Theory of Racial and Ethnic Group Relations

In *Assimilation in American Life*, published in 1964, I presented a multidimensional model of the assimilation process and applied it to the American scene historically and contemporaneously. This model distinguished seven assimilation dimensions or variables: cultural, structural, marital, identification, attitude, reception, and civic. Certain hypotheses about the relationship of these variables were advanced; these were: (1) that in a majority-minority group contact cultural assimilation or acculturation would occur first; (2) that acculturation may take place even when none of the other types of assimilation has occurred; and this situation of “assimilation only” may continue indefinitely; and (3) that if structural assimilation occurs, it will inevitably follow. This theoretical model of variables and propositions was used to analyze the meaning of the traditional American ideologies of “Anglo-conformity,” the “melting pot,” and “cultural pluralism,” and the historical and current realities of American racial and ethnic group life. It was concluded that massive (although not complete nor uniform) acculturation to Anglo-Saxon norms and patterns had in fact taken place historically, while structural separation of racial and religious groups, and to some degree national origin groups, still remained. One important exception to this generalization were intellectuals and artists among whom a new subsociety appeared to be forming which largely ignored ethnic considerations in the formation of primary group relationships and organizational membership. To this overall picture of American racial and ethnic relations in the early 1960s, which it seemed to me would continue indefinitely, I applied the term “structural pluralism.” This analysis contributed to the unfolding realization among students of race and ethnicity that the optimism of an earlier generation of sociologists concerning the inevitable assimilation or “melting” of American minority groups into some common framework which would effect their disappearance was distinctly unwarranted and that, in the words of Glazer and Moynihan, “the persisting facts of ethnicity demand attention, understanding, and accommodation.”

Subsequent events in American intergroup relations during the latter half of the 1960s and into the 1970s, the deepening of racial and ethnic conflict throughout the world during this period, and my acquaintance in the cogeniality of the call to both comparative research and the formulation of more general theories of intergroup relations by such writers as van den Berghe, Blalock, and Schemerhorn have led me to reexamine the assimilation process in a context somewhat more expanded than that of my previous formulation. The domestic events referred to above center particularly on the rise of the “black power” movement, Afro-American

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cultural nationalism, rioting by blacks in major American cities, efforts to institute community control over public institutions in black neighborhoods, and the presumed effects of these developments on the heightening of group consciousness and collective action among Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans, and possibly "white ethnic" groups as well.

The balance of this paper will first consider the relationship of assimilation analysis to the concepts of power and conflict which were relatively ignored (or, more accurately, perhaps, taken for granted) in my previous study, and second, will attempt to place considerations of assimilation, pluralism, power, and the like, into the more general framework of a multi-causal model for the prediction of particular outcomes in majority-minority group relations. The assimilation paradigm itself and its application to the American historical experience up until the early 1960s I find no reason to materially alter.

Blalock has made a useful distinction between competitive resources and pressure resources and, drawing upon social psychological theory, has conceptualized power as a product of resources and the mobilization of those resources. We may, then, speak of competitive power—the ability to compete as individuals in the rewards system of the society—and pressure power—the power to effect change in the society in a collective fashion. I find it additionally useful to subdivide pressure power into two subtypes: (1) political pressure, narrowly defined, in the form of action by means of voting and litigation to induce favorable action on the part of the legislature, the courts, and the executive branches of government, and (2) disruptive pressure, consisting of acts which disrupt normal and expected routines of social intercourse; these could range from peaceful nonviolent demonstrations at one end of the spectrum through angry and violence-threatening confrontations, up to sporadic rioting, and finally to the ultimate extreme of violent revolution.

With these distinctions in mind, I turn now to a reconstruction of the expectancies about the manner of social change in the area of racial and ethnic relations in the United States which prevailed in this country around the middle of the twentieth century among the liberal leadership of the movement for racial equality, both Negro and white, and among men of good will generally. These expectancies were approximately as follows: that because of what appeared to be overwhelming white domination, economically, politically, and culturally, the attempt to improve the lot of racial and ethnic minorities would have to be made by a massive effort to activate the conscience of white Americans to implement the American creed of democracy and equalitarianism, to eliminate Jim Crow laws in the South through litigation at the Supreme Court level, to fight for legislation in the North (and nationally) to legally bar discrimination in employment and housing, to break down the extra-legal barriers to voting by Negroes in the South and to encourage the use of the ballot by minority group members generally for the achievement of equal rights, and finally to work for federal and other governmental efforts to deal effectively with poverty and urban blight in a manner which would benefit all the poor in the population impartially, but which would, clearly, have particular impact because of generations of past discrimination, on submerged racial groups.

