedures of the corporation are thus legitimate and authorized. They accordingly express the continued vitality of the unit's structure even when they modify this. By contrast, routine unit operations that involve no structural modification do not belong in the study of change. Thus simple circulations of office or collegial roles illustrate unit maintenance, unless they involve some material alterations of procedures or rule. However, where the rules and procedures that affect the structural relations of a social unit are altered by institutionalized action or otherwise, then these events, their antecedents, contexts and consequences, are directly of interest to the student of change; but mere redistributions of power or influence among the members of a group which involve no modification of the prevailing framework of procedures, relations and rules, nor any change in the unit's scope, range, or in the validity of its operative particulars, illustrate its structural continuity and do not concern us.

At the most elementary level, changes in the political structure of a unit must always involve one or more of the following developments: (1) alterations in the conditions and categories of membership of some corporate unit, which may include dissolution or changes in the bases of its incorporation; (2) alterations in the scope of unit activities, which modify its internal and/or external articulation, resources and collective status; (3) those alterations of unit procedures and rules which are linked with either of the preceding developments.

Developments of these three types represent changes in the structure, status and capacities of the units that undergo them, even if they follow prescribed procedures and observe unit rules. Moreover, if such changes develop outside or in violation of the constitutional framework, they clearly challenge or reduce the validity of the previous structure, while altering it. Normally also either of these modifications involve substantial changes in the rights and conditions of at least some members of the unit, and perhaps changes in its scope and capacity also.

Redistributions of power and influence that precede or accompany allocations of authority within a social group, without modifying its bases, norms, formal procedures or external status, merely illustrate the characteristic processes and routine operations of the unit. Such institutional processes of redistribution validate the unit-structure by upholding and manifesting its norms, and by demonstrating their validity and adaptive capacities. Reallocations of authority that proceed extra-institutionally or contra-institutionally indicate the inability of the antecedent institutional structure to restrain or accommodate these developments. Likewise, illegitimate deployments of authority by those holding institutional positions illustrate the inadequacy of prevailing procedures and norms which ensure or generate official immunities despite incompetence or misconduct. Developments of either kind tend to invalidate the antecedent corporate constitution and to evoke collective responses.
which may generate further changes in the unit's procedures, structure, scope and conditions of membership. Where such developments modify or contravene earlier institutional arrangements, these cannot directly validate them; and they must therefore owe their effects to other regulative principles, notably to the distributions and manifestations of power in the current context. Moreover even when structural changes are made in accord with the institutional norms and procedures of a unit, and are thus legitimized and authorized by these sources, such revisions of the previous structure, procedures, rules, scope and conditions of membership must either express the power alignments that prevail, or their reorientations to current and foreseeable conditions. This is equally true of structural changes induced within a unit by exogenous events or forces, such, for example, as the actions of other bodies that modify its status and external relations in the social context by altering its scope, autonomy and resources, with or without the unit's consent. All exogenous developments that generate structural change accordingly modify prevailing alignments of power or authority within the unit affected, and ensure its accommodation, conditionally or otherwise, and with or without its consent. Yet even if such structural modifications are instituted with the formal assent of the unit and in accord with its accepted procedures, they can only express the reorientations that prevail under its current distributions of power and authority.

