American
SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW

Volume 7 JUNE, 1942 Number 3

A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF STRATIFICATION*

KINGSLEY DAVIS
Pennsylvania State College

IN SPEAKING of stratification, we must remember that social structure, though an emergent reality, is not concrete, i.e., is not a separate entity but simply a factor in concrete behavior. Any set of concepts employed to represent and analyze social structure must therefore be highly abstract and must observe the canons of clarity and logical consistency.

Position, Station, and Stratum. The broadest and most central concept here utilized is *Position*, by which is meant *a place in a given social structure.*[1] To characterize a position, we say that it is subjective in the sense of existing in the minds as well as in the behavior of the societal members; yet it is objective in the sense of being common to many minds and therefore independent of any one mentality; it is also reciprocal in the sense of implying rights and obligations which the incumbent of the position has with respect to the incumbents of other positions; and it is functional and purposive in the sense of serving both a function (or functions) and a purpose (or purposes) with regard to the rest of the structure.[2]

Two types of position, *Status* and *Office*, are distinguished by the fact that status is *a position in the general institutional system*, recognized and supported by the entire society, crescive rather than deliberately created, rooted in the folkways and mores, while office is *a position in a deliberately created organization*, governed by specific and limited rules in a limited group, more generally achieved than ascribed.[3] An example of a status in our so-

* Presented to the Ohio Valley Sociological Society, Columbus, Ohio, April 26, 1940. No claim is made that all concepts here utilized are original. Indeed, complete originality in a paper of this sort would probably be worthless. The aim, rather, is a slightly new synthesis of concepts already extant in the sociological literature.

[1] Almost synonymous with Linton's term, "status," Chapter VIII, *Study of Man*, New York, 1936.

[2] The conscious or unconscious formulation of the purpose, rights, and obligations of a position does not imply an awareness of the actual function, nor does it imply on the part of the general public an accurate knowledge of the specific techniques required by the duties of a given position. Cf. Linton, *op. cit.*, Chap. XVI, "Participation in Culture."

[3] A full distinction between these two was worked out by Talcott Parsons, Robert K. Merton, and the writer in unpublished discussions.

ciety would be "professor"; an example of office, "assistant professor of government at the University of Arizona." It can be seen that holding an office may give one a status, and status may help one acquire an office. In the first case, the reason can be found in the importance, scope, and function of the organization of which the office is a part, as well as in the importance of the particular office within this organization. Occupational position is often a matter of status and office both, the first when viewed from the standpoint of the general public, the second when viewed from the standpoint of the particular business or agency.[4]

Since any individual fills not one but many positions, and since in any society certain positions tend to adhere to one another in the same person, we may speak of *Station*, meaning *a cluster of positions which may be combined in one individual and recognized as so combined in a great many cases.* Whereas a status or office defines one's position with reference to a limited sector of social interaction, a station defines one's generalized position (the sum total of one's major positions) in the structure. In common speech, the term "status" is often used in this sense. Since a station is a recurrent combination of positions, it implies a certain degree of fixity. It means that many individuals have the same combination of statuses inhering in their person as a locus, e.g., "aristocrat." The name for a station is often derived from *one* of the major positions constituting it. For instance, we sometimes speak of the "landowning class," by which we mean more than simply landownership. We mean a whole group of rights and privileges which happen to be associated with landowning but are not necessarily a part of it. A man may own no land and still be a member of the landowning class, because he has all other positions which landowners in the given society generally have; and contrariwise, a man may own land without being a member of the landowning class. Furthermore, the particular position which gives a name to the whole station may not itself be uniform; it may be really a name for a class of positions which are roughly similar and which tend to have the same associated positions. Thus doctor, lawyer, and professor are each different occupational statuses, but are on about the same level of evaluation and accompanied by similar allied positions. A common name is therefore given them which designates a station, namely "professional."