Even the peaceful demonstrations of civil disobedience which became a part of the civil rights movement in the early sixties did not, on the whole, challenge these expectancies. The demonstrations, while often drawing violent reactions from hostile whites were, at least so far as the demonstrators were concerned, generally nonviolent and were aimed at obtaining rights for Negroes which had already been granted by law in the wake of the Supreme Court decision against segregated public education in 1954. It was otherwise well within the boundary of practices sanctioned in American democratic values.

In summary, the proclaimed goal of both blacks and white liberals was equal treatment by the law, integration, the raising of the competitive resources of blacks by the corrective means of governmental aid programs and the opening up of white institutions to all, regardless of race, who could now or later qualify by meeting universalistic standards—in short, the use of competitive resource
plus political resources, with nonviolent demonstrations viewed not so much in terms of disruption as a call to the conscience of America, and with the pace of progress seen as inevitably determined by the overwhelmingly greater power of the white majority. Within this context, the prediction of indefinitely continuing structural separation, or structural pluralism, was seen as a concession to the realities of both existing (though hopefully lessening) attitudes of prejudice and avoidance, and the factual presence of an already built-up institutional structure within the communities of racial minorities.

What actually happened, of course, in the subsequent period was not only an intensification of structural separation, but, along with some of the developments mentioned above in what might be called “the liberal expectancy,” the generally unanticipated emergence of the black power movement, black cultural nationalism, sporadic rioting in the black ghettos, and the gradual supplanting (though not completely) of old-style liberal black leadership by a more militant type advocating and using disruptive pressure resources. Thus, there has developed, in a pluralistic context, something close to a real power struggle with both potential and actual outworks of conflict signifying the uneasy race relations climate of the current American scene and which could conceivably, although not inevitably, reach the stage of what Lewis Killian has called “the impossible revolution.”

At the same time, some of the processes encompassed in the “liberal expectancy” also continue to operate so that the picture is a mixed one. For an analysis of this complex situation the variables of power and conflict must be attached or built into assimilation theory. This, however, is only another way of saying that assimilation theory must, for purposes of achieving greater explanatory power, be placed in the framework of a larger theoretical context which helps explain the general processes of racial and ethnic group relations. 6


6. It should go without saying that assimilation theory, as presented in an earlier model, was never meant to advance the thesis that complete assimilation could occur in contact between ethnically diverse population groups—quite the contrary; the multidimensional approach to assimilation provided by any model allowed the various subtypes of assimilation to be conceptually distinguished from each other, advanced hypotheses about the interrelationships of these subtypes, allowed for the possibility of varying rates of progress toward assimilation among the various dimensions, or on some dimensions virtually no progress at all, and, in fact, predicted the indefinite continuation of structurally separate ethnic groups in the American scene. Nor did my discussion of assimilation assign absolute postulation to either the assimilation or pluralistic ends of the continuum. It does, however, present the hypothesis that there were boundaries to the process of separation of ethnic groups within the same society beyond which discontinuous effects were likely to occur.

7. See, for instance, the typology developed by Schenker in R. A. Schenker, Comparative Ethnic Relations.
assimilation, with the major distinction being that between cultural and structural assimilation. Each type can, in theory, of course, be thought of as quantifiable along a single scale or dimension ranging from complete assimilation on one end of the scale to complete pluralism on the other. (2) Degree of total assimilation. This variable would consist of an index combining scores for each subtype of assimilation. Theoretically, the scores could be assigned for each of the seven assimilation subtypes in my original assimilation model. For purposes of research economy, cultural and structural subtypes alone might be used, or more desirably, four subtypes: cultural, structural, marital, and identificational. There might be grounds for assigning variable weights to scores on the different types, although this is not an issue that need concern us here. (3) Degree of conflict existing in the society between the minority group or groups in the society and the majority group and among each other. (1) Degree of access to societal rewards—economic, political, institutional, and so on—for the minority group or groups in comparison with the majority group. This is an equality dimension.