For example, if corporate groups of identical form combine to institute a confederation for their mutual benefit and defence, each initially reserving the right to repudiate the laws and policies of their union, the changes of unit-status and relations that establish the association express their responses to changes in their political situation which appear to necessitate the union without necessitating permanent transfers of unit autonomies to some central executive. In such circumstances, the determination of the associated units to preserve their internal autonomy intact indicates their formal equivalence in status, capacity, modes and bases of incorporation. In consequence, the consociation is based on their symmetrical articulations. Despite such restrictions, the consociation none the less modifies the status and autonomy of its member-units while prescribing their identification in it with one another by proscribing their independent relations with foreign bodies. Thus, by its establishment the confederation changes the status and scope of its components significantly and uniformly. Thereafter the union faces three possible courses of development. It may either persist for generations without structural changes in the status and relations of the members and central agencies; or it may dissolve in various ways and under various circumstances; or it may be transformed, abruptly or cumulatively, into some structure of another type, for example a unitary or federal state, by the progressive extensions of central authority and scope through the development of new functions and activities by its central agency, or through its appropriation of other tasks and resources that were formerly lacking or reserved to member units. In the latter case, even if the original autonomy of member units remains formally unchanged, their dependence on the centre increases with its increased activities and capacities; and pari passu so does the political status of its central administration. Such redistributions of power that neither impair the validity of the institutional arrangements nor modify the status, scope, autonomy, membership conditions or external relations of a unit, manifest its structural persistence, adaptability and authority. Other developments that invalidate these institutional arrangements or alter the unit's status, scope, membership conditions and autonomy, whether endogenous or exogenous in their genesis, indicate its structural change and express other alignments of power with differing orientations and goals.

Of authority and power, the two basic elements in which political relations of any type consist, authority, being identified by and through institutional forms, procedures and relations, presupposes their validity and operates to conserve or enhance them, even when used to initiate or promote changes in the institutional structure. In consequence, relations of power that validate and conserve institutional arrangements must operate within and through the authority structure, even when initiating or promoting its modification. However, while authority is committed to structural preservation by the assertion or adaptation of institutional norms, power has two modes of structural expression. It may be employed either to uphold and maintain the system without change, or to initiate and institute its structural modification. In the latter case, power may be employed legitimately and in accordance with institutional arrangements; or it may be employed extra-institutionally or contra-institutionally to modify them.

Evidently then the processes of political change may involve certain necessary and therefore invariant relations at the level of the elementary principles that constitute political systems, namely authority and power; but all such changes in the structure of a political system must also be manifested by changes in the external or internal conditions of its corporate components. The conditions thus invariably linked may be listed as follows: (1) The political status of a corporate unit is manifested in the conduct of non-members towards its members as representatives; and such status is also shown by the form and articulation of the unit with other units in the system of which it is a part, that is, by its mode of incorporation. Together these conditions determine the unit's proper scope, autonomous activities, resources, operational requisites and implications, and appropriate relations with other units of similar or different kind within the system. (2) The internal organization of a
corporate unit is expressed in those institutional procedures and rules that crystallize and order its structure of status and relations to form a viable coherent unit. The scope, autonomy and resources of the corporate unit will vary with its basis and mode of incorporation, and frequently with its range also. The basis of a unit's incorporation specifies the conditions that regulate its membership, and especially the admission, obligations and rights of members, but also their differentiation by status. The basis and mode of its incorporation also prescribe the unit's corporate form, and thus indicate the appropriate conditions for its internal and external articulations, given the composition and status of the system of which the unit is part.

The bases and modes of a unit's incorporation differ in their reference; the former denotes the criteria of unit membership, while the second substantially specifies the unit's external articulations. It seems logically necessary that these internal and external dimensions of a unit's organization should be mutually congruent and that each should also form a consistent and viable scheme. Given its form and the principles on which a corporate unit is based, the mode of a unit's incorporation accordingly defines its appropriate external relations and collective status within the wider system, by prescribing the appropriate autonomy, scope and internal articulation from which its members derive their corporate rights and status. The unit's operational scope is manifest in those routine autonomous activities which are simultaneously governed by its bases and modes of incorporation and which specify the collective obligations and rights of the members as a distinct 'perpetual' unit.