We may designate as a *Stratum, a mass of persons in a given society enjoying roughly the same station.* The term carries an implication of rank in a hierarchy of strata, and presumably cuts across the entire structure of the society. It implies like interests and common problems, but not necessarily a pronounced solidarity. Several types of strata, e.g., caste and class, may be distinguished in terms of the kinds of positions constituting the station, but we shall defer a classification of the types until a later point.

[4] "Status" is not used here in the sense of general standing in the community, but rather in the sense of a specific position. A person's general standing is a product of all his positions; this is taken care of by other concepts below.

Role and Personality. Following Linton, we define *Role* as *the manner in which an individual actually carries out the requirements of his position.*[5] It is the dynamic aspect of position, and as such is always influenced by factors other than the stipulations of the position itself; hence it contains, from the point of view of structure, a certain element of novelty and unpredictability.[6] This line of thought suggests a way of formulating the relation of personality structure to social structure in terms of three phases of personality integration, here called positional personality, role personality, and genetic personality.

By *Positional* (or *Structural*) *Personality* is meant *the person in so far as he is a product of the sum-total of positions which he occupies.*[7] Every concrete individual is obviously constituted by something more than his statuses. Sociologists have been accused of identifying the structural personality with the concrete individual,[8] but this seems a false accusation, for the sociological approach to personality consists precisely in viewing the individual *as if* he were determined solely by his location in the social structure. From a sheer knowledge of the statuses, without ever having seen the flesh-and-blood incumbent, one could construct the positional personality. This is not an oversimplification but simply a legitimate mode of abstraction; in fact, the network of positions capable of being attached to one person is extremely complex, and every individual's behavior *is* determined to a great extent by his particular combination.

By *Role Personality* is meant *the individual as the sum total of roles which he plays.* Since the role is the concrete behavior in connection with a position, the role personality is the product of three factors. The first one is the poistions which the individual occupies. The term "role" is meaningless without the implication that the individual is *trying*, or is expected to try, to carry out the minimal requirements of his status. In one sense, the role is the particular way in which a given individual *falls short* of performing the stipulated patterns. If the individual falls completely short, he does not occupy the position at all. The very fact that he does not fall completely short is due to the normative elements inherent in the status. The fact that he always falls short to some extent, or at least manifests variations about the expected norm, is due to factors other than the position or status itself. The second factor is the cumulative experience of the individual. The person's life is a historical process in which past adaptations to novel situations build up habit systems which influence behavior at any current moment. The third factor is (3) the genetic make-up of the individual.

[5] Linton, *op. cit.*, Chap. VIII.

[6] Cf. G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*, 173–78 Chicago, 1934. What Mead calls the "me" is the internally perceived position, while the "I" is the actual behavior in the position. "The response to that situation as it appears in his immediate experience is uncertain, and it is that which constitutes the 'I' " (page 175).

[7] Linton, *op. cit.*, 477, employs the term "status personality" to mean the same thing.

[8] Gordon W. Allport, *Personality*, 38, New York, 1937.

By *Genetic Personality* is meant *the person as the sum-total of his physically inherited traits.*[9] This, like the structural personality, is always an abstraction, and to the same degree.

The role personality comes nearest to representing the concrete individual. It is, by definition, a synthesis (manifested in actual behavior) of factors on the genetic and institutional levels of abstraction. It is what we often mean when we use the word "personality" in a concrete sense. Since it is in part dependent on social structure, the study of society offers a partial key to personality, and vice versa. The integration of the one, up to a point, is a corollary of the integration of the other. Statuses are internal as well as external and hence form an important element in the psychic unity we call the self. One significant place to look for the connection between social structure and personal structure is the station (as in the Marxian theory of personality). If the positions constituting the station are incompatible, the unity of the person occupying the station will be weakened. Nobody occupies all positions in a culture, but everyone occupies many, and these must have some compatibility. In these terms, we may discern a sociological approach to mental order and disorder.

