An Examination of the Concepts and Critics of the Theories of Mass Society

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE CONCEPTS AND CRITICS
OF THE THEORIES OF MASS SOCIETY

by

Jeffrey Stephen Margolis

A Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the School of Graduate
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of the
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Jeffrey Stephen Margolis
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Coriolanus:
If you are learn'd, Be not as common fools; if you are not, Let them have cushions by you. You are plebians, If they be senators; and they are no less, When both your voices blended, the great'at taste Most palate theirs. They choose their magistrate, And such a one as he, who puts his "shall," His popular "shall" against a graver bench Then ever frown'd in Greece. By Jove himself! It makes the consuls base; and my soul aches To know, when two authorities are up, Neither supreme, how soon confusion May enter 'twixt the gap of both and take th' one by th' other . . . Thus we debase the nature of our seats and make the rabble Call our cares fears; which will in time Break ope the locks o' th' Senate and bring in the crows to peck the eagles.

from "Coriolanus"
by William Shakespeare

Willy:
The street is lined with cars. There's not a breath of fresh air in the neighborhood. The grass don't grow anymore, you can't raise a carrot in the back yard. They should have a law against apartment houses. . . . They massacred the neighborhood. LOST: More and more I think of those days Linda. . . . There's more people! That's what's ruining this country! Population is getting out of control. The competition is maddening! Smell the stink of the apartment house.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Bigger then Uncle Charley! Because Charley is not--liked. He's liked, but he's not--well liked.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Linda:
Forgive me, dear. I can't cry. I don't know what it is, but I can't cry. I don't understand it.
Why did you ever do that? I search and search and I search, and I can't understand it. Willy I made the last payment on the house today. Today, dear. And there'll be nobody home,--We're free and clear--We're free--We're free--We're free.

from *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller

Henry IV:

Now, Doctor, the case must be absolutely new in the history of madness; I preferred to remain mad--since I found everything ready and at my disposal for this new exquisite fantasy. ... The solitude--this solitude--squalid and empty as it appeared to me when I opened my eyes again--I determined to deck it out with all the colors and splendors of that far-off day. ... I would make it become--for ever--no more a joke but a reality, the reality of a real madness: ... I should like to know what you have gained by revealing the fact that I was cured! ... To give anyone one's confidence ... that is really the act of a madman. But now I accuse you in turn! ... This dress which is for me the evident involuntary caricature of that other continuous, everlasting masquerade of which we are the involuntary puppets, when without knowing it we mask ourselves with that which we appear to be ... ah, that dress of theirs, this masquerade of theirs, of course, we must forgive it them, since they do not yet see it identical to themselves. ... You know, it is quite easy to get accustomed to it. One walks about as a tragic character, just as if it were nothing.

from "Henry IV" by Luigi Pirandello
The quotations above are representative of the three prominent problems entertained by the theories of mass society; that is, freedom in the polity, freedom in the community, and inner directiveness, or freedom with one's own self. This series of problems involves the totality of existence.

Traditional philosophic speculation, the realm of the totality, demands an examination of man's concept of what he is, and what he is not, of what he sees, and that which he does not see. For the prescription "Know thyself" is not only a panegyric for introspective soul seeking; rather, it is an encomium on searching for what one does not know or immediately perceive. We cannot be concerned in this thesis purely with the theories and critics of mass society in themselves. It is through the manifest process of examining the debate between the different schools and conception of contemporary society that we shall try to come across the latent germ of a new idea, or a unique way of looking at things.

Speaking in the most general sense at this moment, it is alleged by most of the critics of mass society that the mass society is a condition found in modern civilization which is typified by industrialization, gross population, and a communications network which
pervades and can be used to manipulate society. The society is perceived as an inflexible organism, in that it restrains individuals from gathering together, communicating, and trying to develop alternatives for a continually changing milieu. Society is atomized.

There is general agreement amongst the mass society theorists that the individual in the mass society neither understands, participates in, nor controls the forces which shape his life in the polity and community. He is found to be without close and intimate relationships, and consequently he lacks the security of being able to distinguish himself from others.

The thesis is concerned simply about the nature

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and problems of our society today. In fact, many theorists use the term mass society interchangeably with contemporary society, but then again some do not.

Some think that the problems of contemporary society are owing to the loss of the exclusiveness of elites, or the loss of superordinate status which would be owed to persons for one or another outstanding human trait or capability.

Others think that to place emphasis on the efficacy of elites is to deprive society of the creative and, most of all, sympathetic understanding of those who compose society.

Taken in their extremes, each group feels that the other's view has prompted a society which makes freedom precarious. These two views are prudentially balanced in the most contemporary theory of mass society. Yet where both groups above find Western civilization as their model for the mass society, this new view discovers that in terms of attenuating events the non-Western world is more likely to conform to the explicit model of the mass society than the West itself.

Given these contradictions, not even to broadly discuss at this time views which condemn the positions above, we merely ask what is it that men perceive in the mass or contemporary society. Since we have not
found a consensus on which we can affirm what in fact
the world looks like, we have chosen to ask two further
questions. Why is it that theorists have been unable
to agree, and how can we sharpen our focus on contem­
porary existence?

The most extensive examination and compilation of
theories of mass society is to be found in Kornhauser's
recent work, The Politics of Mass Society.¹ Korn­
hauser's intention is to show the distinction between
mass and pluralistic tendencies in modern society and
to demonstrate how social pluralism can support liberal
democratic institutions.² Kornhauser distinguishes
between two general theories of mass society: the "con­
servative" theory and the "democratic" theory. Basic­
ally the "conservative" thinkers endorse and fear the
loss of exclusiveness of elites, while the "democratic"
theorists are apprehensive about manipulation of the
masses by elites. It is to this small segment of The
Politics of Mass Society that we have decided to use
as a launching point for the substance of this thesis.
Though we utilize Kornhauser's dichotomy between the

"conservatives" and the "democrats" in Chapters II and III, it must be kept in mind that these heuristic labels do not provide license to keep score. It is a far easier task to classify men in place of their thoughts.

Chapter II will be devoted to those mass society theorists who may be called "conservatives" in the sense that their political and social philosophy requires an intellectual aristocracy of sorts, or their sociology recognizes the inevitability of, if not the desirability of, a ruling elite. In the first part of this chapter we should like to clarify in what sense we are using the term conservative and how the "conservative" theorists of mass society differ from the generally accepted definition of a conservative. The "conservative" theories of mass society exhibit a pronounced recognition of the loss of "traditional" society, the impact of 18th Century and 19th Century democratic thought upon a European population which had expanded almost threefold in a hundred years, and a growth of science and technology in Western civilization which made the reification of democratic thought feasible. For purposes of clarity we shall divide the "conservative" thinkers into three groups: the philosocial, the elitists, and political sociologists of a behavioral persuasion.
Common to all of the theorists of mass society is the concern with the normative questions of sovereignty. The debate has been recast under the heading of the proper type of leadership in the mass society. Whereas the "conservative" ethos denigrates the intellectual capacity of the masses, we shall see in Chapter III that some of the "democrats" agree, but argue for a democracy out of necessity. Yet others do have sufficient faith in the intellectual capabilities of common men and trust that they can determine their own ends. Not unlike some "conservative" theorists, many of the "democrats" think that mass society is more promising as a label under which to categorize the problems of contemporary society than a concrete and definable system. We shall address, in the following order, the psychological, the sociological, and the philosophic positions of the "democratic" theorists.

At the beginning of Chapter III we should like to clarify in what way we are using the term democratic, and how the "democratic" theorists may or may not differ from the generally accepted definition of a democrat. The second portion of the chapter shall commence with an exposition of the assumptions of these theorists in the order mentioned above. We shall find that the optimistic position of Friedrich stands in stark relief
against the bloc of disenchanted views of society which are typical of so many of the "conservative" and "democratic" theorists. Both the "conservative" and the "democratic" views have been synthesized by Kornhauser for the purpose of extracting a new theory of mass society. The third part of this chapter will attend to an exposition of Kornhauser's thoughts. Antithetical as they may appear, the "democratic" and "conservative" views are concerned with the image of society exposed naked to forces which make freedom precarious.

Chapter IV will be devoted to critics of Kornhauser, and a new generation of judges who attack the whole notion of mass society. These critics attempt to show that most of the mass society theorists begin their observations of the universe with an intellectual bias which gives an incomplete picture of contemporary society which ultimately distorts their conclusions about the mass society.

The mass society theorists are concerned about the source of power or sovereignty in a political and social system. The "democrats" prefer to keep power diffuse, while the "conservatives" are content to keep it unitary. Both are raising questions about the efficacy of political and social pluralism in a civilization which is ideologically predisposed to democracy. It should
be stated at this point that certain factors are inherent in pluralism, namely some aspects of the conflict implicit in the bargaining process between diverse interests, that most of the mass society critics have been fraught to consider. Their perception of society has emphasized the consensual aspects of pluralism rather than the conflicting or dissensual aspects of pluralism. Chapter V will be concerned with an analysis of this disinclination to acknowledge all the aspects of sociation, and shall reintroduce an orientation and technique to complement the existing methods of observation, namely social conflict theory.

In Chapter VI we will summarize and conclude the thesis.
CHAPTER II
THE "CONSERVATIVE" THEORISTS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter will be to discuss the "conservative" theorists, that is, one wing of the critics of mass society. Whereas the concern of their "democratic" counterpart is with the exclusiveness of nonelites, to be most brief at this moment, the general "conservative" orientation is disposed to the exclusiveness or importance of elites.

In the beginning of this chapter we would like to clarify in what sense we are using the term conservative and how the "conservative" theorists of mass society differ from the generally accepted definition of a conservative. The "conservative" theories of mass society exhibit a pronounced recognition of the loss of "traditional" society, the impact of 18th and 19th Century democratic thought upon a European population which had expanded almost threefold in one hundred years, and a growth of science and technology in Western civilization which made the reification of democratic thought feasible.
In the second segment of this chapter, which involves a major portion of the chapter, we shall examine the different positions of the "conservative" theorists. Common to all of the "conservative" theorists is their occupation with the normative questions of sovereignty or the choice of leadership necessary for a good society in a world with the alleged inhibiting conditions mentioned above. For purposes of efficiency and clarity we shall divide the "conservative" theorists into three groups.

The philosocial group represented by Tocqueville, LeBon, Ortega, Mannheim, and Baltzell have a common base in their belief in the necessity for an intellectual aristocracy of sorts. There exists a world of


difference between each of their positions. For instance, LeBon and Ortega strived to reverse the course of cultural events in modern society, while the others recognized that the trend of events in modern society is or was irreversible. Their specific direction is guided by a belief in the inherent irrationality of man, and his ineptitude which is manifest in his relationship to the community and the state.

The second group is dominated by the 19th and early 20th Century sociological orientation of Pareto, Mosca, and Michels. Their stress on elites appears to be in part a reaction to the inability of the democratic man to organize and administer the affairs of his world. The elitists assumed that the only possible way to maintain a good society was through the competition and circulation amongst elites.

Our third group, representatives of the Academy,


still fall within the tradition of the "conservative" theorists of mass society. Political scientists such as Converse,¹ Lipset,² and McCloskey³ are concerned implicitly with normative questions which are concomitant with the observations of behavioral and attitudinal patterns in modern society. Some contemporary sociological literature falls under the rubric of "quest for community." Men such as Stein,⁴ Vidich and Bensman,⁵ and Van Den Haag⁶ find a greater need for the exclusiveness of


⁶Van Den Haag, Ernest, "A Dissent from the Consensual Society." Daedalus, LXXXIX (Spring 1960).
elites, the development of a mass culture, and a subsequent loss and, hence, the inevitable quest for community. We have chosen to address this segment of sociology because of their subscription to concepts so similar to the philosocial group. Both groups are extremely attentive to the Tönnisian concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.

Definition

In America today, when reference is made about conservatism, a stereotype of a rigid personality is often what springs into the novice's mind. This type is oftentimes associated with a political disposition which is quick to sacrifice civil liberties in times of tension, which supports overrepresentation of rural groups in state and national legislatures, which tends to be militaristic and also nationalistic. Most of all, the concept of conservatism waves the banner for those who wish to preserve the status quo. The ideology of this stereotype is usually "positional"¹ in the sense that he is concerned with the status position of particular groups.

per se. Contrarily the "conservative" mass society theorists are "ideational" and are concerned with the status quo only in the sense that what they want to preserve exists a priori in the best interest of society. They are not concerned with preserving the position of one group vis-à-vis another, but only what they consider to be ethical and the virtue inherent in human relations.

The "conservative" protest is a reaction to three factors which have changed the complexion of the universe: a demographic explosion, the reification of democratic thought, and the advent of technism.