For purposes of expository economy, we may arbitrarily dichotomize each of the continuous variables in this complex into high, moderate, and low to illustrate some possible outcomes. One outcome for minority group A might be high cultural assimilation, low structural assimilation, moderate degree of total assimilation, high degree of conflict, and low degree of access to societal rewards. Another outcome for minority group B might be high cultural assimilation, moderate structural assimilation, moderate total assimilation, low degree of conflict, and high degree of access to societal rewards. This type of constellation or profile, in my opinion, identifies the essential features of the minority group’s position in the society at a given time. The research strategies for obtaining the requisite measures, while posing difficulties, offer no insuperable methodological obstacles. Their discussion, however, is not within the scope of this chapter. It will be noted that this scheme, while it incorporates the variable of conflict in the dependent variable complex, by implication places power on the independent variable side of the causal equation.

Let us turn now to a consideration of the more important independent variables relevant for a general theory of racial and ethnic group relations. In fact, what I shall attempt to do is to make a classification of the theories of appropriate variables, list some that belong in each type, and discuss one or two from each list that seem to deserve particular attention. Finally, on the basis of the foregoing, I shall attempt to illustrate the possible nature of such a general theory by suggesting several hypotheses and questions which, if properly derived from it.

I would classify the relevant independent variables under three rubrics: bi-social development variables, interaction process variables, and societal variables. Bio-social development variables refer to those relating to the biological organism which is man, and the shaping of that organism, within conceivable limits, by the social environment in the process of attaining adulthood. Interaction process variables refer to social psychological processes of interaction among adults, and societal variables refer to collective structures and phenomena pertaining to the demographic, ecological, institutional, educational, cultural, and stratificational features of a society which are the sociologists’ stock in trade and need no further definition here.

Bio-social development variables. The biological organism of man contains capacities, indeed imperatives, for acting on three levels: the satisfaction of physiological desires, cognition, and emotive or affective response. This bundle of imperatives is acted upon by the social environment in the attempt to effect a socialization which will allow the developed person to function within the bounds of societal and subsocietal demands. This process, I believe, is rarely completely successful and the resulting tensions and dynamics that make and record the relation of man to his social milieu. In the ongoing process the human organism develops a sense of self. Since society is constantly and, in my opinion, inevitably evaluative and value-giving, the protection of the self, not only in the physical and physiological sense, but at least as importantly, in the social sense, is a crucial variable in the ongoing process of socialization. The manner in which the individual comes to know himself and of what he is capable constitutes the core of the subject of personality development. Obviously, interaction processes take place among children and adolescents as well. The distinction made here is for the purpose of separating out the developmental stage from a later stage.
psychological sense, becomes the dominating theme of personality development and human interaction. The capacities to be both cooperative and aggressive, altruistic and selfish, are all contained within this framework. The significance of this viewpoint for intergroup relations is that the sense of ethnicity (in the larger definition of racial, religious, or national origins identification), because it cannot be shed by social mobility, as for instance social class background can, since society insists on its inalienable ascription from cradle to grave, becomes incorporated into the self. This process would appear to account for the widespread, perhaps ubiquitous presence of ethnocentrism, and perhaps even more crucially means that injury to the ethnic group is seen as injury to the self, and the intensity of the passions engendered by ethnic conflict becomes of a magnitude comparable to those engendered by threats to the individual. 9 In other words, man defending the honor or welfare of his ethnic group is man defending himself.

A consideration of the role of self in the process of bio-social development inevitably raises questions about the concept of "human nature" and its potential connection to a theory of racial and ethnic intergroup relations. Virtually since its inception, the discipline of sociology, attempting to carve out a distinct field of inquiry for itself, reacting against a naive biological determinism that had traditionally dominated man's thinking about human behavior, and, later, rejecting the proliferating "instinct" theories of some early psychologists, has with few exceptions resolutely turned its back on the question of human nature, assuming implicitly or explicitly either that man is infinitely plastic and malleable, and thus basically formed for better or worse by the particular social and cultural environment in which he was socialized, or alternately, that the question was not relevant. 10

It has become more and more apparent, however, that the question of human nature is relevant—that it must be faced—since any theory of social action must inevitably deal with the nature of the social actor, however formed; and some observers, including myself, have become increasingly struck by the persistent similarities in human behavior across cultural lines and historical epochs and have begun to wonder whether there are not biological constants or propensities in human behavior which fall short of the "instinct" category but which predispose the actor to certain kinds of behavior in a more lawful fashion than the tenets of conventional cultural determinism would allow. Thus a pair of contemporary anthropologists speak of a biologically programmed "behavioral infrastructure of human societies," and point out that "his view of human behavior... ... makes the organism an active, searching, and stubborn participant in the learning process, rather than just a receiver; it suggests that the teacher is as moved to teach in a certain way as the pupil is to learn. The slate [the familiar tabula rasa] here is not blank at all; it is doing a lot of its own writing." 11

