THE DYNAMICS OF RANK CONFLICT:
An Essay on Single vs. Multiple Social Systems *

by
Johan Galtung
Chair in Conflict and Peace Research
University of Oslo

1. Introduction.

The problem to be discussed in this essay is the
problem of classless societies. The point of departure is
the rather ubiquitous phenomenon of rank, a term we prefer
to "class" for the simple reason that it is much more gene-
ral and does not tie the analysis to any particular school
of thought. To this it may, of course, be objected that
"rank analysis" in itself is a school of thought -[1] but if
this is the case it is at least a rather general one which
is here seen as an advantage also because it permits reflec-
tions both on international and intra-national systems.[2]

A social system, then, is seen both as a set of
actors and as a set of positions - it can be analyzed both
from an actor-oriented and a structure-oriented point of
view.[3] The phenomenon of ranking applies to both perspec-
tives: positions are ranked, and so are actors.[4] There are
high and low positions, central and peripheral ones whether
defined according to division of labor and the accumulating
effects of interaction. and "intra-action", of exchange and
"in-change"; defined according to socially shared perceptions
as to which positions carry "prestige" and which do not; or
defined according to the structure of the interaction network.
Correspondingly for actors: there is such a thing as high and
low, whether defined according to "ascribed" or "achieved" criteria;
roughly defined as criteria already known at birth (position
of the family, position in the order of siblings , age, sex,
race, ethnic belongingness, geographic location) vs. criteria
that appear throughout life and may or may not be seen as the
acting out of a constant potential given at birth (but not
visible), or as something that is created through praxis during
the span of life.

This opens for the problem of allocation: how actors
are placed into positions. Obviously, the simplest way of doing
it would be to have high actors in high positions and low actors

in low positions.[5] Two well known ways of doing this, often
characterized with such polarizing terms as "traditional"
vs. "modern", would be to place a person in the same position
as the father vs. placing the person according to what has
become known of the "innate" potential, such as "intelligence".[6]
Actually, these two methods are only variations of the same
theme. In the functionalist approach to social studies there
was always a tendency to see the ranking of positions and
also the ranking of actors as something relatively firm, absolute,
and then proceed to a discussion of the allocation process.
In a more marxist perspective, shared in the present essay,
the idea might be to accept that there is such a thing as power -
that some actors gain power over others and thereby a system
of differential ranks; this is then translated into a system
of differential positions. Or, vice versa: there is a system
of differential positions and actors holding high vs. low
positions are then defined as high vs. low actors - as coming
from good vs. bad families, as being gifted vs. less gifted, etc.
In other words, the ranking systems are seen as creations of
the social order, not as the constituent element of that order.

There is a link between the ranking of positions and
the ranking of actors: the degree of substitutability. One way
in which rank is expressed is precisely the extent to which
an actor is indispensable, unsubstitutable because he or she
are given the chance of projecting their individuality into
their performance in the position. In a low position the actor
is more like a spare part in a machine: standardized, replaceable
by another - similar, but fresh and new - spare part when broken.
For this to be possible at least two conditions have to be
fulfilled: the tasks to be performed in those low positions
have to be standardized and simplified, and a sufficient mass
of actors have to be seen as mutually substitutable. And for this
to happen people have to be conceived of in a specific and univer-
sialistic manner;[7] few characteristics should be attributed
to them, and according to inter-subjective criteria, such as
family of origin or school performance, thereby permitting
sorting of actors into categories of mutually substitutable
individuals.[8] The significance of western technology and

industrialized society lies in creating positions with highly
routinized work. The significance of modern schooling systems
lies in performing the corresponding task on the actor side;
the creation of equivalence-classes of individuals. As social
systems expand from local communities via nation states to
regions such as the European Community,[9] to some extent dictated
by the exigences and possibilities inherent in western techno-
logy,schooling systems have to expand correspondingly, degrees
have to be made comparable so that substitutability can be across
local and national borders.

