

# 'Motivation' in Sociology and Social Anthropology

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Sociology and social anthropology, in Great Britain in particular, have tried to establish a special provenance by abstracting from what may be happening in the minds of individuals and concentrating on observing their social relations. They have tried not only to describe the latter, but to use the ways these are structured as explanatory of what goes on in human situations. I believe (1) that social anthropology in particular has now reached a stage where interesting advances will depend on anthropologists being prepared explicitly to examine their psychological assumptions: and also (2) that not only interesting advances, but even the survival of the subject may depend on their being able to establish a more colleague-like or even apprentice-like relationship with 'their people'. These two contentions may be related, since in so far as inadequate psychological assumptions are in fact being made under (1), they are hindering the kind of relationship needed for (2). In this paper I shall be concerned particularly with assumptions about motivation. I shall not be making a line of demarcation between social anthropology and sociology. In general, social anthropology has been the study of small, exotic, technologically undeveloped societies, while sociology has been the study of our own industrially developed societies. But the theoretical concepts used are similar; and so are the kinds of psychology on which they draw. I shall in general speak either of 'social anthropology' or of 'sociology', according to the examples and literature I am referring to. For my present purposes I don't think the distinction matters; indeed we are at a stage where it could well be abandoned.

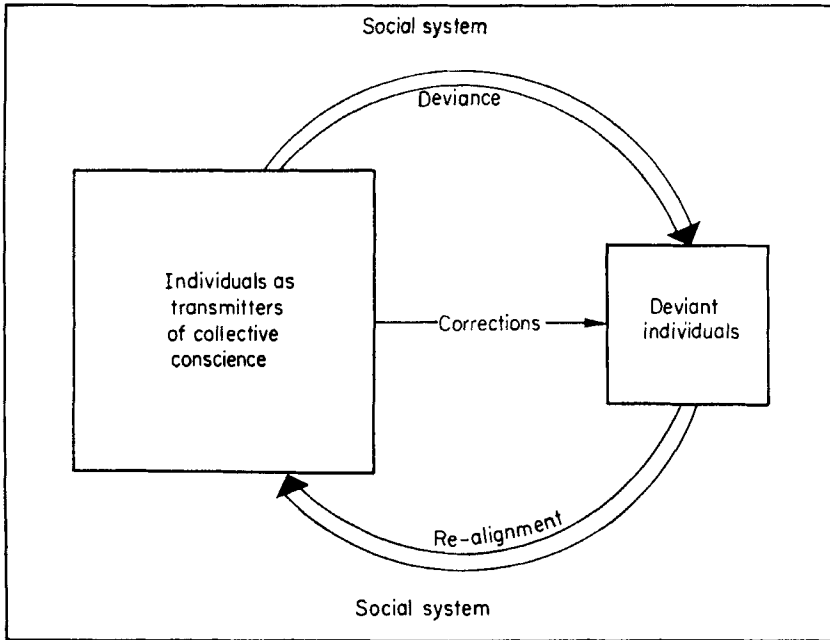
To say that progress in sociology is being hindered by inadequate psychological assumptions would have horrified its modern founding father, Durkheim, and his immediate successors. Durkheim did indeed found a distinctive subject by insisting in his *Les Règles de la méthode sociologique* (1895) that the subject matter of sociology was *social facts*, and that these should be understood and explained in relation to other social facts and not to individual psychology. He was aware of the psychological dimension, but looked for explanations in facts whose 'essential

characteristic consists in the power they possess of exerting a pressure from outside, a pressure on individual consciousness; they do not derive from individual consciousness and in consequence sociology is not a corollary of psychology.' And again: 'The determining cause of a social fact ought to be looked for among antecedent social facts, and not among the states of the individual consciousness.'

A strength of this way of looking at things was that it broke away from 'conspiratorial' explanations, the very common tendency when things go wrong on a big scale to pin the blame on the ill will or sinister machinations of some named group of individuals. It is much harder to accept the possibility that nobody may have intended these adversities; that they are the unintended consequences of complicated relationships within complicated institutional settings. Durkheim himself was less concerned with looking at the indirect unintended consequences of institutional forms of behaviour than at how those forms of behaviour were shaped by the customs and moral sanctions through which people were socialized, claiming that these could not plausibly be explained as having been thought up by particular individuals. Hence he drew a picture of social behaviour as due to the pressures of customs and moral norms (looking on these latter as themselves social facts); social conformity was seen as moral discipline, and indeed moral discipline as social conformity.

If, however, 'pressures', 'sanctions', and also 'customs' are quoted as social facts to explain why people behave in certain ways, it can easily be seen that these can only operate as causal factors through people's minds. A pressure or a sanction is a way of providing someone with considerations which will be likely to give him strong motivation to do one thing rather than another. And a custom, where it is not also a moral pressure, operates through the mental inertia whereby we like to go on doing things in the ways we have done them before. So these 'social facts' rest on assumptions about human motivation. Durkheim recognized that social constraints were internalized in the minds of members of the society, but since they were not, he thought, traceable to the thoughts and wills of particular individuals, but to what he called the *conscience collective*, they could be treated as external social facts. And he and his followers did indeed point to the distinctive interest of sociology, in showing that it was concerned with the kinds of behaviour which were encouraged or discouraged, and even made possible or impossible, by particular institutional settings.

Durkheim thus produced a view of society as made up of individuals seen as transmitters of forms of behaviour sustained by institutions which uphold moral discipline<sup>1</sup> (see Fig. 1).



⇒ = Processes of becoming  
→ = Actions or influences

Fig. 1. Durkheimian consensus model.