In Europe alone, the population expanded from 180 million in 1800 to 460 million in 1914. This altered the shape of society from one which was primarily rural to a structure that became increasingly urbanized. Ferdinand Tönnies, one of the fathers of the German Institut für Sozialforschung, formally conceptualized this distinction between the Gemeinschaft (folk) and the Gesellschaft (urban) conditions. The distinction postulated that the former face-to-face condition, where familial, communal, and political institutions were in equilibrium, coordinated, and cooperative, fostered intimacy and trust between individuals. The latter,

1Ortega, op. cit., p. 111.
characterized by institutions which were uncoordinated and ineffective because of a lack of cooperation, provoked a loss of intimacy and gradual alienation between individuals. Part of the "conservative" protest is against a modern society which prompts distrust and inhibits the growth and development of personal relationships.

In addition to the loss of traditional society, the "conservative" theorists are promulgating their fear of the actualization or reification of democratic thought which offered the reins of government to the common man. Until the late 19th Century and early 20th Century, Europe and the United States were masked in a "pseudodemocracy" which in actuality had always been oligarchic and out of the hands of the masses. By the turn of the century the masses had come to eminence and were encouraging true democracies. The "conservative" reaction involves a verbal excursus of the inability and disinclination of the masses to manage human affairs.

The "conservative" mass society theorists also congregate around a mutual condemnation of the effects of

2Ortega, op. cit., p. 12.
3loc. cit., pp. 11-18.
science and technology upon the human mind. Apparently science and technology cannot help but be at cross-purposes with what seems to be man's natural and moral nature. Implicit in this pragmatic approach is the belief that no human problem is insoluble. The technism has led to the erection of a massive and centralized communications system and has created the tools which promote large-scale bureaucracies. Both systems have grown to a size beyond controlability and, hence, engender the "conservative" fear of individual alienation due to the lack of interpersonal communication. In addition, there is the worry that the inflexible machinery will succumb to tyrannical control.

The Philosocial Group

The range of those theorists who recognize the necessity for an intellectual aristocracy range from America's French mentor, Tocqueville, who observed the lowering of standards of value because of the democrats' intense materialism, to Baltzell, a modern-day professor of

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3DeTocqueville, op. cit., especially pp. 315-316.
sociology who states,

"The mob is waiting for a class of aristocratic leaders, who no longer prisoners of a caste nostalgia, are willing and able to set new standards which the average citizen (who always abhors violence) can aspire to."¹

The matrix of agreement amongst these otherwise dissimilar philosocial, aristocratically oriented groups is the belief that there are two classes of men of which one is naturally superior to the other.² At most, the common man is irrational and will through the democratic practices interfere with his own well-being.³ Or at least he is mimetic. Though capable of following plans and orders, left to his own means he will wander aimlessly.⁴

According to LeBon, in the past every civilization was the outcome of a small number of ideas which have been implanted in the minds of the crowd. Unfortunately, in the 20th Century the masses are usurping the position of an ethical and cultured minority. Given the manner in which they now vulgarize the language, discourse has

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¹Baltzell, op. cit., p. 385.
³loc. cit., p. 15. Ortega, op. cit., p. 44. DeTocqueville, p. 34.
⁴Mannheim, Man and Society, p. 53.
become meaningless. The denigration of reason, con-
joined with the democratic ethos of the masses, leads to
the bastardization of government by an uncritical citi-
zenry which is sentimentally swayed and deceived by mag-
netic leaders. \(^2\) Thus, one cannot help but distrust
democratic leaders. They are leaders of sheep.

The democratic ethos has corrupted men and contem-
porary society, according to Ortega. It has inculcated
in men the almost inborn impression that life is without
limits. Its egalitarianism prompts the conviction that
man's life is excellent and values reside with him and
in his age. He has little or no respect for authority
and impetuously intervenes in all the matters of others
without any regard for them. Hence, the mass society is
without moral codes and devoid of ethics. \(^3\)

Liberal democratic thought and technological ability
have created the conditions for the revolt of the masses,
according to Ortega. It has provided man with both the
inclination and the tools for total equality. Yet all
the combination has created is the decaying self-

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\(^1\) LeBon, op. cit., p. 60.

cit., pp. 11-16.

\(^3\) loc. cit., pp. 68-106.
satisfaction of the technical specialist who knows only his corner of the universe.

Mannheim surmised that once the technocratic society establishes itself there is an increasing concentration, for purposes of efficiency, of political, military, and industrial might. This concentration of power in a democracy is a threat to the existence of all the smaller groups in society. He perceived a state and society with an economic, political, and social bureaucracy that could not cope with the complexities of the day as long as the smaller groups would not acquiesce in their demands. He observed that in modern society the bureaucracies look askance at dissent and resistance, and ultimately overpower them.

Mannheim's criticisms of the masses do not appear to be as condescending as those of Ortega or the remainder of the "conservative" theorists. The latter perceive men as irrational, conforming, and peculiarly susceptible

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1Cf. Mills, C. Wright, The Power Elite. New York: Oxford University Press, 1959. Mills, C. Wright, The Causes of World War Three. New York: Ballantine Books, 1958. Mills' perception of American politics and the social scene is congruent with Mannheim's hypothesis. He recognizes that these institutions have similar goals which are at odds with the goals of humanity. Ergo, the power elite must be made responsible to some type of humanizing force. We shall speak about Mills at greater length in Chapter III.

to the judgment and tastes of others around them. Yet when Mannheim observes that the rationality of the masses is mimetic, he seems to be imbued with a sense of hope that men can become educated. To this imitative propensity he attached the term "functional rationality." Contrary to this masquerade was the virtue of pure "substantial rationality" which was "a substantially rational act of thought," he reasons, which "reveals intelligent insight into the interrelations of events in a given situation." Substantial rationality indicates a series of defined actions or propositions which lead to a previously defined goal. This true rationality is functional, calculable, and under the individual's systematic control. Mannheim perceived the major problem of his time to be the democratization of society and an increasing degree of interdependence, but not necessarily the coordination of all institutions of society. He hypothesized that modern society in which rational habits were unevenly distributed was bound to be unstable. Thus, survival in the modern world necessitates that a democracy bring all members of the society to a high level of moral

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1 loc. cit., pp. 50-58.
2 loc. cit., p. 53.
3 loc. cit., p. 46.
and intellectual understanding. Otherwise, he thought, to maintain the discontinuity between moral power and technological power is to abandon the masses to dictatorial rule. Yet what he perceived was a widening, rather than a shrinking, gulf between the elite and the masses. If something should distort the "functional rationality" of the masses, that is, sway them from their traditional benefactors and mechanistic behavior, Mannheim prognosticated the impotence and dissolution of society. If they neither have the "functional rationality" to follow nor gain the "substantial rationality" to lead, they become unintelligible even to themselves. Mannheim's fear is also that the irrationality of the social structure will force its way into the political life and dissolve the political system. As it stands democracy is its own enemy.1 "Lord of all things, he is not lord of himself."2

This fear of the loss of autonomy of smaller voluntary groups and the widening gulf between the rational elites and the mimetic crowd is inherently tied to the condemnation of the urban condition and the equalitarian philosophy. Underlying the protest is a mechanistic

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2 Ortega, op. cit., p. 44.
cosmogony which perceived society as an organism composed of elements which are self-regulating. Like other biological organisms, society was conceived with the ability to balance conflicting elements internally. This view prevails in scientific Darwinism, classical economics, 19th Century elitism, and is visually manifest through the competition and compromise amongst various groups. Mannheim's apprehensiveness was that the self-regulating nature of society was disappearing, and the process was working away at the innards of society at a suicidal rate. Let us harken back to the conceptions of Tönnies, however, with the realization that interaction according to the rules of the natural order postulate is possible only in a limited system where men are able to understand what is required of them. They must be cognizant of the abilities of the opposition and must in turn be equal to the opposition in order to effectively engage it. In a system of this type both the individuals and the association knew their role and function and each unit knew how one affected the other. Given the shift in the structure of society due to factors which we have already mentioned, the cosmology appears to have been undermined.
The Elitists

Similarly, though not to say that elitism is a necessary corollary of the natural order postulate, Pareto, Mosca, and Michels perceived society as a whole whose parts were always in a struggle for survival. It was their unanimous acceptance of the human need for authority and survival which led to the proposition that those who became elites had a particular virtue for surviving in society. Thus, Mosca distinguished the elites (he never specifically used the term elite) from the masses not only by virtue of their ability to rise to the top in the internecine struggle for survival but also for their moral superiority. This stance is similar to Pareto who could not help but concede that the elites had the highest indicia of capabilities in society.

Not only do the elites differ from the masses because of the successful journey that they have made, but also because their character is antithetical to the masses, who are disinclined to assume any position of responsibility and management. According to Michels,

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1 Mosca, op. cit., p. 53.
"The masses express a profound need to prostrate themselves, not simply before great ideals, but also before the individual who in their eyes incorporates such ideals."

Mosca states,

"They justify their rule by theories or principles which are in turn based on beliefs or ethical systems which are accepted by those who are ruled. This political formula contains very little that could be described as 'truth' but they should not be regarded as deliberate deceptions or mystifications on the part of the scheming rulers. They express, rather, a deep need in human nature whereby the human being more readily defers to abstract universal principles than to the will of individual human beings."

Thus, we have societies which will always be ideologically oriented, where the deceivers themselves can be deceived. To the extent that an idea is not deliberate deception, the rulers themselves are prey to the rhetoric of the outsiders.

Up to this point we have illustrated how the elitists justify their position on the basis of their philosophy and their observations of man. The maintenance of the elitist structure is justified on similar grounds. What we have said so far is succinctly summarized by Hughes:

"As speculative sociologists ..., they were alike Machiavellians in their insistence on the

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1Michels, op. cit., p. 96.

2Mosca, op. cit., p. xv.
sharp separation between rulers and ruled, on the necessary role of force and fraud in government, and the inevitable degeneration of all political groups and institutions."1

Though Machiavelli did not postulate ethical superiority of elites over nonelites, rather one having more ambition than the other, the quotation above brings out the "pragmatic" similarity between Machiavelli and the 19th Century elitists and the process of elitism.

What Hughes means when he refers to the degeneration of groups is the constant circulation and regeneration of new elites. Yet distinctions in the circulation hypothesis can be drawn, especially between Pareto and Mosca and Michels. Mosca and Michels, though cognizant of the perpetual dislocation of old forces and insurgence of new forces,2 laid the hereditary characteristics of the elite on three basic characteristics which are directly associated with social class: the disposition or character of the upper classes (their relationship to the economic and productive process), the fecundity of the various social and occupational groups, and the dynamics of mobility.3 Though Pareto observed that the elites

2Mosca, op. cit., p. 65.
3Michels, op. cit., pp. 103-105.
are continually threatened by subelites or persons who are, in part, representative of the lower classes, this does not necessarily mean that there is the historical Marxian class struggle. He states that the elitist position need not be inherited and they need not be of one type. They may be economic barons, intellectuals, politicians, journalists, or what-have-you. The circulation of elites is mainly a struggle between personality types whose main interest is power. According to Guttasman,

"The 'class struggle' for him [Pareto] is not a struggle between opposing sections of society but a fight between an indefinite number of groups with differing interests and above all between elites who fight for power." ²

Pareto was one of the few thinkers to realize that Marx recognized that internal conflict was derived from the existent social structure, and this in itself produced changes in the social structure.³

Let us take a few moments to recapitulate. There is general acceptance by both the philosocial group and the elitists that the mass of men is basically

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¹Guttasman, W. C., "Social Stratification and Political Elite." *British Journal of Sociology*, XI (Spring 1960), 139.

²ibid.

inarticulate, irrational, and mimetic. They are more content to follow than to initiate leadership. We observe that on both the level of ideology and the level of personal aggrandizement there is hostility between elites and their peers and between elites and the lower echelons of the society, at least on the level of ideology. We observe that, in spite of the elitists' desire to limit access and entrance to their group, this constant process of hostility and conflict between the elites and others inevitably alters the character and the disposition of the ruling class from time to time. Thus, we perceive perpetual conflict from two sources which makes for perpetual change. During this process there apparently is the filtration of the masses into the elites, according to Mosca, because the elites must at one stage or another call on the raw physical power of the masses.¹ To a degree, it would appear that elites are dependent upon the possession and support of the masses. To the extent that a bargaining process exists for mass support, some persons from the masses may enter the struggle for elite status on the level of personal aggrandizement.

Thus, there are two distinctive and explicit factors concerning entrance into the elite circles, that is, by

¹Mosca, op. cit., pp. 116-117.
gaining access to the elite via personal aggrandizement and by influencing them with ideas and ideology. The assumption underpinning this proposition is that elites need, except when they are tyrannical, the support of the masses in order to establish legitimacy and, ultimately, authority. In order to maintain their political and social position, they need to be acquainted, indeed to a degree sympathetic, with the problems and character of the masses.

