

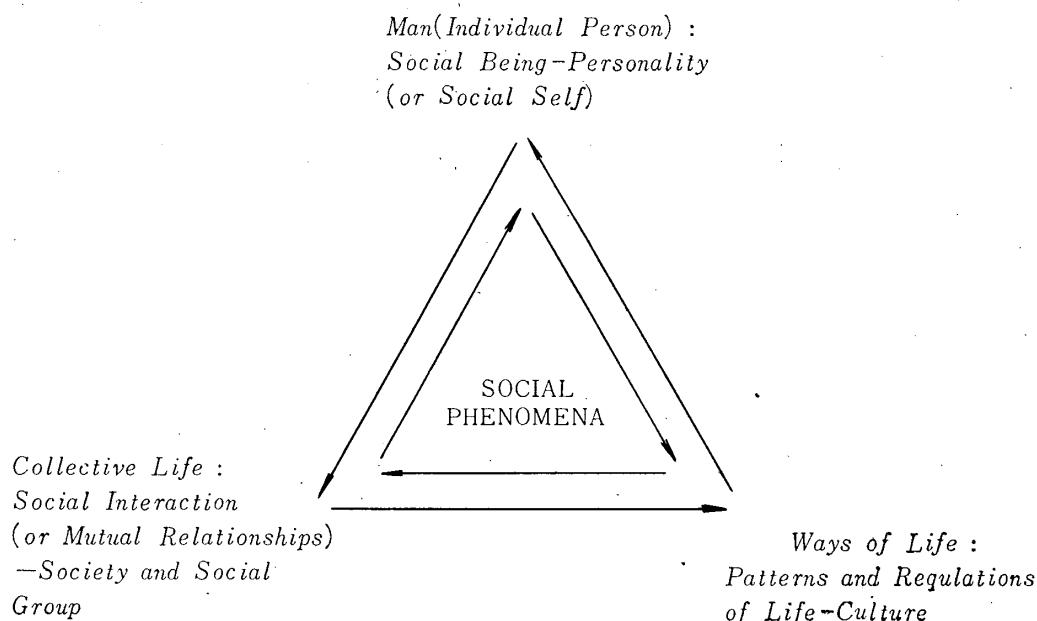
# A NOTE ON THE BASIC CONCEPTS IN SOCIOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTATIONS

by  
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## [ I ]

The application of sociological concept, found in the experimental study of small groups, to other fields of study has not been so rare, but tended, so often, to give rise to controversy. Based upon the factors which could be controlled by investigators and the effects of which were to be studied, sociological standards, procedures and other prerequisite requirements for the application have been frequently inserted in economics, politics, law, religion, demography and so forth. Concerned or connected with the organization, condition, and general study of society, sociology deals, as is commonly known, with "the basic structure of human society, to identify the main forces that hold groups together or weaken them, and to learn the conditions that transform social life,"<sup>(1)</sup> and with comparison of individual with social group, or groups, under a social context, or, in a set of social situation. In this sense, sociology seems, as seen in any realm of sciences, still on the march, and as its major focus of intellectual sort, sociological searches under experiments are now groping about, in the attempt to find a new orientation fitted to the age of 'challenging' in almost all the realms.

But the major themes of the recent sociological researches have had its origin, as fundamental roots, in personality, social group, and, as stated generally, culture.<sup>(2)</sup> These three subdivided subjects, I believe, have always been important as determinants of social analysis; showing my own prejudice, I shall draw an equilateral triangle, forming a trinity as shown below.



Correlation, mutual relations, or, reciprocal influences, among each vertex of the triangle may be assumed to manifest itself by showing that society should be attributed to these key factors of the three in its make-up, beyond any social ramifications, or complexity in its constitution. For the trinity, the three factors, shown above at three vertical points included in one intricate, correlated organism, on the establishment of human society, it is needed to give a much larger significant factor that, in the trinity, is reduced into society—collective life, gregarious state of life of human beings, the one among three vertexes, and that it is the factor which, in its nature, draws a sharp 'demarcation line' between the modernized or urbanized society, as is nowadays, and the preceding stage of 'underdeveloped' or 'unmodernized' state of ways of life before recent technological advances. Material development is, exclusively, a distinguished feature attributed to the urban age, now being under way, as stated by R. C. Weaver,<sup>(3)</sup> which is, indeed, undergoing the process of rapid urbanization in the terms of demography, psychology, physiology, and others of almost all the sciences.