The followers of Durkheim, less interested even than he in acknowledging a background of individual motivation towards social behaviour, concentrated on the institutions, and produced a structural-functional presentation of how a society worked by the mutual reinforcement of behaviour in its different institutions, or their corrective action on each other where disintegration threatens (see Fig. 2).

This functional view of coherent institutions was then complicated by people who recognized the existence of conflict as well as consensus in societies. There was still, however, the attempt to bring this within the general framework of the functional view by trying to show how people who conflict in one social setting would need to co-operate in others, so that an overall equilibrium was preserved<sup>2</sup> (see Fig. 3).

This gives a view of social institutions checking and balancing each other. Political theorists (or most of them) would want to amend this by giving a central place to the institution of government, which can introduce

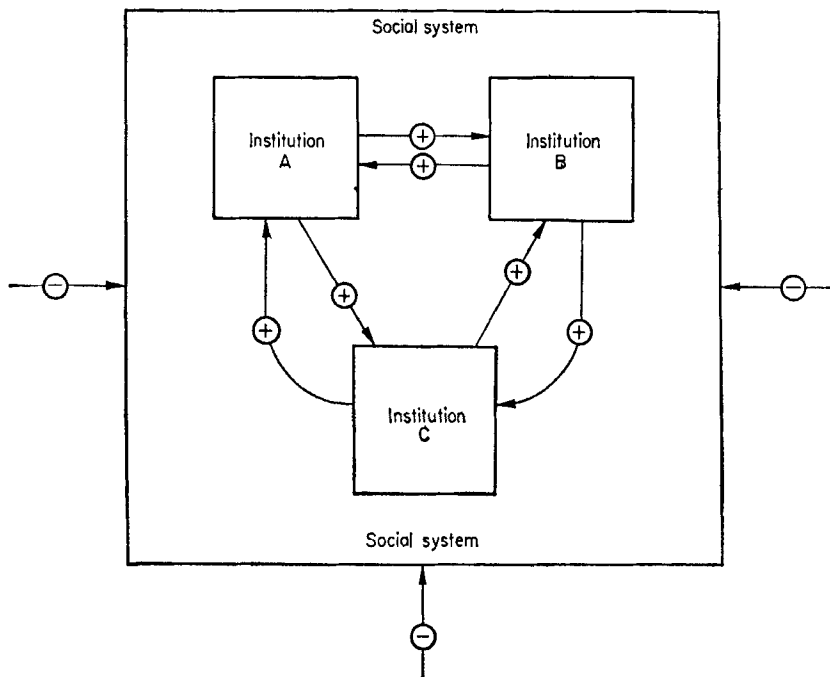


Fig. 2. Post-Durkheimian functional model.

a certain amount of purposive direction backed by force into the system. Of course government is not only a directing force, but is also itself subject to pressures from other institutions within the society (one need only think of the present power of the trade unions). This is shown on the next diagram (Fig. 4) by arrows going both ways, but none the less government occupies a particular position in the centre.

Institutions, however, work through individuals who are their members. They are not collective oversouls. So to speak of pressures and sanctions is to speak of ways in which people acquire motives for doing one thing rather than another. A notion of motivation is therefore being presupposed, and in the rest of this paper I shall try to examine it. This will involve three main questions, (i) the notion of motivation itself; (ii) the kinds of motive mainly assumed in the anthropological and sociological literature; and (iii) how motives might be more adequately recognized in analyses of social behaviour.

Motivation itself is no simple notion, although its meaning seems generally to be taken for granted in the sociological and indeed social psychological literature. The University of Nebraska has a continuing symposium on

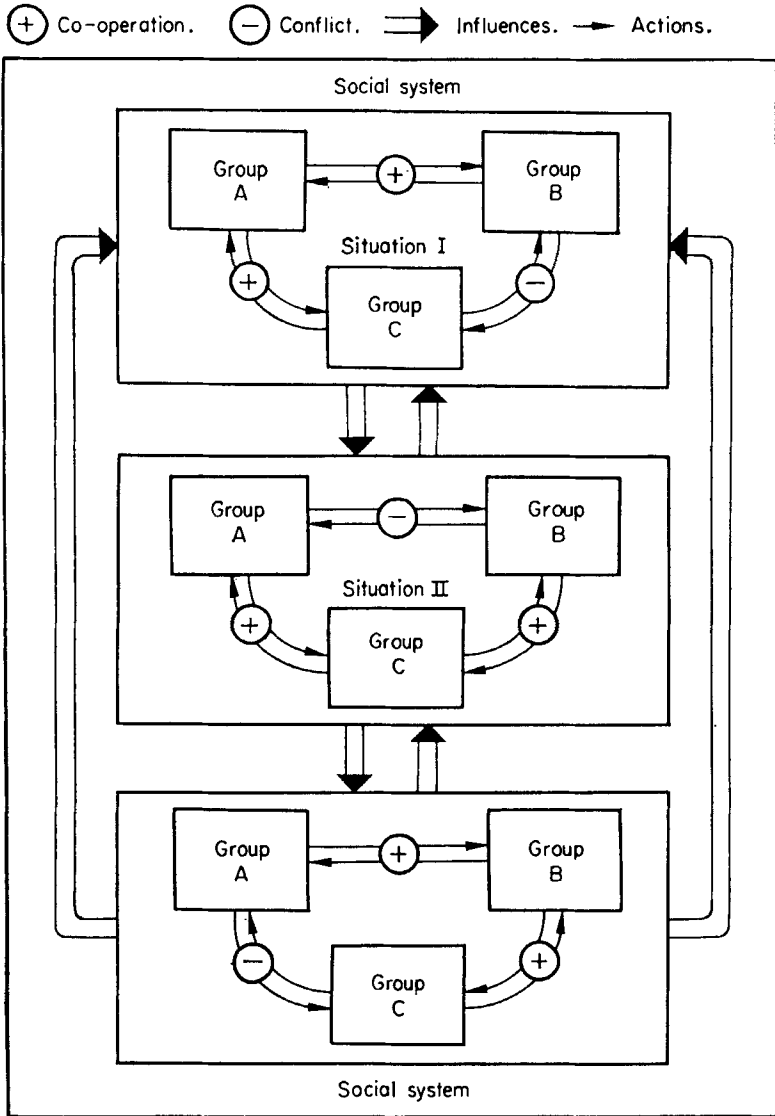


Fig. 3. Post-Durkheimian model where conflicts are contained in equilibrium.