The positions of Pareto, Mosca, and Michels are related to the "conservative" persuasion because they acknowledge the ineptitude of most men to regulate their affairs. Though the position is not necessarily a product of an urban and industrial civilization, in fact it appears to be a reaction to the democratic and technological ethos which recognizes that the democratic man can manage society. The unique factor about the perception of these early-day sociologists is their recognition and emphasis of conflict as a creative element in society. Without the circulation and competition among elites, it appears that the elites would not be able to remain responsive to some of the needs of a new and complex society.¹

¹Yet this sociological view stands at polar extremes to the philosocial group. While the former seek
Since the beginning of this chapter we have been examining normative questions about the proper form of leadership for the mass society. Few contemporary political and social theorists would make generalizations about the nature of man or the universe which sweep as broadly as those we have covered to this point. Modern political and social theory, or should we say behavioral analysis, limits its axioms to the status quo. This academic conservatism with its positivistic base, though concerned with "pure behavior," is at the roots of its pursuit as normative as the theorists of mass society whom we have discussed thus far. It is inescapably dealing with questions attentive to the problems of the "good" society. Because of the empirical rather than the imaginative base of this contemporary social thought, modern analysis has attached itself to the present,

salvation on earth by putting the experts in charge of solvable problems, the latter attack this pragmatic position as being inattentive to the complexities if not the ambiguities of political life. Both groups, while attacking the mass society, are in reality looking each other in the eye.

1 We do not want to intimate that political and social behavioral scientists are the only scholars with a non-normative orientation. Similar positivistic assumptions are, for example, at the base of psychological behaviorism and linguistic analysis.
content to say that experience rather than reason is the godparent of the future.

Yet, given the conditions of man today and the scrutiny of contemporary analysis, men still appear to fall into two dissimilar categories: the politically influential\(^1\) or the intellectually acute,\(^2\) and the stolid and basically irrational mass. Converse states,

"The most important insights are to be gained from the fact that ideological constraints in belief systems decline with decreasing political influence, which is to say that they are present at the 'top' of political systems, or subsystem and disappear rather rapidly as one moves 'downward' into their mass clienteles."\(^3\)

And similarly, McCloskey observes that politically active people have a much higher rate of tolerance and respect for the rules of the game in the American political system.\(^4\) Another analysis which reflects these findings can be found in the fourth chapter of Lipset's book, *Political Man*.\(^5\) The evidence aims to point conclusively

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\(^1\) McCloskey, op. cit.

\(^2\) Converse, op. cit.

\(^3\) Loc. cit., p. 248.

\(^4\) McCloskey, op. cit., p. 365. The article also somewhat tacitly displays that "our" democracy need not necessarily be based on a consensus, or a belief by the majority, of the basic "rules of the game." It is possible that we may well owe more to habit than to rationality.

\(^5\) Lipset, *Political Man*, op. cit., chap. IV.
to the irrational and authoritarian disposition of the lower socioeconomic strata of the nation. McCloskey thinks that,

"Political stability does not depend upon the widespread belief in the superiority of democratic norms and procedures but only upon their acceptance. . . . [Ergo] the viability of a democracy may depend less upon popular opinion than upon the activities and values of an 'aristocratic' strain whose members are set off from the mass by their political influence, their attention to public affairs and their active role as society's policy makers."¹

He concludes that the political influentials; i.e., professional men and intellectuals, organize their thoughts more coherently and more articulately than the masses whose lives willy-nilly are apathetic, ignorant, provincial, and divorced from intellectual activity.² The picture that these theorists paint is strikingly similar to their philosophical brethren.³

We shall be speaking about this social scientific approach and its embodiment of a theory of mass society throughout the latter part of our thesis.⁴ At this time

¹McCloskey, op. cit., p. 361.
²loc. cit., pp. 373-375.
³Much of Chapters IV and V will be devoted to a critique of the behavioral perception of the mass society. In these chapters we shall enhance the notion that contemporary analyses have been normative.
⁴Though most current behavioral studies have in fact been conservative in nature, the behavioral orientation
we need only to examine the sociological literature which falls under the rubric of "quest for community" in order to complete our examination of the "conservative" theories of mass society.

Selznick's thoughts about the mass society\(^1\) can be readily integrated with Mannheim's concern about the efficacy of voluntary groups and their meliorative affects on other small groups. Not only does he (Selznick) perceive the democratization and massification of society but, in addition, a greater access on the part of the masses to the elites. An increase in the number of elites has helped to create a situation where no one group is able to influence society. Selznick observes that there has been the breakdown of exclusiveness of elites and a dampening of the effectiveness of small voluntary groups which might have acted as insulation for the day-to-day pressures between the state and society. Selznick insists upon what Mosca, Michels, and Pareto had for a long time taken for granted and what is implicit in the type of behavioral studies which we discussed: that elites are necessary for the smooth functioning of

\[^1\text{Selznick, Phillip, "Institutional Vulnerability in Mass Society," pp. 13-29 in Olson, Philip, op. cit.}\]
society. The problem of contemporary existence is that conditions in the mass society prevent the elites from fulfilling their function. He recognizes that the "political influential" and the "intellectually acute" are relatively few and far between and that the masses are unqualified to rule because of their loss of values and the cultural levelling which has taken place.

This loss of standards in the mass society has led to the incursion of a mass culture. In spite of her faith in the common man and her fear of elitist manipulation of the masses, Arendt, like Ortega, still regards homo faber as an educated philistine. The mass society provides more leisure time than any other culture which must be filled with entertainment. The desire for entertainment is no different from gathering any other nondurable good, says she; in fact, it is part of the biological process. But like anything else in an excessive amount, it is unnecessary. Yet the modern man is virtually plagued with leisure; subsequently, industry and commerce have appropriately responded by ransacking the past and vulgarizing what learned people consider to be serious

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1 Arendt, Hannah, "Society and Culture." Daedalus, LXXXIX (Spring 1960), 285-287.

2 Cf. Ortega calls today's specialist the "learned ignoramus," op. cit., p. 112.
or high culture. This culture cannot be consumed as is; consequently, it is rewritten, condensed, digested, and reduced to kitsch. Not only, as Ortega supposes, is the modern man the ingracious recipient of the gifts of the past, Arendt also complains that he is making the culture of the past disappear. This is an inevitable result of the consumer society and it spells ruin to everything that it touches. She feels that an object d'art is cultural in the sense that it can endure, and "this durability is the opposite of functionality."

With pathos she continues,

"Culture can be safe only with those who love the world for its own sake . . . who know that without the beauty of man-made worldly things which we call works of art, without the radiant glory in which potential imperishability is made manifest to the world and in all the world, all human life would be futile and no greatness could endure."2

With the above in mind, Selznick's and the philosophical social positions are reinforced. The mass man does not accept responsibility for preserving a value system, and consequently, he easily shifts his values and ethical positions. Such an unstable existence, which it must be, creates a need to belong to any group because the existing society is so substantially unfulfilling. Conjoined


2loc. cit., p. 287.
with the anxiety that this condition produces, man becomes the victim of substitutes and becomes involved in a vain effort to escape this anxiety by blotting out his own identity. Selznick finds himself using Fromm's concept of "Ersatzgemeinschaft," the substitute community. This process ... is conducive to submission to totalitarian control, aggression against the weak, nihilism and compulsive conformity."¹

It weakens social participation, and relations between individuals become superficial. It is this development of segmental participation to which Pirandello's drama addresses itself. The individual in the mass society and the bureaucracy is not cherished for himself but for his functional position. It is by virtue of the role they play or the mask that they choose to wear at one time or another that men are distinguished for what they are rather than whom they are.

These views are given additional support by some studies which examine the habits of American middle-class existence. Commonly illustrated is the dissolution of the family as a primary group.² Accordingly, the mass

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¹Selznick, op. cit., p. 18.

culture isolates one individual from another. People become indifferent and indiscriminately tolerant, and thus all things are trivialized. This process prevents the individual from looking into himself. The mass media provide just one more escape from their boring and unfulfilled lives. This appears to be an elaborate if not intricate restatement of the concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, the one condition more rewarding than the other. Stein eloquently relates:

"It is to be feared, with the great majority of us, slave stokers to fires what burn for demons we would destroy, were it not that they appear in the guise of our benefactors."

Contemporary life has created a depersonalized society which has created an institutionalized cynicism. This cynical posture allows for a sophistication that enables the urbane cosmopolites to discuss the character of Willy Loman as if he were something apart from themselves. The picture that Vidich and Bensman portray of the closely knit association in our society. Despite friendships from formal organizations and mass entertainment, most people entertain themselves via conjugal participation. The conjugal family is powerful in all segments of the population and is the basic core of social involvement.

1 Van Den Haag, op. cit., p. 320.
2 Stein, op. cit., p. 232.
3 Vidich and Bensman, op. cit., pp. 79-82.
middle-class sophisticate is a psychological cynic who is so afraid of his own creation—society—that he has divorced himself from it. His cynicism is a reaction formation to the confrontation with self. And yet this horrid experience keeps progressing. Man has escaped from himself and thus, as Fromm iterates, he has escaped from freedom.

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Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to illustrate and discuss the various "conservative" theories of mass society. The most obvious assumption that may be made is that it is questionable that all the "conservative" mass society theorists are addressing the same mass society. None of those discussed made the effort to define the mass society. Rather, they have speculated about conditions in a society which is somewhat egalitarian and somewhat massified. Their approach has stressed that in our complex modern society the demos, or the common men, are not prepared to rule and, therefore, power should be concentrated in select hands. The "conservative" theorists allege that conditions in

contemporary society threaten the role of the elites and, ultimately, the functioning of the political system. Due to the massification and bureaucratization of society, it appears that the distance between the elites and the masses has expanded. The role of small voluntary groups as intermediary organizations has dwindled. Since the masses, it is alleged, have such an empty existence, owing to psychological and cultural reasons, it is feared that they will indiscriminately reach out for anything which appears fulfilling. Hence, the "conservative" fear that the mass society will succumb to tyranny.

The "conservative" theorists also perceive that conditions in the mass society inhibit and stultify interaction between individuals. Consequently, not only have persons become alienated from the political and social system, they have also become alienated from themselves.

Thus, the cumulative picture of society painted by the "conservative" theorists is not a very optimistic one. The conclusion that we cannot help but gather from this portrait is that contemporary society is not functioning smoothly because of a discontinuity between political ideology and political necessity.

There is one more point which bears discussion, that being the three different concepts of the term political which these groups bring to the threshold of this debate.
Yet for purposes of expediency they can only be identified at this time. The philosocial group has brought to our attention the fact that the answers about existence can be found through reason and independent of council with the masses. The essence of the position is that truth is transcendent. For the sociologists, the solutions are not gained by speculating about transcendent values, rather by submitting the technical question (which they all are) to the expert. The third group finds truth neither in the hands of the gods nor in the hands of the experts, but in the hands of men. As we are drawn more deeply into this thesis, we shall see that they have considered too few men.
CHAPTER III
THE DEMOCRATIC THEORISTS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter will be to discuss the "democratic" theorists, that is, the left wing of the critics of mass society. Whereas the concern of their "conservative" counterpart is with the exclusiveness of elites, the general "democratic" position is predisposed toward the importance of nonelites.

At the beginning of this chapter we should like to clarify in what sense we are using the term democratic and how the "democratic" theorists may or may not differ from the generally accepted definition of a democrat.

In the second part, a major portion of the chapter, we shall commence with an exposition of the assumptions of these theorists in an order listed immediately below. We shall find at the end of the second segment that the optimistic position of Friedrich stands in stark relief against the bloc of disenchanted views of society that were enunciated in the previous chapter and which are also preeminent in the psychology, sociology, and philosophy of the "democratic" theorists.

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The third portion of this chapter will be devoted to Kornhauser's synthesis of the "democratic" and "conservative" theories and his paradigm of the mass society.

Definition

As we saw in the previous chapter, the "conservative" theorists united about the belief that the community is superior to the individuals which comprise it, and that there are classes of people whose particular virtue entitles them to leadership in order to keep the greater mass of society from corrupting itself. Given their picture of an ailing modern society, their conception of an integrated universe, and their understanding of human nature, man could not be entrusted to himself.

To stereotype the democrat hardly involves the ambiguity and connotation that plagued our definition of the "conservative." As the general notion of a democrat, the "democratic" theorists find common ground in their belief in government for and by the people, rule by the majority, and equality of rights. Hence, the polity is no greater than the sum of its parts, and power should not be concentrated but rather diffused. They, generally speaking, conform to the classical definition of pluralism:

"The underlying principle of pluralism is simple
in the extremes. Under it as its name implies, it is not necessary that there be in the state any supreme authority at all. There may be one person, or institution, association, or body such as a church or guild or trade union to whose authority a citizen defers if he chooses, or there may be more than one; and if more, the citizen himself freely determines which shall receive his obedience should there be claims of conflict. In effect, there is and can be no 'sovereign' because sovereignty itself is a wholly inadmissible concept.\(^1\)

The "democratic" position is, in part, a reaction to 20th Century European fascism, communism, and, in general, elitism. The "democratic" theorists are unanimous in their view that there are no supermen in contemporary society. For the most part, elites have been ineffectual and unresponsive to the needs of the majority. They are stating that when there is rule by elites there is a discontinuity between political rule and political authority. Given this state of affairs, the "democratic" theorists perceive the necessity for nonelites to assert themselves.