## [ II ]

For adding some of amplification, showing some of conventional views held by many sociologists, to the previous chapter, I dare to introduce to the ideas of the several sociological concepts. We treat society, in the main, as an organic 'whole,' and treat a person as an organic entity, or a social being, correlated into the social 'whole.' To expand this idea of the interdependence, we have to estimate that when all-out system in all the social relations once undergoes sudden drastic change—as seen in any of social upheavals—, each organic ingredient, a man— a social being or a personality, also, reveals that each of them tends to become deviated, or maladjusted; each social-self may digresses; he may be beginning to be desocialized, for the social-self should be an end-product of the process of his socialization. This important components in the organic 'whole' of all-out social system, in turn, can be further analyzed in focusing on an individual from the point of individual level. To a certain extent, that is to say, one component—each social being— becomes holding in each mind uneasiness or agitation against 'within and without,' each of them, through interaction and communication with each other, comes to have enormous effect on the present balance of social relations which, as in most of the cases, total change of it may take place. In this process, main focus of studies in man seems falling in the point as to how personality, or pattern of individual behavior, is getting formed as one component 'whole,' amidst versatile kinds of social groups, and cultural patterns, or else, under social situations.

As might be expected in the social formation (some features have been described in the simplified graphic form as mentioned in the preceding chapter), the volume and variety of researches in these areas are enormous and tend to grow. But I will, taking the focus on single theme, social-group-experimentations, make all of these descriptions briefly based on my 'personal' views on sociological interpretation or observation of social group formation in experiments.

Among various sorts of gregarious traits of mankind, or, more than any other ways of life among all of traits, aggregate life allows the affirmation that, as Caroline B. Rose, Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota, succinctly puts it, "The individual and the group are the two poles about which sociological theory revolves. Everybody is born into an on-going group. This is likely to be a family (a small group for instance). The group precedes the individual, and the social traits of the individual are inculcated by the group; the individual takes over and internalizes the meanings and values of the group and thus becomes both a member of the group and a socialized individual. The process by which this is accomplished is called socialization....."(4)

In this, the focus should come to be fixed upon social groups, or, more definitely, upon the formation and institutionalization of small groups — directed by all the sciences relevant; intended to devote to the study on them, from all their own angles, in such lights as their structures, their inter/mutual relationships with the rest of human/societal surroundings, — refined as a powerful tool, or a chief key in the development of both personality (individual) and social group (society) in which any kind of social groups plays significant roles. Moreover, the whole range of social groups might not miss such aspects of the study concerning as stated by MacIver and Page, "..... the different constituents of the social structure — ...community, ... class... group... associations... are particular adaptations of one to another ..... These we shall call functional systems."(5) And, by Carr, "The persistence of social structures... implies some functional relationship... It implies a constant process of adjustment and readjustment by functionaries."(6); each of which should be examined in reference to the process of reciprocation among personality, society, and culture, or, of more intricate interwoven process among them.

### [III]

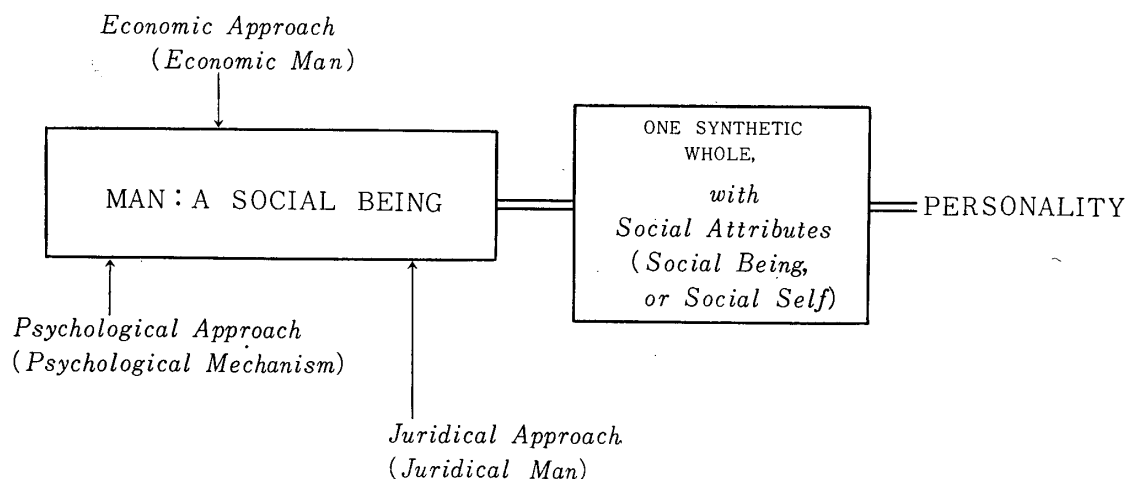
Co-operation of each adjacent field of sciences becomes, as noted immediately before, more significant than ever before; it seems to be strivings for gaining focal plane, common to each other in overlapped areas on their studies, asking mutually help, assistance, and suggestions of other ramified divisions of sciences that have common field, and that, putting two and two together with the achievement of each study, efforts should be made to experiment on the most urgent topical point, one unit or system extracted from the vast field relevant. In general, one system or unit picked up for the intensive research, under microscopical analysis, commanding co-operative concern with the focal point for each, is very commonly seen in recent scientific probing. In sociological terms, to set forth one system or unit, workable within a microscopical domain, picked up out of the limitless expanse of the domain of sociology serves, as a model case does, the purpose for intensively experimental elaboration.