At least two important sociological works of the past few years, in which the authors deal with standard theoretical issues in sociology, have recognized the necessary link between the problems they were respectively dealing with and the question of human nature. Gerhard Lenski in Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification integrates his theory of why social stratification exists and at what magnitude it exists under varying conditions a variety of cultural, social, and environmental variables with certain postulates on "constants" concerning man and society. 12 One of these postulates is that man is predominantly selfish or self-seeking when it comes to areas of choice of large importance to himself or his group. 13 This postulate plays a decisive part in Lenski's theory, since he conceives of it as the major motivational force in the dif


10. An early critic of alleged overemphasis on cultural conditioning in the sociological discipline was A. H. Hobs in The Claims of Sociology (Hart and Winson, 1951). See, particularly, his chapter 3 on "Personality."


13. Lenski's exact statement reads as follows: "Thus, when one surveys the human scene, one is forced to conclude that when men are confronted with important decisions where they are obliged to choose between their own, or their group's, interests and the interests of others, they nearly always choose the former—though often seeking to hide this fact from themselves and others. (Power and Privilege, p. 30; partly italicized in original.)


terential appropriation of economic surplus which produces social

Similarly, Tausky, in his analysis of major theoretical perspec-
tives about the behavior of men in work organizations,14 compa-
nres the classical or scientific management theory of Frederic Taylor
based on a conception of man as motivated by self-interest, with the
“human relations perspective” which focuses the worker’s mo-
tivation by means of affective relationships and “self-actualizing”
on organizational goals. And himself opts for the “structuralism
perspective,” a somewhat intermediate view which, he notes, is
“closer to that of scientific management than to human relations.”

Which view one takes, Tausky points out, is predicated on a con-
siderable extent upon one’s conception of human nature as either
based primarily on self-interest and thus essentially indifferent to
organizational needs, or the contrary: “Try as I might,” Tausky
states, “I remain skeptical about human relations. Research which
attempts to validate the human relations perspective has not, in my
judgment, successfully done so. Let me state baldly the basis for my
skepticism. It is simply that I do not share the optimism about
human nature embedded in human relations writings.”15

Any attempt to formulate a conception of human nature which
can be used as a primary building block in a theory of social action
must deal not only with a selfish-altruistic dimension but also with
the crucial and ubiquitous phenomenon of human aggression. Psy-
choanalysts, psychiatrists, psychologists, and sociologists have strug-
gled with this issue for several generations with indecisive results.
Some see man as basically non-aggressive but seduced into aggres-
sive behavior by corrupt institutions and defective socialization.
Others, following Freud, find aggression to be deeply embedded in
the early development of the psyche as a result of incorporation
into a “death wish” or through a relationship with sexuality. Some
ethologists posit a specific instinct for aggression as a function of
man’s close evolutionary relationship to other animal species (this
assumes, of course, the presence of an instinct for aggression in

these other species). Still others, in a thematic development which
goes back to the work a generation ago, of John Dollard, and also
has roots in Freudian psychology, consider aggression among
human beings to be a likely response to situations of frustra-
tion. The theory of the origins of aggression in man, however, which I
find most persuasive and congruent with my own observations ha-

ciently been brilliantly stated in a new book by the psychiatrist
Gregory Rachlin.16 In a sense, Rachlin’s formulation appears to be
closely related to the frustration-aggression theory mentioned
above; however in Rachlin’s hand the frustration-aggression mech-

anism is put into a larger framework with an organizing principle
of its own.

Briefly stated, Rachlin’s thesis is that aggressive behavior among
human beings is not instinctive, but rather derives from the fact
that man, unlike other animal species, has a distinct psychological
concept of self; that love of the self, or narcissism, is the most basic
human feeling; and that injuries or threats to the self, which are
omnipresent in human life, evoke aggressive responses. In short,
aggression is the ineluctable response to optimally embedded nar-


14. Carl Tausky, Work Organizations (Batsca, Ill., E. F. Peacock Publishers,
1970).
15. Ibid., p. viii.

17. Ibid., p. I, Italics as in original.
18. Ibid. Rachlin, like most social scientists, acknowledges that human ag-


gression is not always destructive—that, in fact, it can play a creative role in societal
Another area of human functioning, as we have mentioned before, is the cognitive one. While emotional tendencies and predispositions may well be of greater importance in the formation of racial and ethnic prejudice, still it would appear that the ability to avoid stereotyping by noting distinctions among people in an outgroup, to discern connections between historic-cultural experience and group behavior, to think of groups in terms of the distribution of individuals along the normal or bell-shaped curve, to imagine the functional value of cultural diversity, to foresee the dysfunctional consequences of unchecked and exacerbated conflict—these characteristics related in some measure to level of intellectual functioning. We should all like to believe that the general or average level of human intellectual capacity is quite sufficient to encompass all these tasks; but the dominant role of racism and intergroup conflict in the Western world in the several centuries ushered in by the Enlightenment should give us at least some pause before making this assumption with extreme confidence.