The prescription of this school of thought is that people should become involved and participate in the political and social system through the medium of voluntary groups. The dilemma of this prescription is, as the "conservative" theorists had perceived, that contemporary society allegedly inhibits this type of action.

Psychology

The psychology of Mills\(^1\) and Fromm\(^2\) concurs with most of the thinkers we have spoken about thus far: that man is not rational. Mills hypothesizes that he has no instinctive harmonious purpose, yet his nature is so plastic that he can always be conditioned to accept his lot.\(^3\)

Fromm takes a "universal functionalist"\(^4\) point of view and states that every neurosis is a dynamic adaption

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\(^1\)Mills, *Power Elite*, op. cit.


\(^3\)Mills, *Power Elite*, op. cit., pp. 301-302. The explicit base of Mills' analysis is power. The quest for power is a fundamental fact of the human psyche. But in addition to this heroic aspect of humanity, there is implicit in this relatively undisputed assumption the fact that those in an advantageous position can mold the minds of men into any shape desired. Though Mills appears to lament about the power of the military, the absence of this power has been peculiarly unique to only the United States up until the end of World War II. We say "heroic" above because we think that Mills is cynically stating that the "good times" are now gone and there is nothing unusual about military ascendancy with its intensive and successful propagandizing. Furthermore, he, in his later works, does not advocate the dissolution of the power elite; rather, he urges that it must be made responsible to a humanizing force. See: Mills, *Causes of World War Three*, op. cit., pp. 36-42 and 131-137.

to the culture. Loneliness is mankind's greatest threat. His need to belong is overwhelming. Though human nature is a product of evolution and is neither innate nor completely conditioned, isolation is a natural fear. It would seem that man is in a constant state of frustration because, given his biological nature, there is a constant propensity for him to withdraw his ties from his fellow man. We shall try to explain. Fromm states,

"Man, the more he gains freedom in the sense of emerging from the original oneness with man and nature, the more he becomes an 'individual,' has no choice but to unite himself and productive work or else to seek a kind of security by such ties with the world as destroy his freedom and the integration of his individual self."

His reasoning is that man, the weak biological creature that he is, takes many more years to mature than any other animal. Thus, he is physiologically committed to his species. Yet as he matures, he emerges from this dependence on others toward his own personal isolation. With the dawn of urbanization and industrialization,

1Fromm, op. cit., p. 13. Cf. Durkheim, Emile, The Rules for Sociological Method. 8th ed.; London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1954. He argues that any psychological critique of society is inherently incorrect because society is greater than, and abstracted from, the individual. To foster a sociology based on psychological facts is to bring the study of society to the level of individual desires and individual action.

2Fromm, op. cit., pp. 22-23.
Fromm declares that survival now depends on man's own efforts, not as it once did on the security of his traditional status. Although he has been freed from his traditional chains, he has entered into a milieu in which he is increasingly isolated and never sure of his status in the community.

Fromm believes that man in the mass society concentrate more on freedom from without than on freedom from within. That is, they are more concerned with freedom, for example, than they are with personal constraint. What is the use, he asks, to have free speech when all persons speak and think the same? The modern man is forgetful of his own individual freedom.

Since men no longer treat themselves as persons, they have little empathy and, subsequently, have begun to treat each other as objects, functions, and role players. Men no longer are able to differentiate man qua man from material objects. Since they no longer make the distinction between self and objects, men have become indistinguishable and inseparable from the milieu. Consequently, there is a perpetual quest for material objects, which temporarily alleviate man's inherent

1Fromm, loc. cit., p. 105.

2Ibid.
ambivalent condition between security and loneliness.

Fromm feels that the concept of freedom has two dimensions: one, community-centered; the other, self-centered. Man has been freed from traditional authority and restraint, yet in the mass society he has found himself isolated and alienated from others. This freedom from the community is negative. Positive or self-centered freedom involves the full realization of individual potentialities independent of roles and functions. It involves cooperation amongst individuals and spontaneity between them.

Thus, in summary, we see that Fromm's is an extremely equalitarian outlook because he appears to be downgrading any, if not all, emphasis on status. Freedom can be realized only via the confrontation with the "real" self, not via the mask of a superficial reality. To extend this thought to social interaction necessitates relationships between two or more people rather than mere role players. The occurrence of elites and freedom appears to be mutually exclusive, simply because elite status necessitates the acceptance of a superordinate

status. It appears that Fromm is harkening back not only to some of the virtues of a *gemeinschaft* world but also to a purely egalitarian one.

Sociology

Few critics doubt that Mills is a cynic and his *Power Elite* leaves more to the imagination than to the hard facts. It can be said that this book is especially reflective of the Eisenhower administration and the McCarthy era. Thus, he perceives and magnifies the traditional Republican alliance with business and McCarthy's shrewd manipulation of the mass media. Merging such phenomena with contemporary trends of bureaucratization and centralization of power, he uses the term *mass society*.

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1McCarthy's daily manipulation of the press apparently had a profound effect on most observers. By virtue of the American commitment to a free press, all the news was printed, thus offering McCarthy a ready-made propaganda machine. Baltzell, a "conservative" theorist, stated, "Classical liberal theory to the contrary, then, there is little empirical evidence in history to support the theory that either a free people or a free press is, in the long run, sufficient, though both are indeed necessary guarantors of freedom against the rise of dictatorial demagoguery ... as long as a free press is guided by a theory which supports the reporting of fact, whether it be true or false, it is hardly in a position to do anything but provide the demagogue with publicity." Baltzell, op. cit., p. 292. It appears, however, that positions such as those above are caught on the horns of a dilemma. Baltzell accepts the importance of free speech but is wary of its results.
interchangeably with modern society. Characteristic of modern society is the imposition of important decisions in the society on the individual with little or none of his consultation. This, in the end, is due to the lack of representativeness on the part of elites, voluntary political groups, and formal institutionalized channels of government. Without elaboration we shall briefly state Mills' thesis. The nation is controlled by an invisible leadership composed of the highest-ranking officers in the military, corporate, and governmental hierarchies. Mills' thesis is such a part of the American scene today that it is unnecessary to dwell on the components of this group at any greater length than what has been stated above. In addition to our criticism that the Power Elite is a reflection of the particular Eisenhower administration of the early 'fifties, Mills himself expected that what he had to say would not be accepted because of the simple-minded liberal ideology that there was no ruling class and that the United States was pluralistic. He states that the power elite is esoteric and increasingly homogenous. It is explicit that he cannot have all the facts to validate his thesis. In light of the above factors about the Power Elite—

its lack of facts, reflection of a particular era, and esoteric nature—we can only utilize the book as a heuristic tool or a fiction which crystallizes the "democratic" protests against modern American society.

According to Mills, America has basically three levels, which he stratifies on the basis of power. The mass society is the lowest stratum of the American culture. Its constituency comprises most men on the street including professionals and the lower- and middle-level managerial classes. The middle level is composed of secondary powerholder; e.g., men active in the Congress, political parties, and large organized pressure groups. The elites, or power elite, are at the apogee of the system. The bottom level bears little resemblance to the liberal image of a society in which voluntary associations divide and hold the keys to political power. Actually, it is fragmented and impotent.¹

Given this national picture of the American political system, we see that the issues which shape the lives of men are neither raised nor discussed by the public at large. The mass of the population lives in a circumscribed environment in which the mass media create a world beyond the "real" world. The mass media have filled

¹loc. cit., p. 28.
them with a false conception of the universe; and Mills, like Fromm, finds it plain to see that man has lost confidence in human beings. The mass media do not speak with their audience; rather, they speak at the audience, constantly impressing their authority and influence.

Mills, agreeing with almost every other critic of mass society, states,

"For life in a society of masses implants insecurity and further impotence; it makes man uneasy and vaguely anxious, it isolates the individual from the solid group; it destroys firm group standards. Acting without goals, the man in the mass feels pointless."

As this sense of normlessness intensifies, men withdraw themselves from participation in the political process. Ultimately, such behavior weakens the links of social integration and communal stability. In spite of the concept of pluralism, which is the "stuff" of democratic theory, it is conspicuously absent in America. Mills asserts,

"The political structure of a democratic state requires the public, and the democratic man, in his rhetoric, must assert that this public is the very seat of sovereignty."

There is little or no link, Mills fears, between the lower and upper levels of society. Even the middle

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1 loc. cit., p. 323.

2 ibid.
level is progressively losing power. No longer are the middle-level organizations able to mediate the grievances between the lower and upper strata. Not only are voluntary groups politically and socially impotent, in the process of trying to retain power they have centralized and extended the size of the group. Hence, the individual no longer derives any psychological satisfaction out of belonging to a group in which he can have no effect.

Not only is the mass of men alienated from the decision-making process, but also those who are members of the middle level are often alienated from the process themselves. In grand organizations such as national labor unions, the AMA, or the Farm Bureau, the rank and file do not influence policy. The effective leaders of these groups are increasingly members of the power elite.

What Mills fears is the de facto disenfranchisement of the majority of the nation. To the extent that the masses are without political effectiveness and social integration, they, the "democratic" theorists lament, are susceptible to manipulation by the elites.

Philosophy

According to Arendt, a rationalist, man's nature is

inherently pluralistic. He is instinctively concerned with things of this world. Yet this does not signify that all human problems are technical. She perceives that the flow of intellectual thought in the modern age is inexorably moving man from his natural plural condition where he was traditionally concerned with reaping "truth" from political compromise. As if it were the theme of the critique of mass society, Arendt concludes that the post-Machiavellian pragmatic man has become alienated from the true nature of himself and his world. This spectre is an inevitable outcome of the enthronement and magnification of modern science. Men have lost their faith in reason and accept only that which is empirically or mathematically verifiable.

Though the realization that the modern's life is unfulfilled and in quest of some type of close relationship--true, false, or otherwise--could predispose one, as Mannheim, to a "conservative" position, it does not persuade Arendt. Her observations of the origins of European fascism permit her to emphasize the importance

views about mass culture can hardly be recognized as much less than a "conservative" position. Politically speaking, she is less a pure democrat than a "democrat" out of necessity. As we mentioned in the "Introduction," we are utilizing Kornhauser's framework. We are not as concerned with personalities as we are with putting general ideological positions into perspective.
of the masses rather than elites. She observed that all of the 20th Century nontotalitarian European dictatorships were preceded by totalitarian movements. These movements shattered two myths about the masses: (1) that what appeared to be a politically neutral and apathetic mass was in reality an active majority rather than an unimportant minority, and (2) they shattered the illusion that the apathetic masses did not "matter" because they were unintelligible and inarticulate. Whether or not they were incorrigible, Arendt states that when they did invade the parliaments they demonstrated to the rest of the population that parliamentary desires were not consistent or attuned to the needs of the real world.¹

Since this undermined the respect and confidence in elites, democratic government in the future, according to Arendt, must remain more responsive or be truly democratic. Though men behave irrationally at times, they are basically thoughtful. The hope for the resurrection of human potential, conjoined with the recognition that the elites themselves had been ineffectual and incorrigible, leads Arendt to believe that modern man--*homo faber*--and democracy are not incompatible.

The Positive View

Friedrich responds to the contemporary disenchantedment with man and society by imploring,

"Give the simple mind of the ordinary man the facts and he will see the rational, the reasonable way to act, and having perceived this way, he will follow it."  

Friedrich's intention is to state his belief in the common man in such a manner as to permit what is sound in the antirationalist doctrines and yet retain what he thinks is necessary for a democracy.

He accepts the modern natural-law theories of Rousseau and Paine and agrees that man is social and equipped to live in a sociable manner. Actually, he believes that the common man and the state are incompatible. However, like Arendt, he must accommodate contemporary conditions and come to some agreement as to what form of government man can and should endure. He begins with the assumption that the community is no greater than the number of individuals or sovereigns who comprise the association. The common man can be no more

2loc. cit., p. 9.
3loc. cit., p. 55.
than one "nth" of the state. If we were more, he would be an uncommon man. He observes that elites, or uncommon men, are merely common folk who are wielding temporary power. Since there are no supermen, he states that we must be drawn to democracy.

Friedrich surmises that the antirationalists resent the masses because they think the base denominator of the crowd is always making the decisions for the populus. He responds,

"The larger the collective groups, the less frequent become the instances in which one person is apt to be right as against the collective judgment of all."