That life is different dependent on whether one is high
or low, that life-chances are different dependent on whether one
is born high or low, are in need of no elaboration. A glance
at the world social map today, comparing middle aged,well edu-
cated men in the tertiary urban sectors of central, industrialized
societies, with the negation of all this - an old woman, uneduca-
ted, in the primary sector, working in a village in a peripheral
part in a peripheral country in the current world system, brings
this out very clearly; although it is not absolutely obvious
that the latter is worse off in all regards, for reasons to be
explored later. The dimensions of verticality, such as exploi-
tation, penetration, fragmentation and marginalization make
themselves felt - creating structurally induced inequalities,
in other words inequities between human beings, communities,
countries, regions. Efforts to justify this by pointing to
dissimilarities between actors, individual as well as collective,
fail utterly: there are differences among actors, but nowhere
like the order of magnitude built into the social structures,
as evidenced by the circumstance that when there is a new deal,
a more fair deal brought about by chance or by deliberate action,
"low" actors usually perform, after some time, very ably in
"high" positions - often far better than "high" actors are able
to perform in "low" positions.[11] In other words, stabilized
verticality,with high and low actors settling where they belong
in social systems permeated by rank,and in a lasting manner pro-
tected by a built-in logic guaranteed by dissimilarities between
the actors,is a myth. A caste system, for instance, can only
continue unchallenged protected by such myths; once the myth
is broken, the search for alternative forms of organization will
start. And the question then becomes: which are these alternative
forms of organization?

2. Single vs. multiple social systems.

One way of approaching this question would now
be to call attention to the obvious: in a society, or in a
social system to use a more general term, actors are not only
organized vertically in one system.   Societies also have
other dimensions, arising from the circumstance that any given
actor usually can be seen as participating in more than one
system, particularly if his or her entire lives are taken
into consideration. We then have to define a "system":
it is a set of positions or actors in interaction, and there
is - like in a Greek drama - a certain unity of action, of
space, of time. Or, rather, this might be used to define
a "single" system as opposed to a "multiple" system where the
unity is broken. What does that mean?

Roughly speaking a multiple system is a system
where an actor is member of several systems, each with a
certain unity, and he does different things in the different
systems. By this one would mean not only the easily defined idea
that there is a definite space-budget and a time-budget with
indications that certain things can be done here, but not there,
now, but not then, that space and time are heavily differentiated
according to activity. More significant is a corresponding
differentiation with regard to actors: certain things are done
with one set of actors, other things with an other set of
actors. It is not so fruitful to try to arrive at a definition
of what "unity of action" possibly could mean. To us, today
work and leisure may be seen as different types of action, in
other societies at other times this was certainly not the case.
But sets of actors, points in space and points in time are clear,
relatively easily understood and can carry the burden of defini-
tion.

The difference between simple and multiple systems
can perhaps be clarified by putting the three dimensions, actors,
space and time (or more precisely actor-sets, space-regions
and time-intervals) together in a cartesian space; asking the
question of fig. 1.

Figure 1. How is the action-mass of an actor distributed?

Actors

Space   Time
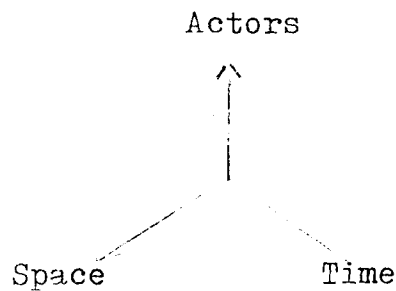
In a single system an actor would tend to stay more together
with the same actor-set;   there would not be much jumping up
and down along the vertical axis of the figure. There may, or
there may not, be space and/or time-budgeting . A tribe -
primitive, traditional or modern - may share production and
consumption activities completely, but they may subdivide
space and time into regions   for distinctive types of pro-
duction and consumption. Or - as one still may find in rural
milieus in even heavily industrialized countries - the farm
family may engage in all kinds of activities on the farm, but
perhaps not at any time; there may be time-budgeting . Also,
when studied more closely at the micro-level, one will usually
discover that there is space-budgeting., Thus, even in the
micro setting of a modern apartment, even inside the "living"
room for that matter, there is usually a mapping known to the
members of the family, perhaps reinforced by the mother more
than by anybody else, as to what could and should be done where
("never eating in the sofa, please", "don't use the dining table
for home work, please", etc.), and when.

        Correspondingly, even in a society that looks as if it
is a single system with everybody sharing all activities, multi-
ple aspects become visible if one studies macro-types; such as the
budgeting of the entire life-cycle of an individual rather
then the time budgets for the day, the week, the month and the
year. We are then thinking partly of the circumstance that
in "modern" societies different types of activities are put
into different time-intervals in the individual macro-time
budget; starting with the existence as child, then comes
schooling, then work, and finally retirement - each of them
constituting a relatively well defined bundle of activities.[12]
In addition to this there is usually also a change of actor-set,
from the family of origin via school-mates to colleagues

the family of procreation , ending in some type of with-
drawal from all three sets, often into loneliness, often into
a specially constructed actor-set known as the old-age home .
In other societies there is much less change in the actor-set
since the individual is embedded in an age-set together with
whom he runs through the entire cycle of early childhood,
socialisation experiences, work and gradual withdrawal due
to senescence.[13] In such societies, incidentally, there may
also be much less clear border-lines between the time-regions,
with more mixing of these types of activities throughout life
(for instance, starting work much earlier and continuing much
later; having "schooling" not as a separate phase in the life-
cycle).