To hypothesize or to assert as postulates that man is basically selfish, narcissistic and perpetually poised on the edge of aggression, and intellectually somewhat wanting, is not, of course, to prove these conceptions of the human condition. Numerous illustrative examples in life, literature, and history can be quickly adduced, but so can some examples on the other side. We are dealing here with matters of statistical frequency, central tendency, more or less, mostly or partly, differences of degree, and so on. Moreover, as I have mentioned before, there are socializing forces and institutions in society which begin the process of controlling, taming, and shaping man from the day of his birth onward designed to predispose him to display cooperation, altruism, and socially beneficial behavior toward his fellow human beings and to develop attitudes of sympathy, concern, and responsibility which would make such behavior a function of internal attitudes as well as external sanctions. Even here, however, one must reckon with certain capacities of the individual, classically identified in the psychological literature, for (among others) rationalization, self-fasts. Nevertheless, it is the destructive aspects of aggression which occupy most of his attention.

delusion, selective perception, and hysterical repression, which, allow, in Freudian terms, the id to outwit the superego while ostensibly accepting the socially certified comfort of the latter's hegemony.

In any event, the process is a dialectic one. Where to categorize the presumed statistical result determines one's judgment about the character of the individual actor whose multiple interactions make up the social process. Unbounded optimism in this matter will do no service for the cause of improved intergroup relations and will inhibit the scientific understanding on which true and lasting progress must be based. Total pessimism would foreclose all actions designed to alleviate racial and ethnic tensions, and seems to me also unjustified as a scientific judgment. It is my view, however, that the conception of man as basically motivated by self-interest, irresistibly narcissistic and protective of the self, ready to defend the self by aggressive behavior (however defined and however circumstanced), and possessed of not unlimited intellectual capacity, a more plausible portrait of the human being than any others which have as yet been advanced. When we add to this conception of the resolute defender of the self and the vigilant watchman over well-being the hypothesis which I stated earlier—namely, that the sense of ethnicity, by virtue of its totally absorptive nature, becomes incorporated into the self—we are then ready to insert into a theory of racial and ethnic contact the actor who, with his fellow actors, is at one time part of the cause and at another time, or perhaps simultaneously, part of the effect in the ever recurrent drama of intergroup relations.

Interaction process variables. Those that seem particularly important with regard to intergroup relations would include stereotyping, which stems from what would appear to be rather widespread cognitive inadequacies reinforced by affective tendencies and lack of equal status primary group contact between groups; frustration-aggression mechanisms in which aggression is easily produced by frustration and directed, depending upon accessibility, either toward the perceived source of or toward scapegoats; felt dissatisfaction phenomena based on the mechanisms of relative deprivation, rising expectations, status inconsistency, and cognitive dissonance;
is this cluster which has been most successfully adduced to date to explain the rise of the Negro Protest and Black Power movement in the late 1960s; calculation of success chances in goal-attainment based on conflict— an intellectual or cognitive phenomenon which is not unaffected by emotional considerations but which also operates in the context of estimation of the amount and kind of restraint or punitive forces which are likely to be brought to bear; and, finally, a process which appears to me to be well-ordered universal in human interaction, namely, that of conflict escalation— the tendency for parties in conflict to react to each other’s threats and reprisals by escalating the level of aggression, punishment, and revenge unless checked by either overwhelming power, exhaustion, or conflict-reducing mechanisms which we at present know too little about.  

Stereotyping and the frustration-aggression dynamic have received considerable attention in the sociological and psychological literature on intergroup relations. It is the last three processes—felt dissatisfaction phenomena, calculation of success chances, and conflict escalation—and particularly their interrelationships—which I shall like to explore in greater detail in this chapter.