motivation, which runs to twenty volumes up to date. A scanning of these does not reveal any close discussion of the notion itself. The paper which seems to me to come closest to definitional problems is one by Donald B. Lindsley, in the volume for 1957. He notes the wide diversity of what is included under 'motivation'—drives, needs, incentives, and he throws in also stimuli and homeostatic mechanisms. His general definition (he says

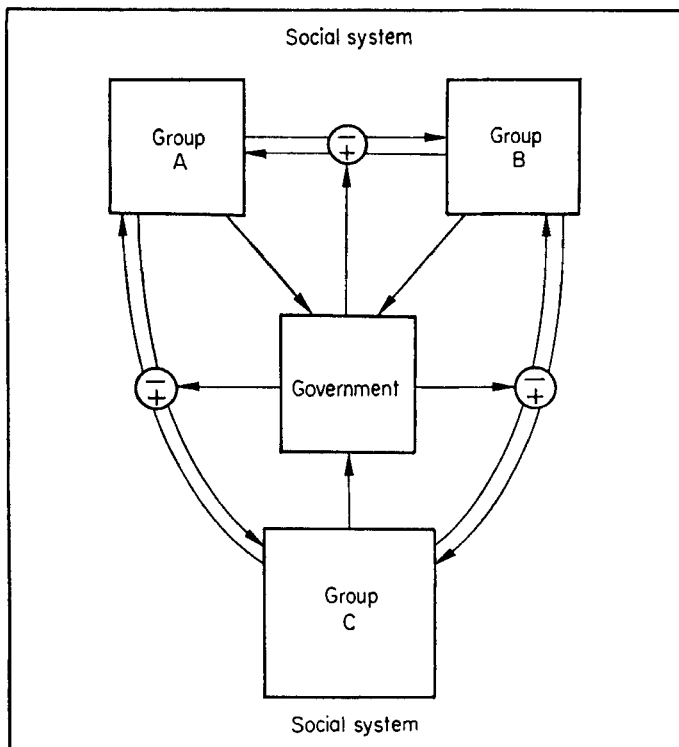


Fig. 4. Model in which conflicts between groups are moderated by government, itself subject to pressures.

it may need qualifying) is ‘the combination of forces which initiate, direct and sustain behaviour, towards a goal’. This can cover any causal factor in behaviour, including external ones, and is surely too wide.

‘Motive’ is a word used for internal, not external conditions which can ‘initiate, direct and sustain behaviour’. An external condition might be an *incentive*, but this would have to be internalized as something desired if it were to provide a motive. Nor need motives be sufficient conditions so that given the motive, the action follows. In law, to argue that someone had a motive to commit a crime does not prove that he committed it; only that it would be plausible to think that he did. A motive can be an affective state such as jealousy, which can make someone want to act in a certain way, but there must also be a belief that the intended action would satisfy this affective state. Moreover, even if so, there may be a judgment that the action would be an unworthy one, so the desire to do it may be inhibited. The desire not to do unworthy actions provides a counter motive.

When someone is appraising a possible action, motives as affective states

enter as factors along with beliefs and moral judgments. So they can be looked on not just as causes of actions, but as reasons which may or may not be accepted and the justificatory reasons for accepting them may also be called motives. R. S. Peters in his monograph *The Concept of Motivation* (Routledge, 1958) sees them as a particular kind of reason, advanced when the justification of an action is not obvious. Giving a motive would be an answer to a question of the form 'Why did you do that?' when it seemed an odd thing to do. This, though certainly one use of 'motive', is surely too narrow. If we do not ask for motives of actions which do not seem to require justification, it is only because we are often not interested in them. But there may be reasons other than the justification of the bizarre for which we can be interested in people's motives. It may be an interest in the very complexity of such states. These need not be violently affective though I think some element of feeling will be present in them. A quiet desire to do one's duty might be a motive. But whether the motive be a 'hot' one such as anger, or a 'cool' one such as a long-term interest in learning a subject, its combination with beliefs means that it cannot be invoked to explain behaviour on a simple stimulus-response pattern.

There are also problems connected with notions of mixed motives and unconscious motives. A person can do something from one motive, when another motive is also present. He may realize this; or he may not, but another person, notably a psychoanalyst, may say that though he thinks he is acting from motive M, his *real* motive is M<sub>1</sub>. This sounds like lack of self-knowledge; but, with due respect for the psychoanalyst, it may be a case of *mixed motives* rather than of self-deception. One acts from mixed motives when motives, as affective states themselves distinct, can be implemented by the same action—for instance, one helps Bill in a difficulty partly because one is concerned for him, but partly also because one likes to be thought a kind-hearted chap. In such cases the motives may be mutually reinforcing.<sup>3</sup> The test of whether the more creditable motive is really operative, or whether the observer is right who suspects that in fact the less creditable motive is the really operative one, will come when instead of being mutually reinforcing the two motives prompt different actions. For instance, one may only be able to help Bill by doing something which will make one unpopular rather than enhance one's reputation. In that case does one still help Bill? If so, then it need not have been true that the 'real' motive was only the self-regarding one. This latter is very often assumed—indeed the word 'motive' is used to mean something vaguely discreditable, or at any rate self-centred—'yes, he helped Bill, but he had a motive'. This snide use of 'motive' as ulterior can be shown to be

unjustified if it is possible for more than one motive to be operative, and for a situation to arise in which the more creditable motive operates on its own.