Prestige, Esteem, and Rank. The essence of stratification is the unequal evaluation of different positions. Hence we use a special term, *Prestige*, to denote *the invidious value attached to any given status or office, or combination of them.* Such evaluation is relative, tending to arrange itself in a scale. Also, as defined, it has purely to do with social structure, i.e., it attaches to the position, station, or stratum, in abstraction from the person.[10]

An individual's prestige, because it arises only from the statuses and offices he occupies, is only a part of his total worth in the eyes of others, for he is judged also by the way in which he fulfills the requirements of his positions, i.e., by his roles. *The invidious value attached to any given role or combination of roles* we call *Esteem.* A person may hold a position of high prestige, and yet, by virture of his behavior in that position, enjoy little esteem. Esteem is thus always related to the expectations of a position, yet it is attached not to the position itself but to the success or failure in carrying out the duties and obligations.

We use the term *Rank* in a structural sense, as meaning *a rung in a prestige scale.* To designate *a point in an* ESTEEM *scale*, we use the term *Rating.*

Conditions, Means, and Ends. Unless the concepts given thus far are to appear stiff and wooden, it is necessary to supplement them with others describing the structure of individual motivation. This will provide a more

[9] A synonym, according to some sociological usage, would be the "individual," as distinguished from the "person."

[10] *Prestige* has an interesting derivation. According to Webster: "F., from L., *praestigium* delusion, illusion; *praestigiae* deceptions, jugglers' tricks, prob. for *praestrigiae;* cf. *praestringere*, to bind up, to blind."

intimate and dynamic comprehension of the relation between social organization and conduct, and will help solve the troublesome problems of solidarity and power.

An *Act* can be analyzed in terms of four elements:[11] (1) an *End, a future state of affairs toward which the process of action is aimed;* (2) a set of *Conditions, aspects of the situation over which the actor has no control;* (3) a set of *Means, aspects of the situation over which the actor does have control and which he can utilize to bring about the end;* and (4) some *Mode of Relationship between Means and End.*

To these we may add *Sentiment* or *Value*, meaning *the attitude which defines a thing as desirable or undesirable and therefore explains the choice between different ends.*[12]

Such concepts as end and value, however, must be carefully distinguished from function. *Function* may be defined as *a contribution to the existence of a given unity*, and may be negative or positive. The given unity may be an individual, a group, or a society. When end and function correspond, we have a *Purposed Function*, otherwise a *Non-purposed* or a *Latent Function.*[13]

Act and position, as defined here, both designate abstractions. The relation between the two is difficult but necessary to state. Since a status requires an incumbent or actor, the requirements of the status can be carried out only insofar as they become somebody's ends. The ways in which they become ends for the actor are many and subtle. The requirements may be taken simply as a matter of ultimate obligation, or perhaps rationalized in terms of a mythical reality; taken as necessary means to ends implicit in the actor's other statuses; or taken as necessary means for attaining certain advantages which the status provides, since each position connotes rights as well as duties. The master stroke of institutional motivation, however, is achieved by the distribution of esteem. Esteem, being a generalized reward for the faithful or skilful performance of positional mandates, is a powerful stimulant to effort. The actor, of course, is limited by certain conditions, varying all the way from hereditary and environmental obstacles to social limitations (such as laws). In general, he is not expected to overcome these obstacles and in the case of normative limitations which are often defined as part of the status, he is tabooed from exercising too much ingenuity. Though limited, the means at his disposal do permit some choice. It is here, in exercising this choice, that factors outside the position itself influence his achievement and hence his esteem. As part of his choice may be the kind of

[11] The conception of action and its elements is derived, with slight modifications, from Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*, esp. 44–45, New York, 1937.

[12] Sentiment is a slightly broader term, for it implies the general background of feeling out of which more specific values emerge. Value, in turn, is more general than end. The series, sentiment—value—end, is thus characterized by increasing specificity.