Analytically, the corporations whose changing properties, relations and forms constitute changes in the structure of the political system of which they are part, are presumptively perpetual regulatory units whose differences of type, base, scope and articulation indicate and specify their differences of status. While the principles on which a unit is incorporated determine its immediate requisites and entailments and thus its minimal scope, its corporate form determines its minimally appropriate internal and external articulation, given the mode of its incorporation to its particular context. Thus in the limiting case of a perfect equilibrium, the extrinsic and intrinsic properties of the corporation must correspond perfectly, as should the requisites of its internal and external articulation, and its collective status with that of its members. In such conditions the unit's procedures, organization and scope should correspond perfectly with one another and with its formal attributes. Accordingly, its routine activities will then manifest its public status and external articulation. The exercise of corporate authority is thus restricted to those relations and activities that sustain the order by fulfilling its requisites and implications; and any material changes in the form, capacities or bases of the unit will modify its status and articulation correspondingly. Moreover, since such developments invalidate some institutional norms, they presuppose and express corresponding changes in the alignments and orientations of power within and beyond the unit. Invariably also, such structural developments modify the articulative networks in which the unit was formerly aligned, together with its juridical status and autonomy. More extensive or critical changes may invalidate some of the unit's requisites or entailments, and thus some conditions and features of its corporate organization. Whether such processes of change consist primarily in revisions of the external relations and status of the particular unit or in extensions or reductions of its scope, these consequences prevail. While changes of unit scale or range sometimes accompany changes of its structure, both may proceed independently; and the mere multiplication or reduction of the number of units, or simple extensions of their range, need not alter the structure of a political system, though either may clearly affect its capacity, unless some changes in the bases or modes of unit incorporation are involved.

Such structural changes in the conditions, context and articulations of a corporation modify the status and capacities of its members by altering the scope and conditions of their membership, that is, by modifying its distinctive rights, duties, privileges and relations, and sometimes by transforming the bases and categories of membership also. Such modifications of membership content commonly take either of three alternative courses. First, the content of membership and thus the scope of the corporate unit may be extended, for example by the acquisition of new collective functions and resources, conditionally or otherwise. Alternatively, membership content and collective scope may be reduced by loss or restriction of former capacity or autonomy. Finally the content of corporate membership may be altered, with or without any accompanying changes in the unit's autonomy and scope, by some revision of prevailing membership categories and by the redistribution of rights and duties among them, presumably on the basis of new criteria of differentiation. For example, tendencies to obstruct the circulation of executive roles summarized in the Iron Law of Oligarchy may materially alter membership contents by revising their distributions without corresponding changes in unit scope. So does the restratification of members in new or modified categories on new or modified criteria.

The basis on which a unit is incorporated may be altered formally
by the action of its members or their representatives through procedures that explicitly or implicitly revise relevant rules, with or without change in membership content. In either event the status, autonomy and external relations of the unit will be correspondingly affected, the particulars varying with the specific alteration and with the unit's initial form and scope. It is clearly possible to modify the principles on which a corporate unit recruits its members without directly affecting its corporate form as group, category, college or other. However, when its principles of membership recruitment are altered, the unit's collective status and external articulation are directly affected. Thus any changes in the basis of incorporation, irrespective of internal restructurations of membership categories and content, invariably involve changes in the unit's external articulation, and thus its public status.

As regards changes of status, scope and articulation, the relations adduced above also apply whether we deal with the status of members in a given unit, or with that of units in a given system. If the system retains its former scope and range, its structural change can only consist in modifications of the original articulation of its corporate components, which in turn involve revisions in the distributions of status, autonomy and resources among them, with correlative changes in their membership contents. Where such realignments proceed without any changes in the number or variety of these corporate units, the processes of structural change simply reallocate status and autonomy among the pre-existing units by redesigning their mutual relations, scope and status to correspond with altered distributions of power and capacity. However, since these changes always implicate the articulative structure by which such units are incorporated in the system, no changes of corporate form can proceed without them. Alternatively, without any alterations in the previous scope and the system, new units of differing base may emerge only by parallel realignments of collective relations and redistributions of capacities and membership. Finally, the scope of the system may change under the impact of endogenous or exogenous forces. These include victory or defeat, aggrandizement or conquest, imposed alliances, tributary relationships, the development of new technological or ideological structures, the desuetude of old arrangements, population changes, and many other conditions.