In other words, this method is directed to employ a limited or focussed domain, *i. e.*, subpart, moderate to handle under the so called 'spectrum analysis,' as a work-unit in which, though in the case of social study isolated to a certain degree from the general mechanism of society, social phenomena would be represented

'situationally' in this defined subsystem. In the model thus represented in a 'handy' size, it also requires to give our minds to the ways that for the effective survey to validate the result, there are two angles; one is 'internal' viewpoint, the other 'external.' Interpretation may be made in this way that in the former method, one focuses one's intensive attention on the subpart only; in the latter one lays emphasis on the wider system, that is, on the correlative functions of the subsystem with other 'whole.' This is certainly true in the sociological study where the manifest content must be studied in its 'social context' and interpreted in the light of 'reciprocal influences.'

#### [IV]

As we saw in briefly commenting on the correlative, or mutual, formation seen among individuals (personalities), society (social groups), and culture (ways of life), a sort of suggestion might be denoted here, which, as a main constituent factors of personality as one organic 'whole,' as in the case that regards almost all the social sciences as one interrelated social intention as seen in space-exploration efforts, all of them, without exception, put their major focuses on the point, 'human society,' which consists of each of men. Their means for approaches to men's society show respective angle of each of them, in which we can see where their inclinations of each perspective in their studies exist, and be directed through their specialized angles.



In short, economical approach should be simply described so that it is directed to the object on the sphere of man who is engaged in any kind of economic activities in society; juridical approach to man, in the direction to the object on his juridical sphere. In sociological angle, an individual, as a social being, should be dealt with in such an idea as 'an inclusive whole with all the social attributes' that connote most kinds of social activities, *i. e.*, economic, juridical, political, and so forth, which is, indeed, reasonable being called 'social being.' In other words, society or social group consists, as its ingredients, of each of social self — personality in which all the above mentioned sorts of social attributes are embraced,

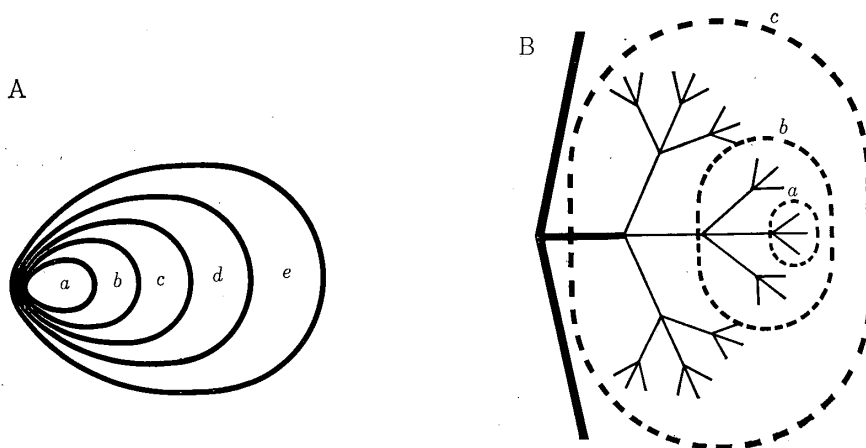
and on which norms of social group, cultural patterns and regulations of it, have their effects.

Mankind, social animal, for instance, once gave birth to their own culture, which, in turn, institutionalized both individuals and groups (societies) —human beings in groups, in other words, gave them a set of social MATRIX to follow, to control themselves. Thus, institutionalization seen in all kinds of social life and group life offered living arrangements, and laid down common norm, standards of behaviors, of people to live up to. Sociological research on institutionalization-process, also, owes, for almost all of it, to the scrutiny of the formative process of the culture under the probing which might have both empirical relevance and methodological significance as a science, and through which science creates its conceptual apparatus.