There is, of course, a problem here over the Freudian notion of 'unconscious motivation'. An 'unconscious motive' may be an affective state which finds satisfaction in doing 'x-like actions', and this satisfaction reinforces the tendency to do x-like actions without the connection being overtly recognized by the subject, though it may come out in dreams. Also there is a twilight zone in which we are dimly aware of these things, but are not acknowledging them, and it may be from the self-deceptions that we practise in this half-awareness, when we dimly know but don't want to know, that the notion of 'unconscious motivation' has an important use. When the subject becomes explicitly aware of the connection between the affective state and the action, he is then in a position to accept it as a motive, and to decide whether the action under the description of an action satisfying this motive is acceptable. He may already also have had an inclination to do the action under the description of its satisfying another motive and if that motive were also present this may be a case of an unacknowledged motive reinforcing an acknowledged one.

There is, then, no need to assume that motivation is provided by one constant or even dominant kind of affective state. Part of the interest of the study of human action, whether social or individual, can lie in looking at tangles produced by multifarious motives—sometimes reinforcing, more often conflicting. This is obscured by too simple a view of motivation, and is the reason why the good novelist, who is well aware of the complexities of human motives, can often give a more revealing social analysis than the sociologists.

In so far as the followers of Durkheim have a view of the motivation of behaviour, there seems to have been a shift from his view of society as a moral discipline. Durkheim himself was strongly anti-Utilitarian, and saw society as cohering through ways in which loyalty and social devotion were evoked by symbolic means. His successors give us a view of society as made up of individuals manipulating its institutions to secure their interests.<sup>4</sup>

We can then fairly ask whether people are empirically found to be like this, or whether they are being made to appear power seeking and competitive in order to facilitate the abstraction of the sociologist. It may be said that this kind of simplification has worked well in economics; but then economics by definition studies economic behaviour, whereas sociology should be able to study a whole gamut of kinds of behaviour in kinds



of social relations. If it is said that there is good warrant in philosophy of science for setting up a simplified model and drawing deductions from it, then the question is whether the model is really being used in a hypothetico-deductive way, and the deductions are being empirically tested, or whether it sets up a picture of what counts in social relations which then gets taken for granted. In other words, is the view of social motivation empirically tested, or is it taken up in the interests of a method and then assumed to be an adequate one?

There are sociologists and anthropologists whose view of social relations suggest that they think that the motives operating in them are those of status seeking and competition, but who write as though they were basing this not on a model, but on their observations. Malinowski, for instance, in his *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* gives a vivid account of the elaborate Melanesian institution of the *kula*, where long voyages are undertaken for the exchange of presents of necklaces of red shells and bracelets of white shells. Behind what look like good-will missions are elaborate procedures by which exchange presentations will be made, and along with the ritual exchanges of gifts a good deal of trading, in sago for instance, goes on in a quiet way. Malinowski generalizes from his observations of the *kula* so as to say that 'the social behaviour of the natives is based on a well-assessed give and take, always mentally ticked off and in the long run balanced' (*Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (London, 1926) p. 26). His natives are rational hedonists, with well-developed and often successful low cunning. Other anthropologists see them as less successfully prudential, as desperately trying to wrest such marginal advantages as they can out of the limited possibilities for satisfaction afforded by their social arrangements. Victor Turner, who has always been sensitive to how large 'afflictions' loom in the communities he studies, described in his *Schism and Continuity in an African Society* (Manchester, 1957) certain 'social dramas' in which 'we can observe how particular individuals manipulate the organizing principles of social affiliation for their own purposes'. And yet the outcome is more often tragic than successful. Life is hard, and, instead of managing to strike the living foundations from the rocks along our way, we are shown looking (generally unsuccessfully) for cracks in which we can seek a precarious foothold in order to climb a bit higher than our neighbours.

A content analysis of the use of the word 'manipulate' as used by anthropologists and sociologists—not to speak of political scientists—could be instructive of how generally they see people as trying to fix things, and, while keeping up appearances, working the system of social norms and

conventions for their own ends. Erving Goffman's accounts of 'social rituals' (see especially *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (New York, 1959), and *Behaviour in Public Places* (Glencoe Free Press, 1963)), describes how people maintain their 'definition' of a situation and build up their own role in it. He puts this in the language of the stage, with the implication that it is the impression made by the performance that counts. 'Qua performers, individuals are concerned not with the moral issue of realizing these standards, but with the amoral issue of engineering a convincing impression that these standards are being realized' (*Presentation of the Self*, p. 251). Goffman allows that people *can* act without guile and contrivance, not heeding the fact that impressions are being formed about them, and, even where they are concerned with this, he sometimes speaks as if their satisfaction was that of an actor in putting on a good show, rather than anything measurable in a cost-benefit basis (I owe this observation to Mr. Alan Ryan). But Goffman's descriptions of us all as 'merchants of morality' has been so widely popularized that it may well get taken for granted without qualification by the increasing number of people who interest themselves in the more readable of contemporary sociologists, of whom Goffman is certainly one. This can well lead to cynicism, to pre-occupation with 'unmasking'. For the implied motivation is either a conscious concern to impress, or else an unconscious concern with keeping up one's defences, where we are deceiving ourselves as well as others. I do not want to say that these attitudes are not wide-spread (Goffman has plenty of observations to back his views). I do want to say that we should not be led into taking for granted that the motives deduced as leading to this kind of behaviour are sociologically significant, whereas those deduced from behaviour which seems to show greater disinterestedness and self-knowledge are either illusory or can be disregarded as not in fact affecting social relations.