[13] Robert K. Merton, in unpublished work, uses the term "manifest function" for the purposed type, and "latent function" for the other.

relationship which will prevail between the ends and means of the status. The kind of end tends to condition the kind of means utilized, but the possibilities vary from rational-intrinsic, to highly nonrational-symbolic connections. In sum, the elements of action afford a way of analyzing the dynamic aspect of social structure, while social structure affords a way of visualizing the framework within which alone action can take place. Three problems of immediate concern to us (solidarity in a stratified structure, the nature of power, and the hierarchic evaluation of positions) can be understood, the writer believes, only with the help of the action schema and functional analysis. Let us take these problems in order.

Solidarity in a Stratified Order. Because values and ends are purely mental, it is anthropomorphic to think of "society" as having them. Yet, as we have seen, social structure involves an integration of acts in terms of some scheme and this integration is instrumented through ends and means. The members of an aggregate organized in a given social structure must and do possess common ends and values, e.g., ends which envisage a certain desirable future state of the aggregate. These define in the broadest sense the normative elements of action and hence the rights and obligations of the key statuses. They do not spring from the genetic personality but only from the structural personality given to the individual by communication. They are individual in the sense that only individual minds can harbor them but social in the sense that they arise only out of social interaction.

There are ends, however, which, while they may be similar, are not shared in common. These give rise to *competition* if they are subservient to common ends and values; to *conflict* if they are not so subservient. Competition, but not conflict, thus contributes to a more inclusive *coöperation*, which operates as a set of brakes and limits upon the pursuit of mutually exclusive ends with scarce means. Taking an entire system into account, the phrase "competitive coöperation" is not a misnomer.

Solidarity therefore implies a system of statuses and offices in which the institutionally defined ends and values are either common and ultimate or else are instrumental to common and ultimate ones, and in which individuals are so socialized that the institutional ends, i.e., the ends of the structural personality, become their ends, i.e., the ends of the role personality.

The common values define the major prestige system of the society. Consequently, in a solidaristic stratified order, the relative ranking of the strata is agreed upon, thus insuring coöperation, reciprocity, and peace between the members of different strata. The particular values and ends of certain strata, as distinct from others, must therefore be intermediate rather than ultimate. They serve to create solidarity between the members of a stratum and to that extent set this stratum off against the others; but, since they are intermediate, they do not upset the dominant evaluation of the whole society. In fact, the ultimate common values recognize and call for divergent

values between strata, associated, of course, with differences of function, so long as these remain instrumental rather than ultimate. Social systems differ in the extent of subordination of intermediate divergences to ultimate common values but it seems certain that there is always, except in a society becoming *anomique*, some such subordination. This is true in spite of the fact that the prestige scale is invidious. If we ask how a person can adjust himself to the invidious common judgment concerning his rank, one answer is that there is always somebody lower than he. In addition, there are two mutually exclusive forms of adjustment significant for stratum solidarity. (1) On the one hand, each person is encouraged to improve his station. The judgment as to his worth is therefore not crushing, because eventually he may be worth more. Stratum solidarity is thus killed by competition between stratum members. If, however, there is a condition in which the goal of self-improvement, though avowedly possible, is not actually possible for members of a stratum because the means are not available, then either stratum solidarity or stratum *anomie* may arise.[14] This bespeaks, if it occurs, a fundamental disjointedness in the structure, and any solidarity it creates may be called *Militant* or *Revolutionary Stratum Solidarity*. (2) On the other hand, individuals may be so fixed in their station that they have no chance and hence no goal for self-improvement, at least in this world. Their attention is centered on fulfilling the requirements of their station as best they can, and their satisfaction is derived from the favorable estimation of conformity. In short, esteem is made to compensate for lack of prestige.[15] In this situation, common living together may produce *Peaceful Stratum Solidarity*.

Presumably, in a solidaristic society, the differences between strata give rise to interstratum competition but not to conflict. The system of common values and ends, implicit in the key statuses and in the general mores governing devotion to duty, take precedence over the differentiated values and ends and thus perform the function of holding the structure together.