Systems or units may institutionalize limited changes in their scope without parallel changes in the articulative structure and relative status of their corporate components, providing only that these changes of scope are distributed appropriately among component corporations in complementary or proportionate modes. However such distribution may be possible only for systems with extremely simple corporate structures, and then only under stringent conditions. If alterations of scope invalidate the requisites or entailments of any particular class of corporations in the system, they will modify its autonomy, status, relations and scope correspondingly, thereby generating a process of structural change which may be episodic or continuous, until a new articulative structure is stabilized for all. Thus, whatever the context and level of corporate organization, structural change consists in the sequential modification of unit status and articulations and contemporaneous alterations of its autonomy, resources and scope. These two sets of changes comprehend the form and substance of the system and its units respectively. On grounds already presented, whether or not they illustrate the decline or growth of the system, such structural changes invariably presuppose and manifest new alignments of power adequate to modify the pre-existing structure of corporate status and relations.

We may distinguish as radical those processes of change by which a systemic structure and its major corporate units are simultaneously transformed by reincorporation on new bases and/or modes. The more abrupt and inclusive the process of change, the more critical the disbalances of antecedent corporate status and scope with prevailing distributions of power and authority.

To illustrate our analysis, let us consider briefly a system with various types of corporation: for example, localized lineages, local communities, male age-sets, colleges or community councils, each type of corporation initially having its own appropriate organization, scope, resources, and internal and external articulations. If hypothetically we assume that the system undergoes structural change without any change of scope, then its structural alteration requires some realignment of these corporate components which must be expressed in complementary redistributions of autonomous capacities among them. Alternatively, similar realignments and redistributions may be confined among the corporations of any particular category, such as its age-sets or lineages. The fewer the units affected, the less extensive the structural changes involved, the simpler the process, and the more likely that it will be episodic, restricted and easily stabilized. However, if the scope and capacities of lineages as one class of corporations increase or decrease, this affects their articulations to other units of differing type, for example the age-organization and/or community council, as well as their articulations with one another. Alternatively, if the community unites with others to establish a wider confederation of identical scope, thereby extending its range, its prevailing distributions of status, relations and capacities may remain unaffected. On the other hand, if one or more lineages extend their autonomy at the expense of others and thus appropriate dominion, the status and relations of all units involved are correspondingly modified, together with the modes of their articulation and collective autonomies. In systems of this complexity, the pre-eminence of any class of corporate units inevitably affects the structure and functions of the community.
council, and perhaps those of the age-organization also. Clearly, any alteration in the autonomy or status of a given corporation directly affects the rights, obligations and status of its membership, and those of other units and their members contingently. The varieties of corporate unit in this hypothetical case provide the principal political structures, while their articulation constitutes the framework of the political system. In consequence, changes in this political structure proceed by rearrangements in the bases, forms and interrelations of these corporations.

The assumption of new capacities or the loss of old ones by the political system as a unit illustrate the generality of the relations adduced above. Either the new capacities are appropriated to a novel type of unit whose accommodation modifies the pre-existing articulative structure and increases its complexity while instituting new relations with older units; or the new capacities must be distributed in proportionate or complementary modes among the original units, or at least among all units of a given corporate class, normally that with the largest prescriptive membership and widest scope. Unless there is an objectively symmetrical distribution of these capacities among corporations of all types, changes in their status and interrelations are inevitable, and thus changes in the structure of the total system. It is also possible that the institutionalization of these new systemic functions might modify the bases on which some of these corporations recruited their members; but in that case, such changes in their systemic articulations will probably modify the modes of incorporation of these units correspondingly.