20. See Lewis Coser’s comment that “the state of nature, in the Hobbesian terminology, conflict, whether it be waged for gain, for safety, or for glory, beneath only in death.” Hobbes’s philosophical vision can be translated into modern sociological terminology when we note that social conflicts tend to continue on to escalate, and to end with the total destruction of at least one of the antagonists, when unchecked by social regulation and by deliberate actions of the contending social structures that control and channel conflicts through normative regulation. Yet the degree to which conflicts are so regulated varies considerably.” Continuities in the Study of Social Conflict (New York: The Free Press, 1967), p. 37.


22. See Robert K. Merton, chaps. 8 and 9 on reference group behavior in Men, Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, The Free Press, 1957). (Chap. 8 was written in collaboration with Alice S. Rossi.)
the divinity. Or one in an open class society may believe that he has a sturdy chance for upward mobility if he is industrious and thrifty or acquires the requisite educational skills. In these two instances felt dissatisfaction is kept at a low level by acceptance of the prevailing ideology by all parties. And in the latter case where the reward system actually provides perceived cases of upward mobility, this perception adds to the forces which minimize felt dissatisfaction translated into group terms, a suppressed ethnic group in a racist society which accepted the usually prevalent ideology in such a society that stigmatized it as inferior would conceivably have a low degree of dissatisfaction (scholars are coming to question the actual substantive existence of such acceptance historically, but here we are for the moment concerned with theoretical possibilities in a model), or a suppressed ethnic group in a somewhat open society with substantial upward mobility opportunities which in practice were continually being exercised by members of all groups would presumably also have relatively low rates of dissatisfaction.

If the value systems of the respective individuals and groups do not simultaneously legitimize the given rewards system, however, or if the rewards system is so extreme in its manifestations of inequality that any value consensus would be continually thwarted by the sheer pressure of lack of satisfaction of human needs at a bearable level, then the third factor, if present in the situation, will come into play to reduce overt conflict: that factor is the system of perceived sanctions based on force or power aimed at suppressing revolt, threatening physical attacks on the system, disruptive demonstrations, and so on. In other words, there is, to use my previously suggested phrase, a "calculation of success chances" prior to the projected action which will play a powerful role in determining whether the action will, in fact, be undertaken. The entire process of combining value impetus with a judgment of the probability of carrying out the action without incurring prohibitive punishment is somewhat similar to the concept of the "dynamic assessment" immediately prior to the initiation of action which was advanced by Mclver a generation ago in his analysis of action and causality.24


There is a pronounced tendency in recent sociological writings to minimize the role of perceived sanctions in human action and to conceive of the human actor as responding largely to valuations, ideology, and emotional forces in actualizing behavior. While these forces clearly do make up a significant portion of the field of stimuli which propel behavioral responses, given the perennial tension between human desires and societal restraints, it seems illusory to me to ignore the important role which perceived power sanctions play in governing the passions of men.23 This formula applies, I believe, both at the micro level of individual action and the macro level of group action. It is certainly true that both individuals and groups may at times under situations of extreme stress act violent or disruptively to relieve their anger or frustrations, or their sense of being unfairly treated, regardless of perceived probable consequences. But our hypothesis is that, statistically speaking, perceived power sanctions substantially reduce the level of overt violent conflict between competing or potentially conflicting individuals or groups. It should go without saying that this is a sociological statement, not a value judgment bearing on the question of the desirability or undesirability of using violence or disruption to redress grievances under particular circumstances. The attempt here is to suggest a processual model of human behavior which actually has application to both macro and micro situations of human conflict and to many fields besides that of racial and ethnic relations.

If conflict does erupt between contending individuals or groups it has a distinct tendency to escalate, all other things being equal. This proposition follows from our discussion of the overriding nature of the propensity to defend the self—and the ethnic group, which becomes incorporated into the self. Conflict, virtually by definition, is viewed, usually quite correctly, by each of the contending parties as either a physical attack on the self, a threat of a physical attack on the self, or a psychological attack on the self. The emotional anger engendered by this attack syndrome dictates a course...
consists of value consensus or dissensus between the majority and minority groups and specifies the particular areas where such consensus or dissensus exists. This cluster has already been examined in connection with its role in felt dissatisfaction phenomena. Still a third group of variables is made up of cultural differences between the majority and minority groups existing at the time of initial contact. For instance, differences in language or religion which existed at the time of first meeting presumably would have a cumulative influence on the extent of cultural assimilation conceptualized as a dependent variable at the time of study. A fourth variable is the nature of ideologies about racial, religious, and ethnic groups present in the general population and concerns the degree of eatitarianism and humanitarianism present in these ideological systems and also the degree and type of assimilation or pluralism desired. A fifth major group of variables involves around the distribution of power between majority and minority groups. The distribution of competitive power, political power, and disruptive power quite clearly affects the outcome of our designated dependent variable profile. Here, however, the analysis becomes even more complex, since the mobilization of power resources does not operate in a structural vacuum but depends on the perception of threat, punishment, and application of countervailing power which help to make up what might be called “the field of power vectors.” Frustration and perceived need provide the motive power for action toward desired goals, but such action, as I have pointed out also has a cognitive component of estimation of the probable degree of negative sanctions.