Functional Basis of Power and Rank. Power we define as *the determination*

[14] Cf. R. K. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie," *Amer. Sociol. Rev.*, Oct. 1938, 672–682.

[15] Such esteem evaluations, independent of the prestige hierarchy, are often generalized to the point where the situation in which action occurs is unspecified, as, for example, when someone is called a "courageous man" in a general sense. A common soldier, if decorated for bravery, may retain his low rank and low prestige but acquire a high esteem rating. The adjective "brave" may refer to an habitual way of meeting situations, implying simply that the person, when confronted with circumstances in which fear is a deterrent to fulfilling the obligations of a status, usually fulfills the obligations anyway. A higher degree of generalization is attained when we refer to a certain person as a "good fellow," or when we refer to no particular person at all but merely to an abstract quality, such as "bravery" or "goodness." Such evaluations induce individuals to perform well the activities expected in their status, whatever the latter may be. Both prestige and esteem evaluations are thought of in terms of rough scales and dichotomies, e.g., bravery vs. cowardice, neatness vs. slovenliness. Since esteem evaluations apply to concrete behavior, i.e., to the role personality, they are more direct and personal than prestige evaluations.

of others' behavior in accordance with one's own ends. Any social structure can be viewed as a power system, and in speaking of stratification we often have in mind the general outline of this power system. Power, however, attaches not simply to the structure and positional personality, but also to the non-structured interaction and hence to role personalities. For example, power attaches to the patriarch as against the wife, but the wife's superior intelligence and energy may negate it. Structural power is necessarily most noticeable when behavior is chiefly determined by position, e.g., in formal legal relations, as contrasted to primary group relations. Social distance bolsters structural power at the expense of personal power.[16]

The *Source of Power* we define as *any factor which explains the possession of power in a given instance.* Obviously, the main factor in positional power is the position itself, an individual enjoying power because he occupies a certain status or office which gives that power; but this is a formal explanation. Pushing the inquiry back another step, we ask two questions: (1) How does a particular individual happen to occupy a given position and thus enjoy the positional power which it carries? (2) Why does the position carry the power that it does?

(1) There are two general ways of acquiring positions. The first of these, *Ascription*, denotes *the occupancy of status because of certain external and uncontrollable characteristics, such as sex, age, and kinship.*[17] The second, *Achievement*, denotes *the occupancy of status by virtue of the individual's accomplishments.* The most important positions in a society tend to be filled by ascription. Ascribed statuses set limits to the range of achieved positions for which an individual may compete and help or hinder him by governing the fluid means necessary for the attainment of position. Both types of acquisition of status are indispensable in social organization. Ascribed status not only provides a certain constancy in the social structure but also gives a point of departure for the socialization of the child. Where reproduction is effected through a familial type of institution, the inheritance of the parent's station (either partially or wholly) is virtually inevitable.

(2) Whether ascribed or achieved, a status presumably gives power to the incumbent proportional to the following factors: (1) the importance of

[16] Structural or positional power, as here used, is similar to Goldhamer and Shils' "legitimate power," but not synonymous with it; cf. Herbert Goldhamer and Edward A. Shils, "Types of Power and Status," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, Sept. 1939, 171–182. In the first place, structural power may be a source of illegitimate power, i.e., a position may be employed to accomplish ends which the position itself is not supposed to accomplish, as in nepotism, graft, etc. In the second place, there are always illicit structures, either in the sense of the structure of an outlawed group or in the sense of a disapproved but nevertheless persistent pattern of attaining strongly cherished ends. Cf. R. K. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie," *loc. cit.*

[17] The distinction between ascribed and achieved status is from Linton, *op. cit.*, 115. For a fuller treatment of ascribed status, see Kingsley Davis, "The Child and the Social Structure," *J. Educ. Sociol.*, Dec. 1940, 217–229; also Talcott Parsons, "An Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, May 1940, 841–862.

its functions, individual, group, and societal; (2) the scarcity of the means for performing these functions; and (3) the number of persons whose behavior must be controlled by the incumbent, and the degree of such control.