He believes that perfection is not the concern of the common man; therefore, it does not matter if he cannot distinguish Durant from Whitehead.

He states that these critical theorists exaggerate the irrationality of human society. Most of them

"interpret society as being molded by an inevitable sequence of social forces or picturing man as an inevitable result of psychic drives, these writers unwittingly destroyed . . . the foundations for the belief in uncommon men, in an elite."

1 loc. cit., p. 65.
2 loc. cit., p. 32.
3 loc. cit., p. 33.
4 loc. cit., p. 262.
Since we cannot have faith in the common man, in part because of the original antirationalist views of Freud, we cannot have faith in the elites. The lack of faith in men has been reified to the extent that the media feel the necessity for influencing rather than informing the masses. The antirationalists have created a self-fulfilling prophecy, and it is the acceptance of this prophetic supposition that is destroying a heritage which is nigh three centuries old.

Friedrich's belief in the common man is substantiated not on a rational basis but for psychological if not, in fact, intuitional reasons. He iterates, referring to political decisions, that "character is more important than intellect." He finds it obvious that laws are not rational propositions or universal truths; rather, they are expedient policies which are amorphous and subject to continuous change. The appeal to character is a safeguard that the laws will always be in accord with the folkways and mores of the culture and that decisions will be ground out of tradition. The common man reserves unto himself a moral firmness that

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1 loc. cit., pp. 262-268.
2 loc. cit., p. 34.
3 loc. cit., p. 203.
will make for the stable acceptance of values and decisions. He simply does not have the cynical cleverness of elites. In spite of the fact that the common men have no special abilities, intellectual or otherwise, it is for the simple reasons that there are no supermen, that they are collectively rational, and that most are honorable that Friedrich can endorse a constitutional democracy.

Kornhauser's Synthesis

It is not that Kornhauser's attempt stands alone in the discipline that we have chosen to examine The Politics of Mass Society; rather, it is its unique and extensive quality. Kornhauser's innovation was to bring mass analysis rather than class analysis to the study of mass society. In addition, it was Kornhauser who recognized the necessity for a synthesis of the "conservative" and "democratic" positions for developing a new and defined theory of mass society. Finally, it is his extensive discussion of the nature and causes of mass behavior which sets his text apart from the multitude of anthologies and periodic journal articles. The intention of his book is to

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illustrate the social, political, and psychological antecedents of mass society and to demonstrate how certain patterns of behavior are not conducive to a democracy.

**Definition**

If we can recall, it was the "conservative" theorists who, for the most part, were conscious of the virtue of a particular class and placed much of the onus for contemporary problems on the uncooperative masses. The "democratic" theorists were concerned with removing class barriers because they feared that the unresponsive elites in a massified society increased the threat of tyranny and the manipulation of nonelites. Both the "conservative" and the "democratic" theorists complement each other in that they agree that what must be preserved in society is freedom. The preservation of freedom, it seems, is akin only to that segment of society which inherently cherishes the value of freedom. "Conservatives" such as Mosca or Ortega, for example, are nonegalitarian because they perceive that the elites behold the virtue of society and are in a position to prescribe and proscribe what is necessary for the good of society. This is in sharp distinction to the "democratic" theorists' search for equal rights and the withdrawal of as many external constraints as is consistent with the
liberty of their fellow men. According to Kornhauser, neither approach provides an adequate understanding of the mass society. On the surface it appears that both theories perceive society as directly exposed to forces which make the maintenance of freedom precarious. But this is insufficient to link the two positions together. The link is in the merging of the conception of the structure of mass society.¹ He postulates,

"Our conception of a mass society involves the following major proposition: a high rate of mass behavior may be expected when both elites and non-elites lack social insulation; that is, when elites are accessible to direct intervention by non-elites, and when non-elites are available for direct mobilization by elites."²

Thus, a mass society involves three major components: accessible elites, available non-elites, and mass behavior. Mass society is not synonymous with either pure democracy, as intimated by the "conservative" theorists, or totalitarian dictatorship, as intimated by the "democratic" theorists. Rather, it is a transitionary concept which lies somewhere between the ideal models of democracy and social totalitarianism. The purpose of his theory of mass society, Kornhauser states, is to observe

"conditions under which democratic institutions

¹Kornhauser, Politics, pp. 38-43.
²loc. cit., p. 43.
are vulnerable to totalitarianism, rather than as a set of conditions underlying totalitarian institutions.\footnote{1}

**Methods of Analysis**

Kornhauser basically accepts that there are certain political, economic, psychological, and social forces in society which tend to alienate all individuals from the political world. With this in mind, we can understand that Kornhauser's mass theory seeks the breakdown of personal and then class identity as an important process whereby people seek fulfillment through mass movements. Divergent classes of men unite over their mutual alienation. Hence, it is all social classes which contribute to the base of mass movements and mass behavior.\footnote{2} This does not signify that he means to discount class analysis. He iterates,

\footnote{1} loc. cit., p. 16.

\footnote{2} loc. cit., pp. 144-145 and 160-161. We find little explanation of this phenomenon, "mass movement." For purposes of consistency, we ask the reader to join us for the time being and accept a commonsensible understanding of the term. To go into a critique of the term at this point would be to criticize Kornhauser before we have let him tell his story. We shall keep the proverbial horse in front of the cart and accept, generally, that "mass movements" refer to the involvement of very large numbers of persons in some political action. They usually participate, independent of their class background, for purposes which involve the totality of their existence rather than a unique particular interest.
"When organizations have as their central purpose the advancement of class interests, they tend to be restrained and limited by the exigencies of their social situation and class tradition. Totalitarian movements, on the other hand, have stable interests, traditional, or other affiliations of their members to restrain them in their aims (which tend to be millenial), their methods (which tend to be violent) or control of their members (which tend to be total). Since . . . we are primarily concerned with similarities between the political extremes, we are emphasizing mass analysis. But because important differences also obtain in addition to mass analysis for a fuller description of their social composition."

Kornhauser's method of analysis is, in addition, comparative. The bases for comparison are four models of societies. In the "communal society" members of the society are firmly bound to each other by a network of ascribed statuses concomitant with consensual face-to-face Gemeinschaften groups. In a "pluralistic society" there are a multiplicity of competing nonprimary groups which have overlapping memberships. These groups allow for a sense of personal identification and worth. These voluntary associations insulate the rulers from the ruled by virtue of their ability to filter reasonable requests from a multitude of demands which are made in the ranks of the groups. This process supposedly operates in reverse in that it protects the masses from elitist or authoritarian domination. This grid of moderating groups

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is absent in the "mass society." Groups which do emerge here are massified. Their objectives are usually millennial rather than particularistic. Since these groups are massified, it is assumed that individuals are unable to glean a similar amount of self-gratification which they might otherwise have received in either of the other two systems where greater action-identification would have been possible. Due to the lack of ego integration in the "mass society," it provides a passive environment in which individuals can be manipulated surreptitiously by a charismatic leadership. In a "totalitarian society" the state dominates the society completely. Groups and individuals are implements for the policy of the rulers. Groups may be active but, according to the model, they in no way review policy.¹

Causes of Mass Behavior

The four models of societies serve as referents for the different amounts of cultural shock or institutional traumatization that a society can withstand. Kornhauser concludes that the pluralistic model is most conducive to a democracy in the contemporary world. The ease with which it can absorb shock through the structure of

overlapping and particularistic groups is superior to the mass or totalitarian models, which cannot diffuse the impact of cultural trauma. Given this excellent ability to shoulder and absorb the effects of societal crises, Kornhauser proceeds to refute the critics of mass society who use the United States and the modern Western world as their target.

Contrary to the theorists who think that technism and industrialization are prime causes of the mass society, Kornhauser replies that it is not industrialization per se; rather, it is where industrialization proceeds at an uneven rate. This situation brings about sharp differential gains and economic differences. Inevitably, those at the bottom of the economic system become increasingly frustrated and alienated from the system.¹

Neither are the problems of mass society a derivative of urbanization per se. He puts the onus on rapid urbanization. Where there is rapid urbanization and industrialization, rigid distinctions develop because of discontinuities between cultural expectations and reality. If the process of urbanization occurs at a rapid pace, people are unable to adjust personally. They are unable to organize voluntary groups to pace and check the changing

¹loc. cit., pp. 148-152.
economic and social scene.

This analysis describes a schism between a superstructure which is manipulating the real world and a substructure which is in the futile position of living in that world. The substructure develops a sense of futility because of an inability to compete effectively with its opposition. Ultimately, its members acquiesce from the struggle simply because there was no gradual accommodation of personal needs in a rapidly changing urban and industrial setting.

Kornhauser goes on to illustrate that mass movements are not an automatic consequence of democracy but rather a product of the discontinuity between political authority and popular rule. He surmises that the lack of social, economic, and political integration leads to the loss of ego integration, or anomie. Hence, man begins to conform out of a sense of anxiety and loses all self-confidence and direction. In his quest for psychological fulfillment, he is liable to grasp for any straw which he thinks will bring meaning to his life. It is for these reasons that he is extremely susceptible to mass


2 loc. cit., pp. 131-143. There is no doubt, though, that movements are more likely to spring up in a democracy because of their usually tolerant constitutional principles.
behavior and manipulation.¹

Mass movements fulfill the need for individuals to have relationships with the power structure where voluntary groups have been shown to be nonexistent or ineffective. To the extent that these movements are direct, they fall into Kornhauser's concept of a mass movement. Mass behavior focuses its attention on objectives which are remote from personal knowledge and experience. Furthermore, he finds that the issues which do receive attention can be known only via the mass media. To this extent Kornhauser believes that mass movements will lack any sense of reality and precision.²

Kornhauser's Conclusion

A legitimate question to ask now is whether the United States or the modern Western world conform to Kornhauser's concept of the mass society. Towards the conclusion of his book, it becomes apparent that most highly developed nations are democratic and very stable. Western nations which have seen the gradual growth of their social and political systems do not fit the model of mass society. The pattern fits most snugly around the

²loc. cit., pp. 177-181.
patterns of behavior and the sociopolitical systems of the underdeveloped and emerging nations. These are the nations which are "top-heavy" with intellectuals and elites and are without a middle class to act as a buffer between the elite and the mass. Yet, Kornhauser iterates, the large Western nations need not be content with this knowledge. Marx may no longer be the prophet of doom, but it might well be Weber for whom "bureaucratization not the class struggle provides the central dynamic of the modern world."\(^1\) Kornhauser warns that bureaucratization is the strongest threat to social and political pluralism in the Western world. His fear, similar to that of Mannheim and Fromm, is that the ascendancy of a large centralized bureaucracy will atomize the middle class. And it has been the middle classes which have traditionally made the compromises which are at the foundation of democratic society.\(^2\)

Throughout his text Kornhauser has tried to argue that there must be a balance in society. An equilibrium should be maintained through pluralistic groups and the conflict implicit in their organization. Kornhauser concludes that the concept of democracy "requires

\(^1\) loc. cit., p. 232.

\(^2\) ibid.
widespread appreciation of the necessary tension between elites and non-elites. Otherwise, the mark of contemporary society will be the alienation of both elites and nonelites.

Conclusion

Let us recapitulate. It appears that the "conservative" theorists, or antirationalists as Friedrich might have it, have separated individual from group behavior. Though contemporary studies reinforce the picture of the irrationality of the common man, the antirationalists had assumed that his behavior in the group would be equally inept. Yet when the "democratic" theorists observed the great mistakes of humanity and looked to the roots of fascism and totalitarianism, according to Arendt and Kornhauser, support was drawn from all the social strata. This situation reinforced the "democratic" assumption that there are no supermen and that, in the future, governments must be more responsive, if not truly democratic.

At the conclusion of Chapter II, we questioned

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1 loc. cit., p. 236.

2 ibid.

3 Arendt, Origins, op. cit., p. 310.
whether the "conservative" theorists were addressing the same mass society. Likewise, the "democratic" theorists have chosen to acknowledge some aspect of Western civilization as the paradigm of the mass society. They have warned that the debilitating conditions of modern life prompt social and political instability. Observation shows them that elites are similar to common men; in fact, they have been unresponsive and ineffectual in fulfilling the needs of the majority.

If we reconsider the possible models of mass society for the "democratic" and "conservative" theorists and compare them with Kornhauser's theory, there is a distinct difference. The crucial difference is that the former utilize modern Western civilization as the paradigm for the mass society. Though Western civilization has its obvious problems, the threat of mass behavior, of alienation of both elites and nonelites, is, according to Kornhauser, greatest in the developing nations, or the non-Western world.