    What we are now arriving at is the concept of segmen-
tation: the extent to which the systems in a multiple system
are kept separate. At one extreme would be the single system
society where all types of action are carried out with the
same actors, at any point in space and time; at the other
extreme the action-mass of the individual would be distributed
in the space of Fig. 1 (the reader would have to supply this
mentally) with each major type of action having its place in
space and time and its correct social context. "Modern life"
is like that: there is one bundle of activities called "work"
and an other bundle called "leisure"; the former is carried
out during work hours, in offices and factories, with colleagues;
the latter is carried out outside working hours, at home, with
family and friends.[14] The question of degree of segmentation
then becomes a very concrete question: how rigid is the time-
budget; how well is home separated from office; how well are
colleagues separated from family and friends? The extreme here
is not only imaginable but empirically probably very frequent:
the control watch of the office that supervises the time-
budgeting; the location of homes in Suburbia and offices in
"Super-urbia" - the center of the city -; the idea of not
letting family members in on the work and correspondingly not
to bring the work home, with the accompanying idea of picking
one's friends from outside the office/factory. This should be
contrasted with two of the most important forms of production

in human history: the family farm and the family shop where
different types of activities are carried out by the same
people, almost at the same space (unless one applies micro-
space analysis) and without rigid time-budgeting. It should
also be remembered that these forms have been able to survive
thousands of years, lasting till our days - possibly a testi-
mony to the circumstance that they have a certain built-in
viability.

A person can be a member of several systems, but
he cannot be an actor in more than one of them at the same
time, for the simple reason that at the same point in time
he can only be at the same point in space and with the same
actors - - - although it may be objected that he can perform
some kind of multiple role with multiple actor-sets around him .
What this means in practice is that, in general, a process of
"switching" is needed when a person starts acting in an other
system. This is where the difficulties enter: a professor
sits in his office discussing with colleagues, the door opens
and his little son appears - meaning that both the work system
and the family system are present in latent form in the same
room, at the same point in time. "Will you wait outside for
a moment?" addressed to the little son, or changes in facial
expression and tone of voice depending on whether the father
is in the work system or the family system are both mechanisms
of segmentation;symbolizing the borderlines between the systems.[15]
Since this may be difficult to handle many people might pre-
fer very clear borderlines, simply instructing the child never
to appear in the office. The switching process implies a
change of social appearance, like changing one's social hide
and if it should be accompanied by an inner change of mood,
most people would feel that some time is needed - for instance,
the time it would take to drive from Super-urbia to Suburbia
or vice versa (using the car for warming up or cooling off,
depending on the direction of the driving).

If the switching in a multiple system takes place
within micro-time, meaning within a day, a week, a month or
possibly even a year one might talk about synchronic multiple
systems. They can be seen as coexisting at the same time.

But if the switching takes place in macro-time, one should
rather talk of diachronic multiple systems, such as the
childhood, schooling, working, retirement sequences mentioned
above. The borderline is not a very strict one, and should
perhaps also be a matter of subjective definition: to what
extent does the actor think in terms of single vs. multiple
membership? Perhaps most people in modern societies spend
a considerable amount of their working time planning their
leisure, particularly their vacation - this would indicate
membership in a vacation system. But a person in retirement
would hardly feel any kind of membership in the childhood or
schooling systems, and even be painfully and acutely aware of
the non-membership in the working system.   Both examples
are dramatically different from the type of switching that
may take place many times during the day, the hour, or even
the minute: such as the switching between membership in
a belief-system and a practice-system.[16] Thus, people living
in highly ideologized societies, whether through religious
or secular faith, may have a certain way of behaving towards
each other, particularly when they talk if they are in the
belief-system, and an entirely different way when they are in
the practice-system. From a solemn, even liturgic tone of
voice in the former they may change to a jocular form in the
latter, including making fun of the belief-system, or creating
a distance between themselves and that system.

It is now important to speculate about the causes and
consequences of segmentation. That it goes together with
functional specialization, division of labor is obvious: this
means precisely that certain things have to be done at certain
places and certain points in time and by certain people -
not by everybody, anywhere, at any time. In that particular
sense segmentation is efficient. Societies based on multiple
structures produce and consume an astounding variety of things
with a high level of processing and marketing. But the social
costs, if that is the correct term, are also considerable.