The functional factor, in order to be utilized, requires a classification of needs. There is a sense, for example, in which the need of the human organism for medical attention is greater than the need for tonsorial attention and the doctor receives a greater degree of power (reflected in a higher degree of prestige) than the barber. There is a sense in which society has a greater need for the priest than for the salesman; this is reflected in the power and prestige of the priest. It can be shown that since the parts of a functional system are interdependent, the differential in their importance for the entire system is impossible to estimate and probably much less than commonly believed. This, plus the presence of other factors, makes it impossible to attribute the power of a position simply to its functional importance. We give less power to the scavenger than to the doctor, yet the one is probably as essential to public health as the other. We give less power to women than to men, yet both are indispensable in the operation of society.

Along with the functional criterion, we must also take scarcity of means into account. This scarcity has several forms, all relating to personnel. The available people who can fill a position may be scarce because the obligations of the position require a considerable amount of technical knowledge. The acquisition of such knowledge requires usually a long period of preparation financed in part or in whole by the society. If the position were not important, capital would not be invested in it, and if the power attached to the position (and hence the prestige) were not great, the individual would not be induced to undergo the long preparation. Moreover, the available people may be scarce because an unusual capacity is required. Unusual talent, by definition, is scarce, and unless the position were important, the society presumably would not exert much effort to sift the population for individuals possessing it. Frequently the fact that a position carries little power and prestige is correctly explained by the statement that "anybody can do that." To a certain extent, too, the necessity of effort gives rise to scarcity of personnel, but this is a tricky phenomenon. The positions requiring the hardest work are often the least powerful; the association of hard work with a powerful position is mainly in the achievement of the position, not in the performance of its duties, although hard mental work, especially heavy responsibility, are often factors.

Responsibility leads us to the next general factor, namely, the breath and degree of control. Before going to the next factor, however, it should be recognized that scarcity may be enhanced in adventitious ways. A position may require a long period of waiting before a person can fill it, apart from any intrinsic necessity for such a wait. Similarly, a great amount of technical knowledge or a high capacity may be required for achieving a position,

though not used in performing the duties of the position. Such adventitious limitations sometimes have symbolic significance (emphasizing the importance of the position) and sometimes a competitive significance (appearing when, for some reason, an important position is overcrowded with qualified persons).

Wide and complete control over others gives one power, virtually by definition, but there are various kinds of control. The engineer of a train has control over his passengers, but not strictly in the authoritarian sense. The latter implies a meeting of wills and the subordination of one will to another in one or more spheres. Authoritarian control is therefore power and there are some positions which, because of their functions, require the exercise of such control. An illustration is the office of policeman. His power is fairly great within a limited sphere but it is a delegated power stemming from a greater authority; hence his real power, and above all his prestige, is not great. Interestingly, positions of high control over others necessarily involve a scarcity value as well. If a great many people are controlled, it follows that very few can occupy the position.

Our assumption has been that prestige and power go hand in hand. This is not true in all cases but it would require considerable analysis to explain why. In general, the three factors discussed are sufficient to supply an approximate explanation of the allocation of prestige.

The *Symbol of Power* or *Prestige* must be distinguished from the source. Such a symbol is *any manifestation signifying to a beholder that such and such a person has a given kind and degree of power or prestige.* The symbol and the source may or may not correspond. When the source is readily observable, it is itself the best symbol. When source and symbol are not identical, there is an opportunity for deception, for imitation in which the form of the symbol is copied but not the substance, and hence for fad and fashion and the vertical mobility of forms.