## [ V ]

In saying this, I feel obliged to indicate some methodological measures applicable to the promotion of scientific research of society, or social group, and the process in its cultural institutionalization or its 'institutionalization' process of ways of life, for another instance, of language — especially, in the analytical probing through experimental 'work-unit' in a small group. There are general methods for obtaining experimental result — some kinds of empirical formulae in ways of actual observation and other positive means.

Picking up one 'definite' unit or system and isolating it from the rest, to which this system belongs, or, on which this subsystem is dependent; this subsystem operates, and functions independently, separated from the (main) part of the rest, but, as a part of the whole structural mechanism, it keeps and shares organic mutual causation with the rest, with the parts working in coordination; then, the isolated system, definitely restricted — 'sterilized' and if necessary 'made it vacuous' in the same way as seen in the cases in the experiments of natural science — for keeping out of and spatially, physically separating, shutting up from the rest of system (the whole organic mechanism), should come to be under vigilant probing eyes. Putting the above interpretation into pictures, let me now add some of words for a little more clarification about this context.



Parts 'a' in the two pictures are subdivided units or systems (called subparts

or substructures) that are subordinate to, dependent on the whole (called upperparts or upperstructures), and that are isolated, in the above pictures, from the rest of the parts — parts 'b' 'c' 'd' and 'e' in A, and 'b' and 'c' in B. In the A, parts 'b' 'c' 'd' and 'e,' and in the B, parts 'b' and 'e,' all of them may function to both of 'a,' as regarded as upperstructures—the whole one as an unit, or one synthetic mechanism, and within them the part 'a' of each (in the pictures, A and B) has respective role with its concurrent playing. These subsystems, parts 'a' in A and B, are to assume preferable or suitable sizes, and to provide experimental researches with those workable to serve as work-units, generally in more separated and stabilized settings than the general patterns of social groups in ordinary scale. In this, these work-units are, for sociological experimets, quite useful, especially in resorting to the experiment in the microscopical analysis.

## [VI]

Exploring by this method is common, in so far as the study of natural science is concerned. As in the laboratory of biochemical research which, in the last ten years, has made rapid developments and marked splendid achievements, probing into the microscopical, chemical entities of organic substances, it has been quite useful to attempt to analyze, according to an authority on the field, life or vital phenomena on the level of units of physical molecules. In the question of the effect of this sort of vital phenomena of organism, the more synthetic or general researches are highly exerted, the more the probing, on the level of microscopical unit, *i. e.*, molecule as a work unit, tends to become indispensable. The greater majority of cases in social phenomena seem, in the same way as seen in biochemical researches or others in natural science, most likely to function in social groups of small sizes, *i. e.*, families consisting of each individual, as vital parts (or subparts) of social or sociological phenomena.

Yet many of the findings arising from the widespread researches in social science might be highly suggestive, if there were absolute objectivity in the experimental processes. The greatest part of the experimental researches, of social or sociological field, in the behavioral field or in the institutionalization of social groups became to rely largely on this kind of scheme of methods more amenable to discreet or moderate discriminative procedures in the study on the function of social situation, conducting to keep the way in the studies in society out of its wilderness of vagueness or equivocality, and, too, contributing to managing to effect an balance between the fundamental theory or concept and the empirically experimental research. Without this method, in the group-study, in this case, directed to scrutinize the 'formation-process of culture' and the 'institutionalization' in social groups, we may be possibly led to fail to arrive at the clear-cut, reasonable and effective results proven by arrangement of new findings.

## [VII]

In the first place, in short, any such kind of experimental observation, in general, presupposes, as indicated before, that some unit of observation have to be selected,

and reliably and validly defined.

In the second place, in this experimental procedure, picked up out of the whole organic system — that is, the whole society for example — one definite, subdivided unit, designed for the precise 'micro-dynamic research,' may tend to restrict the analyst to the investigation of truly small groupings. We are aware that small groupings of children are more preferable to ones of adults whose social behaviors seem hardly unconscious, and, rather, 'artificial' in contrast, pretending seemingly to be unaware of the probing eyes focused on them, and that, as preferential behavior may be made on the basis of explicit and implicit behavior, in as much as explicit behavior is operationally defined by actual contacts, and actual forms of sociation, it can be observed more directly, or vividly in children's small groups than in adult's ones. Though, roughly speaking, the two phases of the processes, explicit and implicit, are but two dimensions of the same configuration, the differentiation underlies the major methodological tracks in 'micro-sociology.' But, of course, we might find it quite difficult in practice to observe mutual interactions among children, which seems to form rather clear behavioral-cultural-patterns, *i. e.*, language pattern or 'cant,' common norm, mores, and so on, through the process of regimenting institutionalization in their human relations. But, the researcher would be limited to the laboratory-setting, or quasi-laboratory-setting, in which only three or four, and generally very few, subjects — namely, in the case of research for infant or child-behavior — can be experimentally studied.