Thus, with the total action-mass subdivided and distri-
buted over the space of Fig. 1 each single human relation be-
comes relatively poor, or "single-stranded".[17] The action context

is **meagre**. This also means that each actor sees very little
of what other actors do, and hence of what they are - there
is a low level of mutual visibility. Of course, this may
also be seen in a more positive light: it means that there
is freedom to be different, a person can show different aspects
of his or her personality in different contexts. One does not
have to be the same person for everybody; there is more free-
dom in personal presentation. But in this freedom there is
also a possible threat to personal integration, almost a
built-in invitation to develop not only divided but multi-
ple   personalities. And this is then a mirror image at
the level of the personal psyche of the lack of integration
not only of the image of society,but also of society itself;
different activities are carried out in different contexts.
The worlds of work, schooling, leisure, family etc. become
so different, with sharp borderlines that not only is the
switching process   difficult and often-times painful; there
is also the problem of meaninglesness because it does not all
hang together. It becomes too easy to develop different types
of ethos in the different systems. Thus, to take one little
example: one may be trained to be cooperative and supportive
in the family, and to be competitive, even aggressive at school -
the latter later on carried into work (and the former kept in
reserve for retirement). In a single system all these activi-
ties would blend and be carried out with the same actors,
often even without space and time segregation and it would be
difficult, even impossible to develop such different styles.
Hence, in a heavily segmented society any type of social theory
and social practice may be found, even in some kind of "peace-
ful coexistence" - one reason why the possibly most segmented
of them all, the United States of America, seems so confusing
and contradictory to the outsider.(18)

Each system in a multiple system presents the actor
with a different context, if for no other reason simply because
each system has its own structure and the structures may be
different. If the structures are different, there is system
in/congruence; as illustrated in Fig. 2.

Figure 2. Three incongruent systems
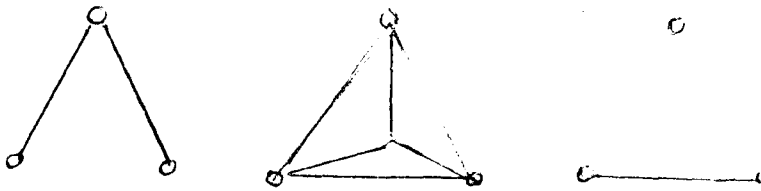
One has to imagine that, synchronically or diachronically,
a person switches from one to the next of these three systems,
starting with a fragmentet system, then a highly participatory
one, then a system where the two underdogs interact but the
topdog is isolated. Evidently the person is exposed to very
different social experience in these systems. Although that
may be a source of personal renewal it may also be a source
of personal confusion, contributing to the sense of disinte-
gration, of meaninglesness. Possibly one characteristic of
Japanese society is that it has undergone "modernization"
with a high level of segmentation, but without incurring
system incongruence. In fact, the first of the three systems
in the figure, specializing in vertical relations at the
expense of horizontal relations, but connecting the total
system, might be very typical of most Japanese systems whether
they come together synchronically or in diachronic sequences
in the life of a single person. To the extent that is the
case, experience in one system serves as a guide for experience
in the next - leading to, possibly, a sense of security as
well as rigidity because of lack of exposure to system variety.

What about rank? Systems as we know them are likely
to have some element of rank built into them, some differentials
in power and privilege as pointed out in the introduction;
some distinction between high and low. A member of a multiple
system may be high in all or low in all in which case the
systems are rank-concordant; but there may also be systems
where members oscillate between high and low, making for rank-
discordance. The phenomenon is illustrated in Fig. 3:

Figure 3.   A rank-discordant actor
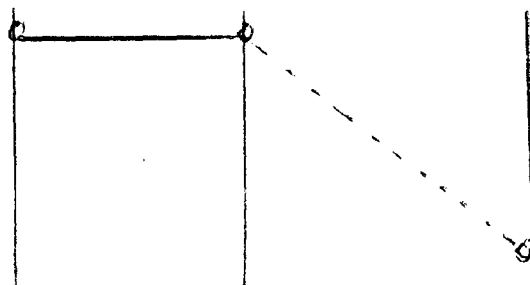
Like system-incongruence rank-discordance is a question of degree. Systems may differ more or less as to their structure, and the actors that are members of the system may be more or less discordant where rank is concerned. Whereas it is clear what system-congruence means (all systems have the same structure) and also clear what rank-cc cordance means (everybody in the multiple system is either high in all   single systems or low in all of them) it is much less clear what maximum system-incongruence and maximum rank-discordance would be - but several ways of conceptualizing this could be attempted, there is no need for only _one_ answer.[19]

What, then, is the relationship between segmentation, system-incongruence and rank-discordance? The relations can be spelt out in the following statements:

1. Without segmentation there is only a single system, hence there can be no system-incongruence or rank-discordance.

2. In a single system there can be any kind of verticality (exploitation, penetration,fragmentation and/cr marginalization) - but it is not reinforced or counteracted by rankings in other systems as there is only cne (relevant) system.