An interesting attempt to make what might be simplistic vice in psychology into methodical virtue in anthropology is found in the long introduction by Max Gluckman and Ely Devons in the book, *Closed Systems and Open Minds* (Chicago, 1964). This comprises papers which these editors have collected to illustrate what one is to do when one's anthropological or sociological analysis comes up against considerations which belong to another discipline. Its sub-title, 'The Limits of Naivety in Social Anthropology' sets the approach. The limits are set pretty close in. The authors recognize that in talking about social relationships notions such as 'status envy' as well as emotions such as love and ambition will be invoked, and that these are in the end words for complex psychological facts. And

behind these again are physiological notions. But, Gluckman and Devons say, in order to demarcate his own problems and deal with them with his own special competence, the social anthropologist had much better use such notions in a naïve way rather than try to acquire technical competence in handling them. 'We consider that most social anthropologists are in this sense naïve about researches into human personality, and that their naïvety is a *justified naïvety*' (p. 165, italics in original text). It is said to be justified if you can thereby get a circumscribed field with problems you can handle; and the test that you have not overstepped the limits of naïveté over any e.g. depth psychological theory you may draw on is that your actual social anthropological presentation does not depend on it—the structure and interplay of social relations could be as it is exhibited to be if the depth psychological assumptions introduced were not, for instance, Freudian ones. Gluckman and Devons think that Turner's account of symbols in Ndembu ritual in his paper in this book, passes this test. It is sufficient for Turner's purposes that he can invoke processes going on in the deep psyche producing emotional charges which can be harnessed in support of the moral norms overtly expressed in the social ritual. His view of these happens to be Freudian, but it need not be. And this is as well, since social anthropologists are not depth psychologists and ought not to talk as if they were.

We can sympathize with this desire to play safe with one's professional expertise. But I believe we have now reached a stage in social anthropology where this playing safe will not do. The limits of naïveté need to be pushed a good deal further back. What is more, these currently used assumptions are not really naïve. For naïve people, unless they try to adopt so me purportedly scientific fashion, can also be people of common sense, and know very well that men act from a variety of motives. They can be generous as well as self-interested, can want to serve institutions to which they belong as well as manipulate them; and if they did not, no family or other institution would be able to carry on. Ordinary people know this, so do most sociologists in their ordinary lives. What has gone wrong is incorporating narrow psychological assumptions into one's theory, and calling this naïveté. A genuinely naïve—though not in fact so naïve—way would be to draw on one's practical knowledge and observation of what people are like, using any means one can of making this fuller and clearer. If anthropologists really believed the social psychologies of motivation in which they present their material theoretically, they could only approach the people they study with an interest in what they could get out of them e.g. as Ph.D. fodder, and would be assuming that their subjects were also interested

in what they could get out of them. (There may be some truth in this on both sides, but if it is, or comes to be the whole truth, it would make impossible a much needed colleague-like relation between anthropologists and the people they study.) As it is, the picture they give of society as made up of manipulators and fixers is belied when they themselves are dealing with actual human situations; and also when they are describing these situations in more colloquial terms.

Thus, when Homans gives us sociological reflections on his experience as commander in a destroyer in the last war ('The Small Warship' in *Sentiments and Activities*, 50 pp. Glencoe Free Press, 1962) he describes a tight society where status distinctions are strong; yet he does not show it as ridden by status envy. The considerations he talks about as mattering are mutual recognition of technical competence; whether the captain can be realistically seen to be trying to do his best for his men; whether he is able to listen. And not only the captain. 'It is essential that at every level of the organization men should be trained to listen with interest and attention, and without interrupting, to everything their subordinates are trying to say, trained also to fit what they hear into some relevant picture which they in turn can communicate.' Also there may be occasions when, instead of bawling-out, 'the skipper must keep his mouth shut, if he can, and then the time may come when he wonders whether he is learning more about the crew than about himself' (p. 60).

What is surely needed here is not only such occasional essays, but a sustained attempt to do the social anthropology of groups whose members are engaged in something which calls for a high degree of mutual concern, and the capacity in people to build each other up and not grind each other down. St. Christopher's Hospice, in south-east London, a hospital for terminal cancer cases, which is a community where death is faced in a spirit of mutual support and trust between patients, relatives, doctors and nurses, could be one such group. One difficulty would be the probable unwillingness of such groups to let themselves be studied. Another would be the need to look at them over a longish period, especially so as to see how they deal with their crises. Neither of these difficulties should be insurmountable.

This will call for a more adequate psychology of motivation. Here social psychology seems to be on the move. The main recent approaches seem to be those described as 'personality theory' and 'cognitive theory'. 'Personality' psychology talks about the process of 'self-actualization', of becoming an 'autonomous' person. It is chiefly represented in the works of the late Abraham Maslow and the late G. W. Allport; the latter is, I think,

more aware of the processes by which people are socialized and within which they try to achieve a personal style of living (see his *Becoming*, Yale, 1955). Maslow's is clearly an approach congenial to existentialists and to people in revolt against the pressures to conformity which they see in existing social structures. To become sociologically interesting, this approach will need to inspire not only literature of protest, but also studies of kinds of social framework which give people mutual support in 'self-realization'.