In the third place, thus, we have seen, briefly, the manner and method in which the interaction-analysis becomes formalized as content-analysis of behavior, wherein standardization of the content units increased the utility of the instrument. As in the scholars of a certain school of theory, namely, Leopold von Wiese, 'associative' and 'dissociative' behavior might be selected to establish general directionality. This method developed further into the one of sociometric measurement of 'group-phenomena.' What we must bear in mind, however, is that if such a kind of measure as sociometry can be administered to any number of children, the unit for the research of implicit preferential behavior need not always require a small group. Any kind of institutional setting, existing in a cultural pattern, might be investigated in this manner, with the question in mind of what consequences these institutions might have, also, for the adult-personality.

### [VIII]

Groups in limited size — small groups — have, as stated above, become to contribute much to the experimental researches on social groups, and cultural formation in those groups as well. Apart from the said sociometric measure, such experimental works as ones which deal, mainly, with small groups for the description of group-behavior, are expected to arrange the accurate and factual data, that is, established (social) group-tradition, cultural patterns (ways of life), and, especially, the formative process of language (in 'cant' phrases and other fashions in secret language with vulgarity).

Isolating a group of children away from the rest of factual social system, out

of this 'pocketed' state of situation, this set of children feels easy to make themselves to follow their own way, as F. Merei's experiment to find determined social factors in the 'work-situation' and group-performance for which he applied a particular measure to children's small groups inside research-laboratories,<sup>(7)</sup> this kind of small group of children appears to be the most obvious 'referent' of the phenomena named institutionalization, and 'culture-tradition-formation' (matrix of the ways of life).

In this measure in laboratory, we are, also, able to find their complex behavior-patterns, responding to their environmental conditions in both social and natural, which are nothing but their cultural patterns or traditions already fixed, and social order or common norm, which, in turn, control and keep these children in the group in order.

Through this experimental process, in small groups, it becomes possible, in the light of these facts, that though not possible within the limited space allotted here to classify them all, subjects for study can be summarized as follows : culturally defined patterns of social structure, patterns of organization, culturally defined norms, cultural definition of physical objects, and all of those common to all kinds of institutions. If we look precisely at these patterns for analysis, we may become aware that all of these patterns of behavior, being once institutionalized, they are persistent, and transmitted from one set of members to others, from one generation to another, and the membership may change but the established cultural framework persists.

## [IX]

Not a few empirical findings have been caused by the above-mentioned method of experimental research — a number of studies on small groups. A main emphasis on such kinds of studies has been placed on, and resulted in the microscopic discoveries, scrutinizing and keeping more firmly to the rigid methodological requirements of scientific research, for answering to any, or, all of sorts of the questions to solidify the theory of sociology and to bring a new rapprochement between theory and research, as a field of social sciences, regarding, above all, in such aspects as social interaction, *i. e.*, communication-patterns, power-structure, group-productivity, group-cohesion, and others (especially, note the case of the research disigned by Moreno who effectively unilized approach to small group resarch — small group as a work unit — through the spectrum analysis in the measurement of the 'dichotomy' method, as it were, in any form, between attraction and repulsion among small group members).

Finally, allow me to make some excuse here. I have no intention of discussing the schools of theories, of different trends concerning these kinds of researches, advocated by eminent scholars, in need of any futher detailed comments, though they all seem, in various ways, to have contributed to the solution of the general problems of sociology or to the most recent development in sociological works. The precise notes on them need not take up much space here, for I believe that no brief presentation of them is possible in this paper that is confined to memo-



randa put down lately. Imperfectness of my attempt, naturally, demands my serious reconsideration made futher from all angles.

### NOTES

- (1) Leonard Broom and Philip Selznick, "Sociology," Row, Peterson and Company, 1958, 3.
- (2) Pitirim A. Sorokin, "Society, Culture, and Personality: Their Structure and Dynamics," New York & London, Harper & Brothers, 1947.
- (3) Robert C. Weaver, "The Urban Complex: Human Values in Urban Life," New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960.
- (4) Caroline B. Rose, "Sociology: The Study of Man in Society," Columbus, Ohio, Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1965.
- (5) R. M. MacIver and C. H. Page, "Society: An Introductory Analysis," New York, Rinehart, 1949, Chs. 21—23.
- (6) Lowell J. Carr, "Analytical Sociology," New York, Harper, 1955, 357.
- (7) F. Merei, "Group Leadership and Institutionalization," Human Relations, 23—29.