3. There can be system-incongruence without rank-discordance for the actor may be low,or high,in all systems only that the rest of the system context is different.

4. There may be rank-discordance without system-incongruence for the actor may be high in some systems and low in other systems, the systems all having the same structure.

Thus, the level of segmentation in a sense steers the other two, and one might hypothesize that whatever "problem", social or personal, may be associated with system-incongruence or rank-discordance it will be more pronounced the stronger the segmentation.[20] The importance of that statement lies in the simple circumstance that the degree of segmentation may be an important causal factor, and,consequently,should be brought into a more central position in social theory. Thus, if we now try to wrap together the three factors of segmentation, system-incongruence and rank-discordance under the heading of 'complication'[21] referring to a society high on all three as "complicated"and a society low on all three as "simple", then there is at least one central element in the package: level of

segmentation. It should be pointed out, however, that
"simplification" of a social system is not the same as its
horizontalization - it only means that with decreasing seg-
mentation this package of three complicating factors starts
shrinking. As to horizontalization: this is the subject of
the next section.

3. The problem of a classless society.

    We shall now try to make use of all these concepts
in an effort to come to grips with some of the problems in
the theory, not to mention the practice, of classless societies.

    Thus, one central thesis might be formulated as follows:
one approach to the classless society, or at least to reduce
some of the injustices in vertical systems, has been to intro-
duce more systems, with the hope of arriving at some type of
compensatory mechanism. The result, however, has been compli-
cation rather than classlessness.

    The theory is simple: if one cannot make everybody
equal in rank in one system, then one might make everybody
member of a multiple system so that the sum of all ranks syn-
chronically and/or diachronically is the same for all individuals.[22]
If one is high in one, then one should not be high in the other
or the next.[23] This might be referred to as "compensatory
socialism", and for instance take the form that people who
are unsubstitutable in their social position (and hence suffer
less from that type of alienation) should have less salary
than the salary needed to compensate for the alienation resul-
ting from allocation into a position with a high level of
substitutability.[24]

    Clearly, this type of social practice would run into
at least two difficulties, both of them easily accommodated
in social theory.

    First, it is well known that rank tends to beget rank.
He who is high in one system possesses some kind of resource -
for instance centrality in the interaction structure, high
level of education, or simply money. That resource can easily
be converted into a high or at least higher position in some
other system, thereby starting a chain-reaction which might
lead eventually to a fully rank-concordant profile; high - high....
-high. During the process the actor is also likely to acquire
the habits of generalized role-playing, as generalized topdog[25]
in this case, as generalized submissive underdog in the opposite
case where there are no resources to be converted. Much social
energy would be needed to counteract this, for instance in the

form of specific laws and regulations like stipulating that
nobody who is rich and well educated shall ever have poli-
tical power; or that nobody who is rich and powerful should
ever get a higher education.[26] Such rules might in theory serve
the purpose of social justice, making for lower correlations
between ascribed rank and achieved rank, and also for lower
differences in total rank. And they look more attractive than
corresponding rules, usually not explicit since they are so
strongly supported by more automatically operating social
mechanisms leading to rank-concordance: he who is already
rich and educated should _ipso facto_ get into positions of
political power; he who has power should have privilege, etc.

But even if such rules should be operative, leading
to high levels of rank-discordance as an approach to the class-
less society, that particular society would have problems of
its own. These problems would not be problems of verticality,
but horizontal problems, stemming from the complications
introduced in the lives of everybody when segmentation, rank-
discordance and (probably also) system-incongruence become
dominant factors in social life. The pressures put on indi-
viduals leading to psychosomatic disorders, psychoses,
possibly even to suicide seem to be relatively well documented,[27]
and might indicate that there is some outer limit to society.[28]
These limits would be much better articulated than the limits
related to the deprivation of the underdog, for in this case
not only underdogs might be hit, but also the rank-discordant
topdogs in the system in a better position to articulate
personal concerns and converting them into social issues.
And there are also forms of social disorganization that seem
to be related to rank-discordance, and that may easily by their
own social force be converted into personal issues - such as
increasing criminality, against person and property of the rich.[29]

In saying this it may look as if the idea of this
essay is that societies essentially have a choice between
exploitation on the one hand, whether in a single system or
in a rank-concordant multiple system, and the threats to per-
sonal and social integration resulting from high levels of
segmentation and rank-discordance on the other. In other words,

is the choice between exploitation and complication?
And should we in that case prefer complication - for instance
in the form of a modern welfare state - because it hits more
evenly?[30]

The answer may be affirmative if we limit our analysis
to what has been said so far. Imagine, for instance, that
education is introduced as a system parallel to systems strati-
fied by wealth and by power. The gifted children from poor
and powerless families are invited to climb the education
ladder, into high positions. But high positions of what?
Either they will be high positions in learning, teaching
and research, but still relatively powerless even if this
is compensated for by good salary - in other words rank-
discordance that might trouble the person for life. Or else
the person is able to convert high education into both wealth
and power, in which case the system has recruited a new ex-
ploiter, whose solidarity with his social origins may be
questionable.