If a political system as a whole suffers some loss of former function, its structural responses to this reduction in scope and capacity demonstrate identical relations, since in so far as they are structurally significant, these substantive losses will find structural expression in revisions of membership status and contents in all those corporations that are directly or indirectly affected, with parallel revisions in the properties and interrelations of these units. Such loss of systemic capacities will also affect preceding distributions of power among these units and will therefore modify the structures of corporate status and articulation associated with this distribution. Accordingly reductions in the scope and capacity of any corporate unit, including that of the political system itself, will normally generate disbalances of its requisites and entailments that destabilize its articulation and may modify its mode. The status of the affected unit vis-à-vis others will then change correspondingly. Moreover, if the system as a whole loses the capacity to insulate its internal structure from further change, such losses must either fall equivalently on all classes of units, a remote possibility given initial dissimilarities in their form; bases and scope, or they will fall unequally and primarily on those corporations of greatest significance and scope in the original system, thus subverting it further by weakening its most fundamental units.
requisites and entailments of its corporate components, we should have a sufficiently detailed and accurate model of any aggregate to enable us to deduce the precise nature and order of its responses to any particular elements or influences that bear upon it. Thus, by examining our model of the aggregate, we should be able to say whether its structure would change in response to specific conditions, and if so in what specific ways and degrees, and in what order. We may then compare these deductions with the data on the empirical situation, and re-examine our model and deductions to identify any errors of construction or reasoning that may account for the discrepancies we find, thereby facilitating the progressive correction of the model and refining our general ideas to improve our understanding of political organization and the actual sequences of political change. Clearly if this procedure enables us to formulate hypotheses that are confirmed empirically, such confirmations imply that those logically necessary relations among the elements of our general model of polities, as orders of corporate organization having specific properties and conditions, may provide some invariance in the structures of the processes by which such units change.

Finally, although as elsewhere in these essays I have often referred to the aggregates under discussion as 'systems', this loose descriptive usage should not be taken to mean that I regard them as 'systems' in any theoretically significant sense. At most my usage is heuristic, and the term 'organization' could be substituted. Thus instead of discussing the functional unity, stability, closure, feedback circuits and other properties of these units as systems, I have dwelt on the bases, forms, requisites, entailments and articulations of these aggregates and their components, all being conceived as structures of the same general kind, namely corporations, whose properties and relations are logically implicit in the conditions and forms of their incorporation. Thus instead of treating these aggregates or their components as functional systems, I have tried to isolate those structural elements and conditions which are sufficient and necessary to define and maintain them, in order that we may deduce their alternative responses to any events or forces that may affect their properties or relations. In effect we could substitute the terms 'organizational aggregate' for 'system' in almost every instance without any loss of meaning. However, following convention, I have first described these political units as 'systems' to facilitate identification, and then proceeded to abstract their structures as the central object of study.

Pluralism is a condition in which members of a common society are internally distinguished by fundamental differences in their institutional practice. Where present, such differences are not distributed at random; they normally cluster, and by their clusters they simultaneously identify institutionally distinct aggregates or groups, and establish deep social divisions between them. The prevalence of such systematic dissociation between the members of institutionally distinct collectivities within a single society constitutes pluralism. Thus pluralism simultaneously connotes a social structure characterized by fundamental discontinuities and cleavages, and a cultured complex based on systematic institutional diversity. In this essay I try to isolate the minimal conditions essential and sufficient to constitute pluralism. I try also to show how such conditions generate and sustain social cleavages that distinguish pluralities, while other combinations of institutional and social differences differ in their structural expression. Having summarily indicated some of the principal forms that social pluralism may take, I review briefly the modes and conditions by which it may be stabilized or transformed.

Pluralism may be defined with equal cogency and precision in institutional or in political terms. Politically these features have very distinctive forms and conditions, and in their most extreme state, the plural society, they constitute a polity of peculiar though variable type. Specific political features of social pluralism centre in the corporate constitution of the total society. Under these conditions the basic corporate divisions within the society usually coincide with the lines of institutional cleavage, reinforcing and generally converting them into deep and rigid inequalities in social and political life. The enforcement and maintenance of these corporate divisions and inequalities are then normally identified with the preservation of social order and stability. Any modification in the political and social relations between these corporate divisions involves corresponding changes in the conditions of social structure. To seek out the conditions essential for this coincidence of corporate boundaries and institutional discontinuity, we have therefore to discover the minimal degrees and forms of institutional divergence which are required to facilitate, promote, or ennoble the sectional closures that plural polity incorporates; and conversely, we need to inquire how various