Sixth, the degree of access to societal rewards (the equality dimension) available to the minority ethnic group affects the degree of felt dissatisfaction of the group and thus affects the dynamics of social change which determine the outcome at any given time. That this variable thus appears on both the dependent and independent variable sides of the causal chain should produce no great methodological disquietude, since this simply attests to the

of power stemming from the friendly interest in the minority's welfare of another sovereign state, or, conceivably, an international body (for example, the United Nations), the degree of such augmentation being a function of the actual power such a state or body has and is willing to use in order to influence relevant events in the host society.

The final point which I should like to raise and discuss briefly in this consideration of societal variables takes us back to the issue of ideologies about racial and ethnic group relations present in the society and held respectively by the majority and the minority groups. As I have indicated, these can be categorized along an equality-inequality dimension. In this sense, we can distinguish very roughly between ideologies which are essentially egalitarian or racist and those which are essentially equalitarian and non-racist. Within the latter group, however, three subtypes seem to have particular relevance in the contemporary world. One is a assimilationist structure in which the presumed logical goal would be eventual complete assimilation along the various dimensions previously distinguished in the assimilation process. The other are essentially pluralist structures which need to be carefully distinguished from one another, since their differences constitute crucial points of current controversy in many pluralistic settings over the world, and their actual respective implementations could well have differential consequences for outcomes in intergroup relations.

The first type I would call "liberal pluralism." It is characterized by the absence, even prohibition, of any legal or governmental recognition of racial, religious, or national origins as a corporate entity with a standing in the legal or governmental process, and a prohibition of the use of ethnic criteria of any type by discriminatory purposes, or conversely for special or favored treatment. Many members of such groups would, of course, receive benefits provided by legislation aimed at the general population in connection with problems produced by lack of effective economic participation in the society: for example, anti-poverty measures.

housing, education and welfare measures, and so on. Members of disadvantaged ethnic groups would thus benefit as individuals under social programs in relation to their individual eligibility, but not in a corporate sense as a function of their ethnic background. Structural pluralism under these circumstances would exist voluntarily, as an unofficial societal reality in communal life, as would also some measure of cultural pluralism, at the will of the ethnic group members, and subject to the pressures toward conformity to general societal norms implicit in whatever degree of industrialization and urbanization was present in the society. Equalitarian norms in such a society would emphasize equality of opportunity and the evaluation of individuals on the basis of universalistic standards of performance. Such a model of society is very close, it will be recognized, to that implicitly envisaged by the "liberal expectancy" mentioned earlier in this chapter.

The contrasting pluralistic structure may be called "corporate pluralism." Under corporate pluralism racial and ethnic groups are formally recognized as legally constituted entities with official standing in the society. Economic and political rewards, whether in the public or private sector, are allocated on the basis of numerical quotas which in turn rest on relative numerical strength in the population or on some other formula emanating from the political process. Equalitarian emphasis is on equality of condition rather than equality of opportunity, and universalistic criteria of reward operate only in restricted spheres themselves determined in a more particularistic manner. Structural pluralism is officially encouraged, and indeed becomes the necessary setting for individual action, and cultural pluralism tends to be reinforced even in urban and in industrial settings.

Putting together, the equality dimension with the structural dimension, we may thus distinguish four types of societies with regard to ethnic orientation: (1) racists, (2) assimilationists, (3) liberal pluralists, and (4) corporate pluralists. In practice, of course, elements of several types may exist at any given time in combination. Nevertheless, in a theoretical sense, these four types need to be distinguished from each other. Both as ideological goals of either minority or majority, and as actual conditions of given societies in a particular period, they may influence the outcome of racial and ethnic group relations in the next stage of the society's existence.