Or, take the other solution so often mentioned:
the use of leisure activities, hobbies, sports, arts,
emotional richness, integrative capacity as ranking dimensions
possibly compensating for power, wealth and learning. Leaving
alone the problem of whether the correlation is negative enough
to constitute any kind of compensation, or possibly so positive
that the result rather will be a reinforcement of existing
ranking orders,[31] one is led to another problem. Either these
new ranking dimensions will be salient enough to bring in
some measure of compensation but also of rank-discordance, or
they will not be salient in which case they will only consti-
tute some mystifying social embroidery. This was the way
women were treated for generations, for centuries: they were
the expressive, emotive experts of the family, the masters
in integrative capacity, more than compensating for the exter-
nal power of their spouses. But the women refused to see it that
way, and the same may happen to children when they discover
what is hiding behind the formula that they are not only sweet,
but also natural, "unadulturated", "unspoiled"- like a very
poor country from a touristic point of view.

Considerations such as these lead quickly to another approach: a rejection of the _idea_ of the multiple system, a return to the single system stating that there is only one system that is real, basic, salient. With regard to that dimension one may have two approaches in the search for a classless society: either to try to abolish any differential along it, any difference between high and low, or to point out that on this dimension everybody _is de facto_ equal, hence there is no problem of class. _Grosso modo_ these are the approaches found under such headings as marxism and nationalism respectively. Whether qualified as vulgar or dogmatic or not, it does not seem farfetched to say that marxists stipulate ownership relative to means of production as _the_ salient rank dimension, and see the key to the classless society in the abolition of that distinction, making everybody equally much owners or non-owners. And one basic idea under nationalism is to stipulate that everybody is equal in the sense of being a citizen, a member belonging to the group - that this shared belongingness is more important than anything else, overshadowing all ranking differences _inside_ the group.

Both approaches tend to deny the multiplicity of social systems today, including the high levels of segmentation that are now emerging. Equality, even equity obtained in one system may be quickly counteracted by stepping up the level of segmentation so that inequalities and inequities may emerge more easily because the other systems are more detached from the system held to carry the causal burden or social classes. Precisely by detaching education from class belongingness, from good and bad families and making it more universal with more equality of opportunity, the automatic transfer from equality relative to means of production to equality in level of education would be weakened. The result is relatively clearly seen in many of today's socialist countries: a very solid stratification system based on level of education, with top intellectuals quickly filling the vacuum created by some expropriated capitalists. The idea of abolishing class working on a single system alone would only be tenable if 1. there were only one system in modern societies _or_ 2. there was an automatic transfer effect from one system to the rest.

To maintain the former one has to be blind, to maintain the
latter there is a strong burden of empirical proof not easily
shouldered by those who seem to think along such lines.

One should not conclude this section without mentioning
a possibility that often is forgotten: to add so many rank
dimensions to the social order, trying to make all of them some-
how salient, that there is no simple rank-discordance that stands
out. In a sense this can be said to be the American solution.
Life is build around a theme of competition: there is the obvious
competition in working life, but also in leisure - any kind of
hobby can be turned into a competition, even friendship can
become a competition as to who has most and best (for ins tance
in the form of higher status) friends. But this hardly represents
a solution for the simple reason that even if people live in
25 systems,all of them competitive, there will probably usually
be a handful that stand out commanding the attention - thereby
providing the basis for rank-discordance.

4. Conclusion.

Our conclusion so far would be that we are simply
facing two different problems: exploitation and complication,
one of them vertical, the other horizontal. It is naive to
believe that one of them can be solved as an automatic conse-
quence of solving the other. This is very clearly seen in
the case of simplification: single or simple social systems
may be cruelly exploitative. But it should be equally clear
for the case of horizontalization: horizontalization done
by equalizing total rank, or by equalizing the rank in only
one single system may result in more , not less, complication.