This leads us to make two assumptions: (1) it may be time to reassess our observations of the world in order to see who is actually threatened and (2) it may be time to reassess, if not establish, a definition of mass society in order to perceive what is threatened. As it stands now, the term mass society is less a definition of
a particular state of affairs than it appears to be a potpourri of assorted social and political ills of modern civilization, both Western and non-Western.
CHAPTER IV
THE CRITICS OF THE THEORIES OF MASS SOCIETY

Introduction

Up until this point we have been concerned with the theories of mass society. We have described the "conservative" position which seeks the exclusiveness of elites and have recorded the "democratic" opposition which stresses the importance of nonelites. The "conservative" thesis, irreconcilably locked with the "democratic" antithesis, has been summarized and synthesized by Kornhauser. It must be kept in mind that the central issue of this debate concerns the proper structure or type of government and leadership necessary for contemporary society. The "conservative" theorists contend that power should be concentrated. The "democratic" pluralists contend that power should be diffused. In order to preserve legitimacy and effectiveness, Kornhauser perceives the necessity for a sympathetic balance between elites and nonelites.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the writings of the critics of the theories of mass society. The first segment of this chapter shall be devoted to
the critics of Kornhauser. The second part of the chapter will concern itself with the critics of the concept of mass society per se. Throughout the course of this chapter, we should like to explore the efficacy of three major propositions which put into question the perception of the theorists of mass society.

It appears that observations of the mass society have been lax to acknowledge elements in society which can be considered political in nature but have not been recognized as part of the political system.

One might say that there is a lag between social patterns and political institutions in the modern society which is in a constant state of flux. This condition of constant change encompasses and oftentimes adjusts conflicts between various interests in the society.

Only in an introductory fashion, we should like to show that many of the mass society theorists have been influenced by latent ideological predispositions and have, consequently though unintentionally, distorted the picture of contemporary Western and American civilization.

If these propositions are considered sufficiently valid, it may be necessary to revitalize our observations and theories of the mass society.
Critics of Kornhauser

The First Proposition

Most of Kornhauser's critics--political sociologists and sociologists--concentrate on his interpretation of group behavior in modern society. The first and most obvious criticism is the query about the mechanics of the allegedly debilitating mass movements. Exactly what is a mass movement? The question is posed, to mention only the most verbal critics, by Deutsch, Erbe, and Wrong. Kornhauser's thesis confirms the common-sense notion that psychological insecurity and social isolation favor extremist politics and mass behavior. Having gone this far he does not distinguish mass movements from non-mass movements. Accepting that mass movements are extremist, at what stage, it is asked, can a radical movement become a mass movement? A question that may be legitimately raised at this point is: Are Kornhauser's critics merely concerned with numbers and the amount of


people in a mass movement? The answer is negative; they are concerned with the structure of mass movements. Let us elaborate. Kornhauser is wary of mass movements because their causes and objectives are millenial, remote, and experiential. Essentially, there are three outstanding factors about the structure of the mass movement which contribute to Kornhauser's fear of them. He believes that (1) the superimposition of a guiding and messianic ethos on a heterogeneous mass creates a homogeneous membership which (2) contributes to the loss of exclusiveness of elites and also (3) prepares the mass membership for manipulation by an obviously sinister charismatic elite. By characterizing the structure of mass movements as immense chunks of malleable population manipulated by an extraordinary elite, Kornhauser leaves himself open to questions concerning the structure, administration, and political obligation of these groups.

Assuming that we can speak of mass movements, little recognition is given to the Weberian and Michelian "iron laws" of organization which might explain how the mass movement maintains its momentum. It is one thing to say that elites emerge in all bureaucracies and moderate-sized groups, but it is extremely questionable whether groups composed of millions with an alleged allegiance to a total cosmogony could maintain their impetus
without a hierarchy and cadre of thousands. This leads to the question of whether, in fact, mass movements are strictly monolithic? Or are they composed of many units which are led by a cadre who abide by but, no doubt, alter the larger group's ideology?

It is essential that in the future some effort be given to the study of the nature of mass movements in order to verify at least seven factors which will aid in deciding whether or not mass movements contribute to the instability of a democratic society.

Our idea is not only that (1) it must be asked whether a member has other group affiliations and overlapping interests, but also that (2) it must be ascertained whether or not his unit fluctuates from the standard ideology so as to comprise a distinct unit. If it is proven that there are subordinate groups with some type of distinct membership, we must ask (3) if the member can, according to the traditional concepts of group interaction, glean a sense of responsibility and worth which is engendered from realizing that compromise is necessary to achieving his goals. If we can accomplish the above, we should be able to discover (4) whether the mass movement tends to meliorate or exacerbate extreme positions. We must then ask (5) what, if any, role does the cadre play in the mass movement and (6) what is its role in the unit. Not to
leave the member the complete victim of social forces, it must be answered (7) whether his psychological satisfaction is warranted. Does he have an effect in his unit or even in other parts of the movement?

If these questions can be determined, we will be in a superior position to decide whether or not mass movements are pluralistic and whether or not they can be a source of stability. Our point so far, to be emphatic, is that the nature of mass movements has gone, for the most part, inadequately examined. Albeit questions about it go unanswered, they are at the heart of Kornhauser's definition of the mass society.

Some critics level the argument that Kornhauser and other critics of his calibre are middle-class rationalists and, hence, surreptitiously limit the political practice of some elements of our society.

In order to define his position, Perrow relates the traditional assumptions of political pluralism and voluntary group membership. By distinguishing individual pluralism from political pluralism, he demonstrates that the reification of the concept can lead to abusive behavior. Competitive pluralism is a political concept

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which simply emphasizes the balancing of power between diverse interests. Individual pluralism is an unexpected consequence or latent function of political pluralism. It is a psychological phenomenon which leads to the appreciation of the views of others and provides the intellectual tolerance to change personal attitudes. Normatively speaking, apart from its latent function, the manifest mechanics of political pluralism deserve little praise. Perrow continues to elaborate these traditional assumptions which surmise that the interests of all significant groups in society are given representation which is true and uncoerced. The concept also allows for a multiplicity of groups and overlapping memberships. Since the individual has no great stake in any group at one time, it is expected that the pluralist will accept defeat and compromise. All of the assumptions above supposedly lend themselves to the stability of the political and social system.¹

Contrary to what he considers to be popular belief, Perrow states that group interaction today is not in accord with the traditional model of political pluralism. The minority of the nation which voluntary groups do serve are least likely to be a source of instability in

¹Perrow, op. cit., pp. 413-415.
the United States. He emphasizes his thesis by pointing to the plight of the Negroes and other colored races, the consumer, the poor, and the unemployed. These significant groups have had very little aid, relatively speaking, from formal organizations such as churches, unions, or industrial councils. "The groups speak for them occasionally, but rarely with them." ¹ Perrow decries that even though the nation has multiple groups (the type which Kornhauser is calling for) the interests of most groups have gone unrecognized. Existing groups have not provided for the peaceful entry of new groups into the system. Furthermore, the groups which do exist have not made their membership intellectually appreciative of the problems of others.

Shifting his focus to mass institutions or supra-local groups, Perrow claims that mass institutions open themselves to more than one class and do have a multiple group structure. ² Contrary to Kornhauser's prognostication,

¹loc. cit., p. 414.

²Cf. Gusfield, Joseph R., "Mass Society and Extremist Politics." American Sociological Review, XXVII (February 1962). Gusfield seems to think that there is the possibility of pluralism in a mass movement and the mass society. He states that suprelocal groups in the mass society provide a source of direct attachment which is necessary to keep a society together. These massified groups increase rather than decrease the possibility of substantive consensus because local groups cannot reach a national
they are not, in fact, monolithic. Thus, the crucial determinant, as it were, of totalitarian groups or mass movements is put into question. According to Gusfield, it is unlikely that one dynamic group will be able to superimpose itself and guide the whole massive organization.

Perrow and Gusfield are obviously attempting to compensate for our questions raised about the structure of mass movements. This contradiction of Kornhauser and of the theorists of mass society who perceive the dissolution of secondary groups again points to the necessity for reliable and extensive observations, if not renewed studies of contemporary existence.

The unique thing about critics, such as Perrow and Gusfield, is that they support mass movements because they are amongst the few organizations today which actually conform to the traditional concepts about group

consensus. He urges that these groups actually diminish rather than exacerbate the intensity of social conflict by mitigating the impact of major decisions and social changes which are inevitable. Furthermore, the linkage between the elites and the membership is flexible rather than rigid. Hence, it seems plausible that the link between them is not superimposed by the one on the other. This would seem to undermine Kornhauser's fear that there is the loss of exclusiveness of elites. Elites, in fact, do exist and are distinct from the smaller groups. If the links between the elites and the masses are flexible, it is questionable if the masses can be manipulated with the ease assumed by Kornhauser. Gusfield implies that supra-local institutions are a stabilizing factor and that they can be tolerant.
interaction. Perrow's criticism is that these concepts, as utilized, were able only to explain the behavior of those already inside the political system. But as modern society has incorporated or politicized the population, we have begun to realize that there are elements of the community which have always been apart from the political system. The Negro population provides us with our best domestic example. Extremist behavior is apparently a major channel which will allow disenfranchised elements to get to the position where they can afford to make the compromise so characteristic of ordinary groups. The lag between social patterns and political institutions becomes obvious now. As it stands today, the new members of society—the poor, the lower socioeconomic groups, the Negroes—cannot afford either to lose or even to compromise.

Thus, Perrow is virtually condemning Kornhauser and his fear of mass movements. What Kornhauser has done, Perrow argues, is to use only upper middle- and upper-class behavior to derive a model of society as a whole. Perrow iterates,

"The model then must be revised. Rather than saying that membership in multiple groups leads to more stable and responsible behavior, and thus

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1 Perrow, op. cit., p. 420.
fosters democracy and presumably promotes the economic affluence of group members, we should revise the order of the argument as follows: Economic affluence leads to the stability to participate in mediating groups, that tend to engage in responsible behavior, and the occasion for practicing 'tolerance' in the true meaning of the term. That is, we can tolerate a threat to the equilibrium of our system because we have built up sufficient immunity or protection to make the threat ineffective. . . . For those who are not immune to threats and who have no surplus to bargain with, tolerance and compromise are not permissible."

Let us recapitulate for a moment. The critics of Kornhauser have shown the need for an adequate description of mass movements. In searching for this description, it becomes apparent that Kornhauser's model of democratic participation is biased and influenced by upper middle-class patterns of behavior. We have also found that the traditional model of pluralistic group interaction might not conform as well to middle-class groups as it may to supralocal or mass organizations. In general, it appears that Kornhauser, not to mention Lipset and many other contemporary political sociologists, has been lax to consider elements in society which are political in nature as part of the political system.

Critics of Mass Society

The Second Proposition

Since the conclusion of Chapter III, we have been

1 Ibid.
developing the notion that inadequate perception of the mass society puts into question the viability of the "conservative," the "democratic," and Kornhauser's theory of mass society. Not only are there dilemmas about who should control the political system, but also about who actually participates in the system. Even if it can be said that voluntary groups are a hallmark of democratic participation, it is questionable whether they are, in fact, disappearing or resurging. At the end of the previous chapter, we found ourselves questioning the observations of the mass society for different reasons. We noted that Kornhauser was inclined to think that the mass society was more akin to the emerging nations than to the urban and industrialized West. We reiterate: it may not only be time to review our theories of mass society; it may also be necessary to revise our techniques for observing the existing order.

The most staunch critic of the theories of mass society is Shils. His writings aim to redefine the picture of modern society and to criticize the mass society theorists for being victims of a romantic mythology.

The mass society is a new and different condition. It is the only type of society that manifests a politicalization of the entire culture. An enormous number of people are being integrated into the social system at all
levels of the state and society. This is not an unusual observation; in fact, it provided the basis for Mannheim's distinction between "functional" and "substantial" rationality. Mannheim perceived the dissolution of small groups and the intensification of bureaucratic standardization. Contrary to what we have heard from most of the mass society theorists, Shils views a modern society in which there is rigorous pluralism concomitant with a great deal of conflict. This conflict is a result of the total popular participation in society. It is a product of the political and social inequalities which inhere in a society which contains tens of millions of persons who are socially mobile and struggling for individual and group recognition. Shils thinks that this conflict ultimately permits a consensual society. In a society where conflict is so prevalent, it is the choice of alternatives to avoid further conflict and violence which develops a sympathetic response between the demands of men and gives the masses a feeling of unity. He feels that the mass society allows for a greater sense of attachment to the society as a whole. This is the first society in the

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history of the world which has incorporated virtually all members into the political and social systems. For this reason alone, it has enhanced the dignity of man. Man, unfortunate as it may seem to others (i.e., LeBon or Ortega), is the source of his own destiny.