'Cognitive theory' looks like being a potentially more powerful tool for anthropologists, since it goes with close observation of how people deal with their experiences and the actual skills they develop. The operative words here are 'deal' and 'develop'. Cognitive theorists are prepared to make an assumption that within the 'black box' of subjective consciousness there is an active process going on between the observable moments of stimulus and response. 'Learning' is not just the building up of dispositions to act in certain ways through the application of positive and negative reinforcements, but growth in mastery of experience through developing powers of forming and handling abstractions, seeing instances of rules, interpreting sensory clues through 'schemata' (a term borrowed in this sense from Sir Frederick Bartlett). All this would have been no news to an older generation of psychologists such as Ward and Stout (or indeed to Sir Frederick Bartlett). But it is news for a generation brought up on the strict S-R model. Nevertheless, the tradition of behaviouristic psychology has had the effect of tightening up views of what the active powers in the psyche may be by basing views not on introspection but on observation of behaviour in the mastery of skills.<sup>5</sup> Where interest is centred on studying the development of skills in the handling of experience, it is more possible than on a simple S-R model to think of motivation as related to long-term goals and also to think of it as directed to satisfactions arising out of the actual development and use of the particular powers. There is also the interest in different kinds of achievement and what is held to count as success. Here cognitive theory is relevant to the question of motivation, as introducing the kinds of interest which sustain people's efforts, both on the development of skills and in following long-term goals.

An approach which is also a broadening from the S-R model is the diagnosis of what, David McClelland is called the 'N-Ach' factor ('Need for Achievement'—N-Ach for short). Here, as in cognitive theory, there is a dynamic view of the psyche, which postulates, besides concern with hunger, sex and tension reduction, (a) preparedness to maintain tensions in the interest of distant goals, and (b) a disposition to compete with a

standard of excellence which a person has set himself and for which he has an emotional concern. N-Ach studies regard people as not only wanting pleasure and reduction of tensions, but to pit themselves against a challenge. This, however, is a variable factor, and tests have been worked out to see how high different subjects score in it. Some of these tests consist in looking at the content of their dreams and at stories they write or tell, to see whether these show signs of concern with achievement. The central reference here is McClelland's *The Achieving Society* (Princeton, 1961), which looks at the kind of motivation which promotes economic growth, and concludes that the classical economists' notion that this is rational self-interest in profit is insufficient unless satisfaction in achievement is also brought in. Some anthropologists are applying the McClelland tests (study of dream content and stories, as well as task scores) in looking for evidence of stronger and weaker N-Ach among peoples of different societies. One such study is *Dream and Deeds: Achievement Motivation in Nigeria* by Robert A. Le Vine (Chicago, 1966). He looks at comparative scores on these tests among Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba peoples in Nigeria, and, as might be expected on the criteria applied, the 'go-getting' Ibo score highest, and the conservative Hausa lowest. *On the criteria applied.* What this study brings out is that the kinds of achievement and standards of excellence in which the investigator is interested are those of a competitive society where one wants to get on in the world and get a better job. Le Vine's hypothesis is that the strength of N-Ach is related to 'status mobility', the opportunities for moving around and changing one's status (i.e. not staying put in a local group), but becoming what William Watson, when in the Manchester Department of Anthropology, called a 'spiralist', a person who moves from one locality to another at each step of his career. If this concern with job advancement, linked to the possibility of status mobility, shows itself in the stories produced by the Nigerian subjects of the tests, it should however be remarked that these stories were written by young people at schools and colleges who were undergoing an education in which they were being encouraged to think that this kind of ambition was expected of them.

What would happen if tests for N-Ach were devised for standards of excellence and for achievements in societies where there is no 'status mobility', and where the 'spiralist' style of life is not seen as possible or even desirable? This is a pertinent question, because among ourselves people are asking whether achievement should necessarily be connected with job mobility in a competitive society, and whether overall success is to be measured in terms of G.N.P. It would be ironic to foist these assump-

tions on people in the under-developed countries just when we are questioning them ourselves. It is of course almost a matter of definition to say that if a country is 'under-developed' it needs to get its G.N.P. up, and it is natural that those concerned with its development will be concerned with the kinds of motivation which can help to do this. But why should we identify *The Achieving Society* with a society which promotes economic growth? Before making this the index of achievement and linking it with 'status mobility' anthropologists might well look, before it is too late, at other notions of what it is to be a success in societies where there is not status mobility, and where other powers than those which go into getting ahead in a competitive world are prized and developed.<sup>6</sup>

The strength of 'dynamic' views, such as those of cognitive theory, lies in their approach to the constructive powers of the psyche. On these views, besides concern with tension reduction, there is concern to pit oneself against a self-imposed standard, to meet challenges from the environment, to master skills as well as to enjoy gratifications. Their present inadequacy is that interest in particular skills and achievements seems too much limited to those which are assumed in our Western world. In societies with rudimentary technology and few communications, and where achievement has to be sought in a life-long role in a local community, there may be developments of powers which get atrophied in technologically advanced societies. Also the ways in which achievements are valued may be less individualistic. For instance in Le Vine's discussion of achievement motivation in Nigeria (*Dreams and Deeds* p. 113), under 'Competition with a standard of excellence', it is said that 'Statements referring to successful competition in battle and other group activities are excluded from scoring'. Many of the achievements in traditional societies are of course individual and competitive, but many others, including highly valued ones, are performances in a group in close co-operation.