What remains is the approach of trying to proceed along
two lines of social theory and social practice: reducing rank
differences in all systems, and - at the same time - simplifying
the total system by reducing the level of segmentation.
On purpose we say "reducing" and "simplifying", not "elimination"
- sticking to the more modest terms that also indicate processes.

What kind of image would this type of thinking lead to;
a society exposed to the processes of simplification and
horizontalization? A simple society where the same actors
interact in a many-stranded fashion, with less rigid time-
and space-budgeting,is by necessity - or at least so it seems
today - a society with not too many members. In other words,
the thinking points towards re-centralization (as opposed to
de-centralization, the establishment by the center of sub-
centers in the periphery), building relatively self-reliant
units of limited size.[32] And as to horizontalization: it points
in the direction of such strategies as job-rotation in one
system(as opposed to having different ranks in many systems),and
job-reconstruction so as to diminish the differences between
high and low, even down to zero.[33] Moreover, it points to the
direction of interaction structures where everybody is about
equally central, a structure that also would be hard to obtain
if the numbers of members were not to be relatively limited.

All this conjures images of the Chinese People's
Communes on one's inner mental screen. It is important that
this should be seen as one example, an illustration of a more

general principle rather than the only possible manifestation
of simplification and horizontalization. But it is significant
as an example, for it indicates, at least, that one is talking
about something real, something that has empirical referents,
not only of an abstract theoretical figure. One would also
imagine that in People's Communes strains resulting from
the extremes of rank deprivation and rank differences, as
well as exposures to incongruences and discordances would not
be present. No doubt, one way in which this has been obtained
is also by emphasizing belongingness, building on general
moulds of collectivism in the culture, perhaps also setting
the members of one commune to some extent apart from the out-
side. To the extent that this is done one might perhaps say
that horizontalization and simplification have been obtained
at the expense of drawing a tighter border between that par-
ticular social system and the outside, possibly building on
or creating a pattern of xenophobia.(34)

Thus, one ends up with images not too different from
traditional utopian literature constructions(35)But they could
be enriched with one additional idea: instead of complication,
(36)
complexity. Horizontalization and simplification do not
unambiguously define a social order, they set very broad
guidelines within which many forms may be possible. The
realization within one social setting of a multiplicity of
such forms, in other words the practice of diversity, would
make for a more complex social order, presumably less vulnerable
to detrimental outside influences.(37)Equipped with mobility
a social order of that kind would also offer the individual
sufficient variation. That mobility would, in fact, reintro-
duce a multiple system diachronically: a person might (but
he might also not) choose to move from one to the other according
to his inclinations. as life goes on. But each one would consti-
tute a total social setting and for that reason be different
from diachronic multiple systems. In the latter the individual
goes from one empoverished existence to the other; in the
former from one total social system to the other - in other
words from one society to the other.(38)Concretely this would
constitute some form of internal migration within societies
as we are used to think of them, and cohesiveness would probably

have to be provided for by some kind of federal administrative
structure. In a system of that kind the aged would end their
lives as full citizens, not in an empoverished single system,
ultimately also deprived of rank - as opposed to the many
systems, perhaps particularly outside Europe, where rank
increases automatically with increasing age so as to compen-
sate, to some extent, for the gradual withdrawal made neces-
sary by the process of aging.

Finally, some comments on what this might mean for
the international system; also a system of actors. One con-
clusion might be the realization that there is no automatic
transfer here either. Economic independence does not follow
automatically from political independence as we all know today,
nor will cultural independence follow from the sum total of
the other two. If horizontalization is the goal, the struggle
has to be fought at the level of every system; there is no
cheap way out.

Second, if more meaningful international interaction
is attempted, it would probably have to be in systems with a
limited number of members, and this would point towards regiona-
lism, not only to universalism . An international system
divided in regions with a limited number of members cooperating
on a basis of equity and mutual benefit and over a rich spectrum
where interaction is concerned, is actually very much in line
with contemporary practice, and it does follow from the type
of theory indicated above: there is no substitute for horison-
talizing relations in all interaction systems, and this can
best be done among a relatively limited number of relatively
equal actors.