A *Power Situation* is *a relationship or set of relationships in which power is exercised.* For analytical convenience, it may be reduced to two actors, the Superordinate, *A*, and the Subordinate, *B*. In delineating types of power situations, some key elements are as follows: the relation between the ends of the two parties (are they mutually exclusive, indifferent, or harmonious?) the amount of knowledge or ignorance, realized or unrealized, which each party harbors concerning the other's skill and intentions; the amount of knowledge which each has in regard to the external conditions; the degree of freedom possessed by each in choosing ends and means; and the relation of each party's line of action, and of the total situation itself, to the rest of the social structure. That these are crucial elements can be seen from the following tentative discussion.[18]

[18] The basic ideas were worked out by a discussion group at Harvard University in 1937, under the leadership of Talcott Parsons. The term "power situation" was not employed, how-

First let us look at two modes of influencing people, in abstraction from social structure. Then let us see how society regulates and controls the use of these modes.

Basically all modes of influencing people can be reduced to two pure and concretely nonexistent types: exchange and coercion. In the first type, *B*'s freedom of action is not limited in any way by *A*. The latter can influence him only by offering something that *B*, with full knowledge of the facts, would want anyway. *B* in return offers something that *A* wants. This is essentially an equalitarian, indeed a golden rule relation, for each influences the other only to the extent that the other wants to be influenced. Yet it changes into an unequal relation as soon as *A* has either such a monopoly of goods that *B* in order to survive must offer too much for a minimum return, or such a monopoly of knowledge that *B* must accept his word. For the characteristic of coercion is that *A*, in pursuit of his own ends, influences *B* to do something which *B*, if free to choose and in full possession of the facts, would not do. *A* accomplishes this by the threat of physical force (the ultimate instrument of coercion) which limits *B* to a choice between an end which *A* wants him to pursue or an end which would be utterly obnoxious to *B*, as in the choice between obedience or death; or by a distortion of the facts so great that *B*, in pursuing his self-chosen ends, is actually led through mistaken information to do the things *A* wants him to do.

No actual relation is one of pure exchange, for always one side or the other has some advantage. Nor is any relation ever one of pure coercion, for the subordinate always has some knowledge and exercises some influence on the superior. It may be said that relationships toward either pole are unstable and tend to break down in the direction of the other. More important for our purposes is the manner in which the social structure utilizes and controls these two relational principles.

Generally, the tendency of group regulation is to eliminate force of fraud from some relations and to allow their exercise in others. In the simple exchange of goods, for example, the regulations limit the amount of misrepresentation which the seller may employ, guarantee good faith in contracts and guard against unfair treatment of minors and aments. Sellers of potentially dangerous commodities or of complex services are apt to be regulated by a licensing system which undertakes to guarantee to the buyer that such persons are qualified to offer the commodities or services. For instance, in the exchange of expert attention, which requires on the part of the practitioner a technical knowledge far beyond the layman's grasp, we have the easy possibility of fraud. The buyer cannot solve his problem or fulfill his need by himself; if he wishes to attain his end, he must follow the practitioner's recommendation. But how can he be sure the practitioner will re-

ever, and the fundamental dichotomy of the present scheme was not formulated. See "Parsons' Sociological Group: Reports of Meetings" (mimeographed, ed. by K. D.).

spect his desires? Why will not the latter fill his own pocket by pretending to help the client without actually doing so? The client can rely only upon the past repute of the practitioner, the force of the practitioner's professional ethics, and the licensing sytem certifying the practitioner as legitimate in the given field. In short, the dispenser of expert attention, e.g., lawyer, doctor, engineer, is given a status and held responsible for his acts as a means of insuring that the exchange relationship shall have some measure of equality. Behind such regulation is an *ultimate* consensus as to the rightness of equalitarian exchange.