This is where narrow psychological assumptions may well hamper the social anthropologist. In order to understand how people interact and communicate with each other in co-operative enterprises, he may need to take part in the enterprise and learn the necessary skills. 'Participant research' is of course an accepted method. But if one looks on one's fellow-participants as self-interested, manipulating and to be manipulated, one can hardly be a whole-hearted colleague in a co-operative enterprise. There is no need, however, for the view of motivation which gets support from the cognitive theory psychology to be so restricted; interest in developing skills and in achievement, even if it is often competitive and individualistic need not be so.<sup>7</sup>

I pass now from social to depth psychology. In *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (Oxford, 1945, p. 142) Professor Fortes writes 'Though Tali religion springs directly out of the social structure it is fed by streams whose sources lie beneath and behind the social structure'. The 'sources' will be in the affective states which provide motives, and depth psychology is one way of trying to map them. Professor Fortes himself does it in Freudian terms. For instance, he describes the animal symbols, expressing the 'living mystical force of the ancestors', and says that the most widely respected totems are *animals with teeth*—indicating the potential aggressiveness of the ancestors and the ambivalent feelings of love and hate this evokes. The fact that the explicit references to a Freudian background are rare does not mean that they are not extremely telling, and they bring illumination into his rigorous account of the structures of kinship relations. Fortes also draws on Freudian assumptions in his *Oedipus and Job in West African Religion* (Cambridge, 1959), where he distinguishes types of attitude to destiny in these religions by correlating them with different views of the moral authority in the parental-filial relationship.

Victor Turner also draws on Freudian theory, especially in his account of initiation symbols in his 'Symbols in Ndembu Ritual' (published in *Closed Systems and Open Minds*). He says that symbols in such a ritual have an 'ideological pole', where they refer to the norms and principles of the social life, and a 'sensory pole' where they draw on deep-seated emotions (such as those associated with parental ties and with sex), and thereby they harness these emotions in the service of the ideological values. Turner's accounts of this emotional substructure is put in Freudian terms, but he is less committed than Fortes to Freudian theory. Indeed he disclaims competence to make such an express commitment. 'At one end of the symbol's spectrum of meanings we encounter the individual psychologist and the social psychologist, and even beyond them (if one may make a friendly tilt at an envied friend), brandishing his Medusa's head, the psychoanalyst, ready to turn to stone the foolhardy interloper into his caverns of terminology' (*op. cit.* p. 50).

Freudian theory can indeed take us into a world where conscious behaviour is fed from deeper sources. It is a social world in which relations in the wider society (which can include the ancestors) are formed in the images of the original parental-filial relationships, with their emotional charges. Its limitations for social anthropology are not so much due to the common criticism that the Oedipus complex may be a phenomenon of Western bourgeois society (with suitable adjustments it may be possible to meet this)<sup>8</sup> as due to the question of whether the emphasis on anxiety and



tension reduction allows the deeper powers of the psyche to be sufficiently creative to sustain ways of life in difficult circumstances (Freud himself felt this doubt in *Civilization and its Discontents*).

Here maybe a critical development of some sides of Jungian theory would help. In the Jungian view of the psyche a deeper person is trying to grow, and this is connected with the search for one's own vocation. In some traditional cultures, this is connected with finding one's particular guardian spirit. What anthropologists have seen, and Jung, I think, has not, is that a person's inner self cannot just be 'realized'; he has to find a constructive way of working it out in relation to other people in social roles. When his inner powers and the tasks of a social role come together, there is the exercise of a vocation. The stereotype of the role is then counteracted by the inner resources of the individual, and then we reach the deep kind of motivation on which it is likely that in the end the vitality and adaptability of a society depends.

This brings me back to the question with which I started: how to take account of a more adequate view of motivation. At present I cannot do more than indicate a few respects in which I think this might be done. I do not want to lose sight of what I take to be the central sociological interest in *institutions*, and how people interact in them. If we want simply to talk about individuals interacting with each other, we had better go to the novelists. Or to the historians—though historians are increasingly writing not just about interesting individuals, but about their institutional setting. The end product of the historian, however, is a narrative and not a synchronic account of how a particular society works. If the sociologist is to give the latter, he will construct his account by using simplified abstractions, such as 'the social structure', 'roles', 'extended family'. These will be his *theoretical* entities, but his *ultimate* entities are persons in interaction. The psychoanalysts are right in saying that 'social behaviour is fed by streams whose sources lie beneath and behind the social structure' (to quote Fortes again), though we need a more adequate mapping of these streams than they have yet given us. Sociologists can be on the look-out for ways in which these streams, as different interests and affective attitudes in the psyche, come out in the character of social relations.

I have said that the theoretical entities of the sociologist are simplified abstractions, shown in relation to each other to form his model. This is legitimate, provided he knows that he is leaving out a great deal, and what is left out will be richer and more complex than what is included. If what is going on in this richer background is also *assumed* to be simple and stereotyped (as in the views of self-interested motivation which I noted),

it is then being read into the background from the model. Access to the background is obtained in the observations and common-sense knowledge of people, which can then be drawn on to test limitations in the model. Sometimes the limitations are such as to distort the understanding of the society. Such would be the cases where an institution would not work unless people were more generous in their reactions than they are being made to appear. Other cases would be social changes in which instead of reacting to novel situations by trying to reassert their old behaviour patterns, people are showing versatility in producing new patterns. (The failure to show this difference may be one reason why sociologists have difficulty in dealing with social change.)