In response to the hue and cry about political alienation, Shils assumes that the apparent withdrawal of the masses from political participation is a manifestation of the disenchantment with extreme forms of authority. Consistent with his notion of conflict and the emergence of new elements into the community, he states,

"The apathy which so many notice is brought to the forefront of attention as a result of the greatly extended opportunity for judgment and sharing in the exercise of decision which the mass society offers. The vulgarity is one of the manifestations of the expansion of sensibility; it is an unrefined and an appealing expression of sensibility which replaces the long prevailing torpor of much of the race."\(^2\)

In spite of its shortcomings—the inevitable industrialism, the onslaught of urbanism, the mass communications—Shils insists that the critics of the mass society do not perceive the unique quality of today's generation. Similarly, Bell acknowledges that the most impressive factor about the mass society, apart from the attenuating

\(^1\)loc. cit., pp. 37-38.

\(^2\)loc. cit., p. 45.
psychosocial aspects, is the inexorable rapidity of change. The most salient phenomenon about modern life is the striving for material and economic betterment and the greater opportunity for individuals to exercise their talents. This type of society, Bell relates, embodies a plurality of norms rather than the monopolistic control of a single consensual group or ethos. The mass society is a product of this diversity and, hence, a product of change itself.\(^1\) Basically, he believes that the critics of contemporary life are merely making a romantic protest against this continual process of transformation.\(^2\)

Earlier in this chapter we pointed out that it may be necessary to renew our observations of society because existing theories did not provide an adequate explanation of the nature of society. Perrow and Gusfield contributed the notion that the mass society may well be pluralistic if we acknowledge the majority of the actors in the community. Shils and Bell have reintroduced the very old notion that society is in a constant state of conflict and change, which is a latent or nondeliberative process which attempts to adjust to the inequalities between interests in the society. The alarming quality of these two

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\(^2\)Ibid.
notions is not that they are in any sense new ideas (they are quite old) but that theorists of mass society were lax to develop the conflicting rather than the consensual or integrative side of sociations.

Having disposed of our original two propositions, let us move on to our third point: that the theorists of mass society have to an extent been influenced by latent ideological predispositions, and albeit unintentional, they have distorted the picture of contemporary Western civilization.

The Third Proposition

Both Shils and Bell level the argument that a concept of mass society is meaningless without a proper standard of comparison. Most theorists of mass society, as we have seen, utilize the concepts developed by Tönnies. Bell blatantly states that it has not been proven that social disorder and anomie are borne out of this new and changed society. Shils states that neither contemporary theorists nor Tönnies have had sufficient data about the nature of society in the past. Thus, he questions whether,

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1 We shall discuss this at greater length in Chapter V.

in regard to the quality of individual integration and personal happiness, a valid distinction can be made between societies which are *Gemeinschaften* and those which are *Gesellschaften*. If Shils is correct he seriously undermines many of the normative propositions of the mass society theorists.¹

Shils candidly relates that the critics of the mass society are victims of a myth or a legendary mixture of Marxian and German sociological romanticism. The myth finds its roots in Tönnies¹ distinction between the folk and urban conditions. Today the picture of the *Gemeinschaft* society has been juxtaposed against the urban *Gesellschaft* scene, which Tönnies regarded as extremely Hobbesian (in which no man was bound by ties of affection, obligation, or loyalty). This schema was further developed through the efforts of the "Institut fur

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¹Cf. Merton, Robert K., *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Rev. and enlarged; New York: The Free Press, 1957, p. 89. Merton questions whether contemporary theorists recognize that their phenomenology may be sociologically incorrect. He refers to the misapplication of established concepts as if they were theories. If concepts are utilized in the place of theory, then social scientists must expect that their picture of the world will be distorted; "an array of concepts—status—role, *Gemeinschaft*, social interaction, social distance, *anomie*—does not constitute theory, though it may enter into a theoretic system. It may be conjectured that, insofar as an antitheoretic bias occurs among sociologists, it is in protest against those who identify theory with clarification of definitions, who mistakenly take the part for the whole of theoretic analysis."
"Sozialforschung," attached to the University of Frankfort before 1933. Subsequent to that year, because of the Nazi menace, the schoolmen moved to Columbia University in New York City during the late 'thirties and early 'forties. The concept, with emphasis on the Hobbesian quality of cosmopolitan life, was reified and enlarged after immigration to the United States. It was clearly a reaction, Shils states, to the fascistic ideologies which had overrun the European continent in the early 'thirties. The myth was engrained in contemporary sociologists an implicit Hobbesian bias which results in a methodology which purports to seek out trends toward totalitarianism in contemporary political and social institutions.

Thus, the roots of the concept of mass society and mass culture are less with the society itself than with its critics, according to Shils. He appears to think that the critics are more often than not condemning themselves rather than the society. The masses have always had their own folk culture, which could be called base or vulgar; their games are simple, their jokes crude, and what have you. But this was relatively unnoted before the 19th Century and, therefore, went without

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comment from the intelligentsia until the masses and the intelligentsia were incorporated into a common society. It is only since all men have been incorporated into the same society that the intellectuals participate in similar experiences with the masses. Shils comments,

"If they lower their own standards, they should not blame those who have not had the privilege of living within the tradition of high standards such as they themselves enjoy or could enjoy if they cared to do so."²

It appears that some of the mass society theorists, because of their personal experiences with the rise of fascism, might have intensified their resentment of the complexities of the modern world. Shils also seems to be implying that the "conservative" theorists of mass society are jealously guarding a distinction between "their" world and the world of the "masses." The object of this discussion was to introduce the idea that, due to deep-seated convictions, some of the observations of the mass society could be obscured.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have tried to emphasize three major propositions concerning the theories of mass society.

²Shils, "Daydreams," p. 608.
Our contention was that if these points were sufficiently valid it might be necessary to renew our observation, if not our theories of mass society. We have been reluctant to acknowledge factors which can be classified as political but have been, until recently, apart from the political system. We have tried to restate the aged thesis that society, particularly a modern society, is in a constant state of conflict and change because of continual competition for scarce resources in the community.

Lastly, we have tried to sow the seed of thought (which we intend to cultivate in the beginning of our next chapter) that social theorists have been influenced by latent ideological predispositions and have, consequently, distorted the picture of contemporary Western and American civilization.

Our next chapter will be devoted to introducing a new technique for observing society.
CHAPTER V
SOCIAL CONFLICT THEORY

Introduction

In the previous chapter we discussed three aspects of the theories of mass society, particularly those views akin to the political sociologists. We questioned their perception of the universe. We have not limited our comments to this group alone. At the end of Chapter III we recognized that the conflicting picture of the mass society, as portrayed by the "conservative" and "democratic" theorists along with Kornhauser's paradigm, might signify the necessity for a reevaluation, if not a renewal of our observations of contemporary society. This problem seems to pervade the debate about mass society. Without an explicit definition of this condition, we have found ourselves debating the most general problems of contemporary existence; that is, where does and where should power reside? The classic egalitarian "democratic" position is that each individual is sovereign. The "conservative" view is that power is and should be concentrated. We are not prepared at this time to say where the seat of sovereignty lies. But, given the problems
mentioned up to this point, we are concerned with the simple questions of fact; that is, can we get an adequate and reliable picture of American society?

In this chapter we should like to introduce or reintroduce, as it may be, a new technique for observing society. It is based on an otherwise old maxim that conflict is a form of sociation. 1 We do this with the hope that it will contribute to our perception of the mass society.

The three points made in the previous chapter are closely related. In this chapter we should like to discuss their significance. Are there elements in our society which are political and have not been considered part of the political system? If so, and we do find Parrow's argument to be impressive, do these elements participate in and influence the constant process of conflict, change, and adaptation in society? What roles have the ideological predispositions of scholars played in the past analysis of sociation? Why have they, for the most part, ignored if not deprecated certain elements of society recently? And why, though conflict has for a long period of history been considered a mode of sociation, have they

been fraught to consider the positive political aspects of conflict?

Conflict Theorists

There is a school of theorists who hypothesize that some contemporary political scientists and political sociologists, such as Lipset and Kornhauser, and sociologists, such as those mass society theorists who write about the "quest for community," have been utilizing theories which seek the positive or consensual aspects of society rather than negative aspects, such as conflict. Miller and Reissman comment that voluntary group participation is not the only formal index of pluralism and democratic interaction. Theorists, such as Kornhauser or Lipset, having chosen to look at one aspect of

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democratic behavior, are predisposed by virtue of their method alone to look more favorably on the upper middle than on the lower classes. In terms of this type of interaction, it logically follows that only the upper and upper middle classes can maintain a stable democracy. They are the only groups which act positively in the political system. Miller and Reisman propose that in the future analytic methods be attuned to other aspects of American culture, such as equalitarianism, anti-elitism, and other cooperative connotations in the nation. The conflict theorists are not rebelling against the group approach of modern social analysis; they are merely trying to enhance the scope of this technique.

Dahrendorf claims that until recently political sociologists have been preoccupied with the consensual or formal integrative or cooperative aspects of democracy rather than what superficially appears to be nonintegrative. Contemporary analyses have not lent themselves to the description of social conflict, especially amongst

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1 loc. cit., p. 272. Cf. Dahrendorf, "Toward a Theory," op. cit., p. 172. Dahrendorf realizes that their "functionalist" approach need not necessarily render conservative results. Their method seeks only to find a mutual reaction between two institutions. Thus, if group membership increases, an individual might vote more often. For example, Converse states that (a) ideological constraints in belief systems decline (b) with decreasing political influence. Converse, op. cit., p. 248.
the politically disenfranchised. Since their approach is incomplete their results are bound to be distorted.

Other than Pareto, Mosca, and Michels, most mass society theorists have sought to find the roots to a smoothly functioning system not in conflict but in the superordination of "substantial rationality" or "collective decisions" or a "humanizing force" or an "intellectual elite" or the inhibition of "radical movements." While there does not appear to be a logical necessity for critics of mass society to be opposed to social conflict and political flux, especially in a society which needs so much reform, they have, in fact, tended to implicitly support the existing order.

Likewise, Coser states that since the 1930's observers of pluralistic interaction have been more apt to stress the dysfunctional rather than the functional aspects of conflict. Thus, in observing the statics of group cooperation, the consensus amongst the social conflict theorists is that most contemporary political sociologists and, for that matter, many of the mass society theorists have ignored conflict because it interferes with the status quo, which is implicitly regarded as

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2Coser, Functions, op. cit., p. 28.
functional. The reasoning behind this view is furnished by Horowitz who recognizes that conflict and consensus seek to explain cooperation. Strangely, he queries, consensus involves objectification and is considered implicitly to be part of the system, while at the same time conflict is perceived to be external to the social structure because of its spontaneity and impulsiveness.\(^1\) Thus, conflict is always viewed as pernicious and not as part of the system. Horowitz argues that to place conflict outside of the social system is to place a premium on equilibrium and to do so implies that society can be changed only by spontaneous if not apocalyptic events.\(^2\)

The problem with consensus theory, Horowitz iterates, is that it is fulfilling the "iron law" prophecies of Michels and Weber. By stating that

"harmony is intrinsic to the organization of the
bureaucratic life, we begin to search for a har-
mony which exists over and above the actual accords
reached by men."\(^3\)

Hence, consensus theory can never talk about "creative" conflict as a means of expressing genuine social needs.

We need not go into the positive, prescriptive

\(^1\)Horowitz, op. cit., p. 179.
\(^2\)loc. cit., p. 180.
\(^3\)loc. cit., p. 182.
implications of this statement right now, but we shall return to the thought in the latter part of this chapter. Basically, Horowitz attributes the eminence of consensus theory to the fact that theorists have not been able to withdraw themselves to the heights of an objective plane. Like most other members of society, they have been surreptitiously caught up in the consensual ethos of modern American life. The most cogent explanation of this process is the realization that mass persuasion is more powerful, less painful, and in some respects more utilitarian than mass terror. ¹

¹Libid. As we mentioned earlier, conflict as an integral part of sociation is an old idea. In Chapter II we referred to Pareto as one of the few sociologists to recognize the Marxian thesis that change was a process generated from within the social system. Cf. Coser, dissertation, op. cit., pp. 1-150. In his dissertation Coser outlines the history of American sociological thought. He illustrates that 19th and early 20th Century sociology and sociologists were extremely normative and imbued with a spirit of reformism. The discipline as a whole was preempted from theoretical investigation because of its concern with the practical social problems of daily life. "Social conflict appeared to the early generation of American sociologists as a fundamental and constructive part of social organization. A view of society, and especially social change, that did not include concern with conflict phenomenon appeared to be seriously deficient." Coser, loc. cit., p. 84. However, by the time of the New Deal, sociologists had become advisors, experts, and consultants to government and industry. They were no longer "reform" minded, as Coser puts it, but they became "applied" minded. Once the sociologists became "staff," their problems were decided for them by the bureaucracy. Thus, conflict was no longer seen as integrative but as seriously disintegrative for the agency for which they worked.
This completes the discussion of our three propositions: (1) what roles have ideological predispositions of scholars played in the past analysis of sociation; (2) why have they, for the most part, ignored if not deprecated certain elements of society recently, and (3) why, though conflict has for a long period of history been considered a mode of sociation, have they been fraught to consider the functional aspects of conflict?