In relations involving coercion, there is more clearly implied a potential conflict of immediate interest; but the *ultimate* interests of the two parties (superior and subordinate in this case) are again assumed to be identical. Even the subordinate, however much he may chafe against authority at a particular time, supposedly recognizes the general necessity of authority. The man who hates receiving a traffic ticket would hardly advocate the elimination of all policemen. As distinguished from what might be called "the authority of the expert," the authority of office does not rest primarily upon technical skill or knowledge but upon the office itself. The governor of a state, if he came by his office in a legitimate manner, need have no special qualification. It is not the particular man but the office which counts. Ideally, it is not an individual at all who coerces, but the office—and behind the office, the entire society. Insofar as the subordinate is a member of the society, the coercion to which he submits is presumably in his mind justified.

Any system of authority, however, carries in itself the potential seeds of self-destruction. Situations arise in which a prophetic or revolutionary leader gains a following at the expense of duly constituted authority. Such a leader commands only on grounds of moral duty and personal devotion. The only coercion he can exercise is the threat of exclusion from a fundamental good or of future retaliation when worldly power has been achieved. He appeals to the pristine values, the true sentiments of his listeners, with the implication that the existent authoritative structure is perverted and is no longer instrumental to the maintenance of these verities. The charismatic leader, therefore, represents the apparent exception which proves the sociological interpretation of legitimate coercion.

Class, Caste, and Estate. The system of statuses is at the same time a system of exchange and authoritarian power situations. An adequate classification of strata would involve isolating the most important positions in the station by which each stratum is defined, and then studying the interstratum power situations implicit in these positions. To define two strata, Marx seized upon the coercive relation between employer and employee (a situation resulting from the breakdown of equality of bargaining between the two), but there are many kinds of power situation, so that a classification on this basis must be quite detailed.

Another basis of classification is the mode of acquiring the positions which

constitute the station. Exceedingly broad, this basis should be used as a general framework, after which subclassification may take place in terms of power situations. It is possible, for example, to define *Class* as *a type of stratum in which the positions are acquired at birth by succession from the parents but may be altered later by achievement or lack of it.* The child acquires, by virtue of his parents' class position, certain advantages or disadvantages in the competition for specific statuses. *Caste* would then be defined as *a type of stratum in which the positions constituting the station are acquired by descent and remain fixed for life, regardless of achievement;* while *Estate* would be regarded as *a type of stratum in which the statuses are acquired by descent and tend to remain fixed but yet are susceptible of distinct changes under certain conditions.* Involved in this classification is the amount of interstratum mobility permitted. One may make the classification more accurate by speaking also of uniformity of station within the rank. Because of high mobility, a class will show less uniformity of station as between the various members than either a caste or an estate. Again, the *unit* of mobility is the individual where classes are concerned, the local caste group where castes are concerned, and either the individual or the vertical dynasty where estates are concerned. Finally, the *number of sources* of status appears to be large in class stratification, small in estate stratification, and very small in caste stratification. Such criteria should permit us to classify broad types of strata, then break these down into subclassifications in terms of specific power situations.

Summary. Treating *Stratification* from the abstract structural point of view, we have used *Position* as the key concept. On the societal side, we have defined a *Station* as a recurrent combination of positions inhering in the same person, masses of persons with roughly the same station as *Strata.* These strata have different *Prestige* ranks in accordance with the prestige of the positions making up the station. The prestige of a given position depends upon the function which the activities associated with it perform and upon the scarcity of the means for performing this function.

All along we have attempted to distinguish the structural factor from the nonstructural factors in concrete behavior. Thus, the *Positional Personality* has been distinguished from the *Genetic* and the *Role Personalities.* The *Positional Ends* have been distinguished from those which the individual may actually pursue. A *Solidaristic Society* has been held to be one in which the system of positions is integrated on the basis of common ultimate ends and mutually interlocking intermediate ones, and in which this ideal integration is also a real integration in the sense that the positional personality determines to an effective extent the concrete behavior of the individual. Viewed in this way, it is possible to understand the solidarity both of the separate strata and of the whole society in a stratified order. It is also possible, using the scheme here suggested, to arrive at a tentative classification of types and subtypes of strata, notably the *Class, Caste, and Estate* types.