APPLICATIONS: SOME THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

Within the appropriate limits of this chapter, I shall be able to select only a few major variables which seem to me most salient and construct some plausible causal chains. As an initial strategy, I shall consider some actual historical situations of intergroup relations and apply the variables previously adumbrated. Most observers would agree that the two most devastating and horrendous examples of intergroup relations in the past four hundred years were the enslavement of four million Negroes of African descent in the American colonies and American state prior to the Civil War and the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis in the twentieth century. We begin with the bio-social development variables (or related constants, if one prefers) of the human being conceived as essentially a narcissistic defender of the self, aggressively ready to defend the self, incorporating the sense of ethnicity into the self and displacing the usual ethnocentrism. In the interaction process we focus on the tendency to compare the self invasively with others, the tendency to conflict escalation, and the potential tempering of this process by the field of power vectors which produces a calculation of success chances prior to the initiation of a given contemplated action. These relative "givers" may be thought of as present in all the causal chains I shall adduce below, although for purposes of conserving space I shall not necessarily refer to them again in the formal propositions.

Within the American colonies, from an ideological point of view although democratic and relatively equalitarian values applied to whites, they distinctly were not considered relevant to blacks. The overwhelmingly prevalent view of whites toward blacks was racist. With regard to power, the blacks had virtually none. Internally, they were fragmented, socially and culturally, carefully kept uneducated, and unable to acquire by virtue of their bondage the military technology which would have enabled them to revolt with any possibility of success against their masters. Externally, the societies in Africa from which they had been seized had neither the organ-
Racist ideology pervading the majority group plus low degree of "inside" minority ethnic power, plus low degree of "outside" minority ethnic power plus felt opportunity to enhance the self through economic means by massive discrimination leads to low degree of access to societal rewards by the minority ethnic group ranging from second class citizenship to slavery plus minimal conflict (at least, in the short run).

In the case of the Jews in Nazi Germany, we note the presence of an endemic racism (anti-Semitism), again a minority relatively powerless internally in either a numerical or potentially military sense, a quickly emerging totalitarian state, and no threat of effective countervailing military sanctions from the outside (World War II did not begin until Germany invaded Poland). In this situation, a genocidal ideology was promulgated by totalitarian rulers who made use of both endemic anti-Semitism and the overwhelmingly effective social control mechanisms and institutions of the modern industrialized totalitarian state to engender support and terrorize any potential opposition to their policy of extermination of the Jews. In propositional terms, we emerge with the following:

Intermediate degree of racist ideology permeating the majority group plus low degree of "inside" minority ethnic group power plus low degree of "outside" minority ethnic group power plus totalitarian government leads to low degree of access to societal rewards by the minority ethnic group, quick and intense mobilization of hatred toward the minority group at governmental will, plus massive and quickly terminated conflict ranging in outcome to the point of expulsion or extermination.

It will be noticed that for the purpose of brief exposition here I have chosen to focus, among the dependent variables, on access to societal rewards and degree of conflict, and among the independent variables on ideology, power (both "inside" and "outside"), and the political nature of the society on the democratic-totalitarian scale. I should like to add a further comment on the individual and simultaneous effects of ideology and power on particular outcomes in intergroup relations: In both examples I have used to suggest theoretical propositions, the minority had low "inside" power. In the face of a distinctly racist ideology converted into action on the part of a highly discriminatory majority, an ethnic minority clearly needs augmented power in order to reverse the balance and secure its rightful opportunity for an equitable distribution of rewards and respect. It might be inferred from this that I am suggesting that an optimal situation in all pluralistic societies is an equal distribution of power among all groups, majority and minority. I do not, in fact, advance this hypothesis for the following reason, or complex of reasons. In a pluralistic society which operates in a democratic ethos and with equalitarian ideals, albeit with present modest degrees of ethnocentrism, a situation of equal power for all groups in the society, given the volatile and escalating nature of ethnic passions, will probably be inherently unstable and conflict producing. The optimal situation in a democratic-equalitarian pluralistic society, I would hypothesize, is one in which the minority group has an intermediate degree of power—less than that of the majority, so that it cannot disrupt the society completely, but enough so that it can levy strategic influence to protect its rights—"cause trouble," so to speak, in areas of discriminatory treatment, and in which it is supported by "outside" power in the face of a violent threat of attack by the majority on its existence and legitimate aspirations. "Outside" power—that is, power wielded by another sovereign entity—cannot, in the very nature of things, be wielded often or indiscriminately, or on every or even most day-to-day issues of potential conflict inevitably arising in a pluralistic society. It can serve, however, as a "backup" threat in the face of extraordinary danger to the minority, and, perhaps more usually, in the form of special diplomatic negotiations relating to specific issues.