Apparently, because disenfranchised groups, such as the poverty-stricken Negro, the unemployed, and others whom Farrow has pointed out, have been unable to participate in the same channels as the middle and upper classes, their political activity has often been radical and contrary to the middle-class model. This, coupled with an incomplete methodological technique of gathering data, has built into political and sociological views of mass society a fear of mass movements, a belief that secondary voluntary groups are on the wane, and a belief that existing groups are less effective than they have been in the past. We do not want to sound as if we doubt the cogency of the consensual views of mass society. The doubts we have raised are merely preliminary to the introduction of a new or revitalized technique for observing society. It is hoped that a social conflict theory will complement what we have already learned about the mass society.
Social Conflict Theory

Dahrendorf summarizes and modifies what he considers to be an incorrect model of society which the consensual theorists have been utilizing: every society is a relatively persisting configuration of elements in which every element in society contributes to its function and every society rests on the consensus of its members. Rather, each modern society is subject at every moment to change, for social change is ubiquitous; every society experiences social conflict at every moment, for social conflict is ubiquitous; every element of society contributes to its change; and every society rests on the constraint of some of its members by others. 1

If we take as constant this Hobbesian basis for a conflict theory, we are accepting that existence involves a struggle to maintain or advance a position. 2 Conflict


2 The Hobbesian view is somewhat parallel to Tönnies' concept of Gemeinschaft. As a philosophic proposition, not only does the Hobbesian view put into question the universality of the concept of Gemeinschaft but it also alludes to the supposition that institutions and patterns of behavior act independently if not at cross-purposes with each other. Though most of the theorists that we have discussed think that they have been observing an integrated universe in which one institution directly reflects the conditions in another institution, it may well be that the universe is composed of congeries of
arises when the goals of diverse parties are mutually exclusive or mutually incompatible. The raising of an issue depends upon the utility of the objects. Since there will always be a competing interest, the encounter will necessarily be a gamble because acquisition of the object will involve a cost, either social or monetary, which will vary with the marginal utility of the object. Here then we have the components of a conflict theory.

Institutions rather than integrated patterns. It is no wonder that Dahrendorf limits his conflict model to modern societies.

1Cf. Bernard, Jessie, "Parties and Issues in Conflict." Journal of Conflict Resolution, I (June 1957), p. 112. When an object is mutually exclusive, no two things can possibly occupy the same place at the same time. Mutually exclusive objects are more likely to be found in a physical rather than a social setting. In the social setting, objects of diverse interests are likely to be mutually incompatible. Things which are physically exclusive can never absolve themselves, but in culture and society it is more likely than not that the problem can be absolved if and when one party gives in.

2Most attempts at utilizing the concept of conflict for a renewed theory of societal action have been schematic rather than theoretical. These attempts have been more concerned with the notion of conflict as a broad outline, rather than as a formal hypothetico-expectational system where propositions are put to the test of empirical verification. Though we have been speaking about social conflict theory in this chapter, in actuality the discipline is without a specific theory of social conflict.

Basically, it would involve some kind of expenditure on the part of the actors involved. Conflict may be either internal or external; that is, within the group or a reaction to pressure from outside the group. The spectrum of conflict can range from self-denial to disagreement to competition and to violence. Violence, or conflict in its most extreme sense, is engendered when either party refuses at any point to reconcile itself with the demands of the opposition and, therefore, does not permit itself to take alternative modes of action.

Since we are not directly concerned with a theory of social conflict for itself but only as an addition to the techniques for observing the mass society, a great deal about conflict theory has gone unsaid. The point of illustrating conflict theory, as we did, was merely to reintroduce an orientation that has been useful in


the past. As we have mentioned several times, there is nothing particularly new about this idea. Yet despite the fact that nonpositive aspects of society have been staring the mass society theorists in the face, a rebirth of social conflict theory has just recently begun to gain momentum.

To speak of social conflict theory and the functions of social conflict is to assume that there is an interdependence between conflict and something else. As one factor in the system varies, conflict will vary accordingly. This, we think, is the true meaning of function in its social scientific sense. Function does not necessarily, but is usually and can be, to an extent, defined as fulfilling a need. But a more cogent explanation of function is based on the expectation of interdependency of elements, not on need. Hence, any theory of social conflict should attempt to find structural interdependency between conflict and other social and political patterns. As political scientists we might ask of all classes if there is a correlation between conflict and creativity, or do men adjust under various

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conditions any better through conflict than other means of agreement? The choice of questions that can be asked seems to be unlimited.

The object of adding social conflict theory to the roster of observational techniques is to compensate for all aspects of pluralistic interaction, both negative and positive factors, and, by virtue of the study of the total scheme of sociation, to become cognisant of all the actors in the political and social system.

Conclusion

Both the theoretical and the practical aspects of the theory are attuned to the recognition of all factors and actors in the society. We would expect that an orientation of this nature would be well received by such critics as Gusfield, Perrow, and Shils. In fact, it may well be that our democratic ethos is surging back into the groove of academia. At least there appears to be the possibility of a rapprochement between the "democratic" theorists and the conflict position. We think that the positive prescriptive implication of a conflict orientation is similar to some "democratic" theories of mass society because of its recognition of the broad possibilities inherent in pluralism.  

1Intellectually speaking, it would appear that a
Friedrich is intent upon promulgating the utility of dissent in modern society. He acknowledges that a foundation of rules is necessary to insure that dissenters can agree to disagree. If this is possible, then there need be no fear of anarchy in the mass society.\(^1\) The rules of the game ultimately limit the intensity of competition. Thus, in part, Friedrich is calling for a quasilegalistic political system. Likewise, Simmel urges his readers not to condemn legalism as pettifoggery or a system of law objectified in stuffy courtrooms, but to extend legalism, an objectification of conflict, to the political and social system as a whole.\(^2\) This advocacy of conflict hinges on the tradition of the law and its emphasis on realistic rather than nonrealistic or hostile conflict. Within the framework of legal conflict there is a formal objective over which struggle ensues according to rules. The struggle can be terminated once one side achieves its objectives. The intent of this plan is to avoid the psychological hostility which might otherwise prolong the engagement. If Simmel’s or

rapprochement would be engendered between the behaviorists and the conflict theorists. Yet it would appear that, for purposes of clarifying everyday political differences, the conflict theorists are more "liberal" than the other group theorists. Hence, the accommodation between the "democratic" and the conflict theorists.

\(^1\)Friedrich, op. cit., p. 156.
\(^2\)Simmel, op. cit., pp. 36-38.
Friedrich's legalism could be reified, it would necessitate three basic factors: a basic belief in the law, an acceptance and realization that there will be continual change, and an ability to agree that all parties involved must agree to disagree.

Though conflict theory is somewhat compatible with the egalitarian aspects of "democratic" theories and is also prepared to acknowledge factors which escaped the consensual theories of mass society, we do not think that a social conflict orientation is necessarily incompatible with a mass society position. It is conceivable that a conflict orientation might complement and bear out the findings of the more consensual studies. Our main point is that, since the various theorists and critics of the mass society are at odds with each other, the time has come to renew our observation of the modern world.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In our "Introduction" we said that "know thyself" was not only a panegyric for introspective soul-seeking, but it could also be an invitation to be prepared for serendipitous events. Our examination of the debate raging about the condition of modern society led us to question the observations of the theorists and critics of mass society and to ask whether a theory of social conflict might prove to be a suitable addition to the techniques of political analysis.

Some thinkers argued that the mass society was a debilitating condition, a product of industrialization, urbanization, and democratization, which alienated man from his political and social ties. Others argued that the paradigm of the mass society was to be found elsewhere. If we want to say that the mass society is something more than a cliché and a potpourri of contemporary political and social ills and is, in fact, a system which can be structurally defined, we must utilize techniques of observation which will recognize all the important factors and elements in a society.

The problem of the alleged massification of society
arose some time after the French Revolution. Cotermi-
nously, there has been the gradual growth, speeding up
in the 20th Century, of democratic thought. The reifi-
cation of these egalitarian ideas has been made manifest
in the tendency to divide political power among conflicting
groups. For intellectual reasons many prophesied
the suicidal threat of diluting power and putting it in
the hands of the masses. Others who observed that power
always flowed to the few challenged that this diffusion
of power led the democratic man to corrupt himself.
Contrarily, many modern theorists are now speculating
that power is becoming increasingly concentrated. Given
our democratic heritage, these theorists are bemoaning
its incompatibility with democracy. Of course, others
find that the nature of society, particularly its group
structure, has been misunderstood and thus cannot join
in the lament that men are becoming alienated from the
political system, the social system, and themselves.

The intensity of mistakes, more pronounced in a
democracy because of its openness, coupled with the dif-
ficulties inherent where population has exploded and
the shift from a rural condition to an urban industrial
complex, has led some to doubt the viability of democ-

cracy. The response to these cataclysmic events from
philosophic circles has grown as each segment has
reacted to the misperception of the other. Yet there is almost a unanimous fear amongst the "conservative" and "democratic" theorists of mass society that democratic society might succumb to social totalitarianism.

The theorists and the critics of the mass society have raised questions about the nature of society, about the proper form of government, and whether power, sovereignty, or leadership should be diffuse or consolidated. In other words, they, not only those theorists of a philosocial orientation but also the behavioral scientists and non-normative theorists, are concerned with the ancient normative political question of the allocation of values in society. Though the debate is manifestly about the mass society, it is essentially a phenomenological issue which seeks the interrelationship of events. Insofar as all the theorists are seeking the relationships or the functions of various institutions, the debate is also teleological. To the degree that the debate seeks the origins of institutions or systems, the fundamental issue for all the critics and theorists of mass society is normative for at least two reasons. The first reason is very simple: to speak of a system is to have arbitrarily decided upon the existential reality of a phenomenon and to have delimited its boundaries, though the debate about the mass society
does not rage over what is political or whether the political system is a subsystem of the social system. We want to stress that teleology is intrinsically normative, and all the theories and critics of mass society are inextricably dealing with questions about the limits and purposes of institutions. The second reason why all these approaches are normative hinges on our first reason. Assuming that one has solved the problem of finding out what is "out there" and "what it does," there appears to be the assumption that once we discover how the universe operates then we shall have the solace of knowing how to live an organized life. In other words, what is natural is best. No more ancient and normative statement has been uttered in this whole thesis. Try as the new science will, we do not see that it is any less normative than traditional political thought. The argument has been recast into a debate about the mass society, but fundamentally it is concerned with the allocation of values in society and with the nature of society itself.

At the heart of this debate are at least three notions of how to approach the good society or realize truth. The first notion, characteristic of diverse figures such as Ortega or Arendt, is that men may reason about the nature of man, abstract from concrete reality,
and draw assumptions which should lead to a stable and beneficial existence. This conception does not rely upon popular representation to achieve goodness and, in a sense, can be considered undemocratic. If truth can be arrived at apart from popular participation, then it is understandable that these idealists would be less inclined to consider the conflicting interests or the chaos of the community. They might even resent it. The second, a pragmatic view founded on the skepticism of the 18th and positivism of the 19th Centuries, assumes that the problems of the world can be solved as long as the proper tools or functionaries with the highest indicia of competence can entertain them. The third view, somewhat skeptical about the knowledge of forms but in ways concerned about truth, entertains that truth is a product of the different views about X. It seeks to find the relation between the object and the perceiver. In other words, it seeks to find how various groups or individuals behave in terms of X.

In spite of the great concern about the nature of society, especially our democratic milieu, apparently the theorists and critics of mass society somewhere along the way have obscured the portrait of the mass society. As we mentioned earlier, some identify it with contemporary, urban, industrial and communication complexes
in America. Kornhauser finds the model more fitting for the emerging nations rather than the cosmopolitan West. Others have questioned the whole concept of the mass society; whether there is less political participation and whether conditions will lead to social normlessness?

It appears that though most of the critics have been looking in the right direction; that is, to the competitive elements in a plural society, they have chosen only to account for those aspects of pluralism which at first glance appeared to create and maintain our democratic system. They have chosen to ignore the less formal and more disintegrative or maladaptive factors of sociation. Due to a concern with conflict amongst the totally enfranchised members of society, many behavioral analysts logically appeared conservative because they could not account for some elements in the society which might have altered their findings. If in the future political and social theorists expand their testing of the democratic aspects of a society, a theory of social conflict, amongst others, could be utilized. We do not in any way want to imply that a conflict theory is incompatible with a mass society position. It is only hoped that a theory of social conflict would be an addition to the existing techniques and might be able to account for the disenfranchised and the more informal channels of
political and social competition. As a complementary method it may help to compensate for the distorted picture of the mass society.

As it stands now, we have no conclusive way, other than our personal intuition, to determine whether modern society provides for an existence which is any more odious than was life in the past.
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