I shall therefore end with another diagram (Fig 5), which incorporates the view of the social system which was shown in Fig. 4 as consisting of institutions acting on each other with government in the centre. But Fig. 4 is modified by calling these elements 'Institutions as spheres of

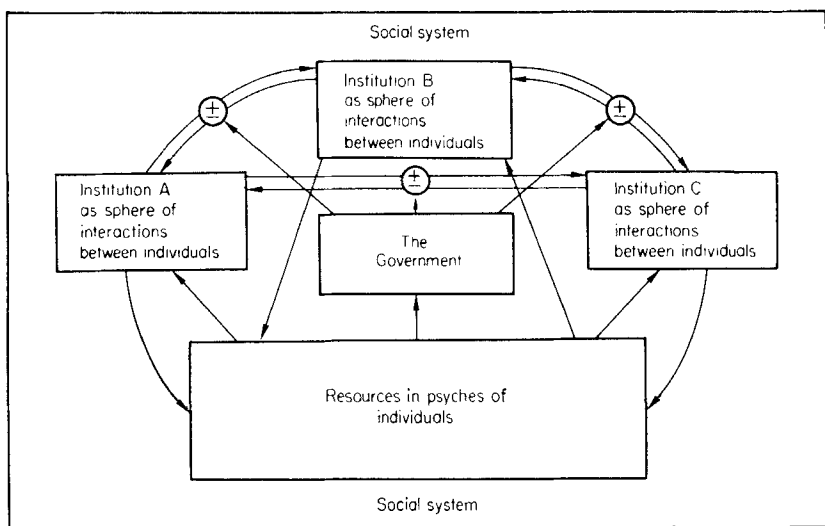


Fig. 5. Model of social system where institutions, including government sustain and are sustained through resources in individual psyches.

interactions between individuals' and putting 'The government' for 'government', in order to bring out that the ultimate entities we are dealing with are persons in interaction. And if persons are the ultimate entities they have inner as well as outer lives (at least we know that we ourselves have, and our relations with other people and indeed our own inner lives would surely not be as they are unless we believed that they had too). So

Fig. 5 has a large box at the bottom to show that resources from this inner side in effect initiate and sustain the social interactions. There are also arrows to indicate that these inner resources are themselves influenced by social interactions, e.g. in what is called 'being socialized'. I have no cause to deny this.

Figure 5, unlike the others, is intended as a 'lest we forget' diagram, calling attention to ultimate concrete entities, rather than setting out relations between theoretical entities. So my box called 'Resources in the psyches of individuals' does not have any special term characterizing those resources. I have said that we must draw on every means we have of understanding them; in the course of this we shall doubtless come to specify particular kinds of motives connected with beliefs about how they may be implemented, and to describe actions in ways appropriate to these. The sociologist's job is then to see whether certain social actions are more intelligible, when considered under these descriptions rather than others. If some non-negligible ranges of social behaviour are more adequately interpreted when described as forms of friendship than as forms of competitive manipulation, the motives which feed the former may then turn out to be as important as those that feed the latter as factors in explaining the activities which make a society tick. At least there is no need to foreclose the possibility because it is supposed that if motivation is taken into account at all, it must be stream-lined as a form of self-interest. For this assumption may come from an image of human nature adopted as 'scientific' because tough-minded, rather than as the only image that can be a guide to the sociologist in his empirical enquiries.

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<sup>1</sup> This is too simple: individuals re-work material which is transmitted to them, especially when it comes by word of mouth, and the Durkheimian view ignores this. Professor Goody's discussion in *The Myth of the Bagre* (Oxford, 1973) shows how this reworking happens.

<sup>2</sup> The most trenchant expression of this view is in Max Gluckman's *Custom and Conflict in Africa* (Blackwell, 1955). It was mooted by G. S. Simmel in his writings on conflict, which are presented and discussed by Lewis A. Coser in *The Functions of Social Conflict* (1956). Coser sophisticated the discussion largely through using the Freudian distinction between realistic conflicts, and tension relieving conflicts which are displaced on objects which are not the real adversaries. He shows how conflicts which bring latent hostilities into the open can strengthen a society, and also how societies have ways of containing conflicts, and so his treatment falls mainly within the terms of our Fig. 3. When conflicts tear a society apart, the model will not serve: functional sociology perhaps by definition, is more fitted to

deal with maintenance than with disintegration. Both Gluckman and Coser are aware that there are some conflicts which do not go on within an overall consensus, but threaten the very basis of the consensus.

<sup>3</sup> It might be said this is a case of 'over-determination', i.e., there is more than one sufficient condition. But I do not put it in this way because as I have said, I do not hold that a motive by itself, apart from belief and judgment, is a sufficient condition for an action. In many of the cases diagnosed under 'unconscious motivation' the belief and judgment may however be attached to only one motive.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, G. A. Lundberg, *Social Research* on sociometric indices; S. F. Nadel in *The Theory of Social Structure* on social structure as an ordinal scale of relative position of power and control over resources. The use of learning theory, as for instance by G. A. Homans in *Social Behaviour in its Elementary Forms* is also instructive. A kind of behaviour may of course start off in any one of a number of ways, but it is sustained or checked by positive and negative reinforcements which are generally presented in terms of something like the cost-benefit terms of the market.

<sup>5</sup> On all this, see Stotland and Cannon, *Social Psychology: A Cognitive Approach* (Philadelphia and London, 1972) and Jerome S. Bruner *et al.* *Studies in Cognitive Growth* (New York, 1966).

<sup>6</sup> I do not want to accuse McClelland of limiting N-Ach to interest in the kind of achievement which leads to economic growth. But since this is what his book *The Achieving Society* is about, this may have encouraged people to think of achievement primarily in such entrepreneurial terms.

<sup>7</sup> There is a hint of this in J. K. Bruner's concluding remarks in *Studies in Cognitive Growth* (p. 129).

<sup>8</sup> However, there is a growing suspicion that the depth and social psychologists are heavily culture bound, both in their own theoretical assumptions and by the experimental material with which they operate. It may be the field anthropologists who can pick up clues as to how to transcend these limitations, for instance by attending to 'folk' theories of multiple souls. (I owe this observation to Robin Horton.)