1. There is a rich literature in this field. Some of it is
reflected in the present author's "A Structural Theory of
Aggression"; and article mentioned in the preceding note
(Essays in Peace Research, Vol.III, ch.s 4 and 5 respectively).
Also see Anderson, Zelditch: "Rank Equilibration and Politics",
European Journal of Sociology, 1964, pp. 112-125; J.P. Gibbs &
W.T. Martin: Status Integration and Suicide (Eugene: University
of Oregon, 1964); by the same authors: "Status Integration and
Suicide in Ceylon", American Journal of Sociology, May 1959;
Alessandro Pizzorno: "Squilibri (o Incongruenze) di Status e
Partecipazione Politica", Quademi di Sociologia, 3-4/66,pp.371-386;
Hubert M. Blalock,Jr.: "Status Inconsistency and Interaction:
Some Alternative Models", The American Journal of Sociology,
Vol.73/3, November 1967; Andrea Tyree: "Status Inconsistency and
Childbearing", Ph.D thesis, Department of Sociology, University
of Chicago; Hannu Uusitalo: "An Analysis and Comparison of
Rank Balance Theories", Tutkimuksia Research Reports, Institute
of Sociology, University of Helsinki No.138, 1970; Eugene Burnstein
and Robert B. Zajonc: "The Effect of Group Success on the Reduction
of Status Incongruence in Task-Oriented Groups", Sociometry, 1965,
pp. 349-362.

2. For some work using the same general line of thinking on the
international system, see Johan Galtung: "International Relations
and International Conflicts: A Sociological Approach", Transactions
of the Sixth World Congress of Sociology,1966, Vol I, pp. 121-161
(also in Essays in Peace Research,Vol.IV, ch.9 - with some of the
themes taken up in the same volume, ch.10 "Big Powers and the
World Feudal Structure"); Anders Boserup and Claus Iversen,
"Rank Analysis of a Polarized Community: A Case Study from Northern
Ireland", Peace Research Society (International), Proceedings,
Vol. VIII,1967; Manus Midlarsky: "Status Inconsistency and the

Onset of International Warfare", Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Political Science, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, 1966; Frank Hoole: "A Frustration-Aggression Analysis of the External Behavior of Nations", etc.

3. For a presentation of the distinction between actor-oriented and structure-oriented analysis, see the author's The True Worlds: A Transnational Perspective, New York, 1977, ch. 2.1

4. It may be objected that there is no such distinction: if actors are ranked in terms of "intelligence" or something similar, this only means that there is another system of intelligence-positions to which the actors are also allocated.

5. Clearly, this is a way of avoiding rank disequilibrium with all its consequences - for instance as spelt out in the literature referred to in footnote 1 above.

6. This is elaborated further in ch.1.2 in the author's Members of Two Worlds: A Development Study of Three Villages in Western Sicily, (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1971, New York, Columbia University Press, 1971).

7. For the use of these terms generally associated with the name of Talcott Parsons, see ch.1.3, op.cit.

8. For a further elaboration of this perspective, see Johan Galtung: "Schooling and Future Society", Papers No.8, Chair in Conflict and Peace Research, University of Oslo.

9. In the European Community this is referred to as one of the basic four liberties: the free movement of goods, capital, man-power and services - basic ingredience for the expansion of a capitalist economy.

10. For one elaboration of these concepts, see "Social Position and Social Behavior: Center-Periphery Concepts and Theories", Essays in Peace Research, Vol.III, ch.1 - or ch.4.2 in the book referred to in footnote 3 above.

11. If this were not the case, organizations and institutions would die out relatively quickly for they are all in one way or the other based on the idea that people should be recruited from low positions into high positions. They have also usually a built-in assumption of the opposite character: once promoted one should not be demoted. There is a trained incapacity in performing lower tasks, they are seen as psychologically re-volting and contrary to the way personel is flowing through an institution. Inherently, however, one would not assume that the director of a coal mine should be incapable of per-forming the tasks at the bottom of the mine - just as one would also imagine that the worker promoted to the desk of the director would sooner or later catch up with the tricks.

12. For an exploration of this theme, see Johan Galtung:
"Structural Pluralism and the Future of Human Society"
in Proceedings from the Second International Future Research
Conference, (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1971).

13. In some societies this age-set is defined by birth and may
consist of all those born within a four-years period, or a
one-year period - as the Chinese calendar would encourage. In
other societies age-sets may be more defined by means of social
birth, for instance graduation from senior high school or
university as is the case in Japan.

14. For a discussion of the territorial expression of this
division, see Johan Galtung: "Human Settlements: A Theory, Some
Strategies and Some Proposals", Papers, No.19, Chair in Conflict
and Peace Research, University of Oslo.

15. I am indebted to Tarsis Kabwegyere for this particular way
of expressing the general idea.

16. For a person from the protestant part of Western Europe the
switching practices encountered in the catholic South of Europe
and the socialist East, not to mention the very high levels to
which this practice has been developed in South-Eastern Europe,
may come as a shock used, as he or she would be, to the idea
of consistency between thought, speech and action.

17. In social anthropology these expressions are particularly
associated with the excellent work of Eric Wolf. Max Gluckman uses
the expression simples-multiplex.
18. This theme is developed further in Johan Galtung: "The United
States in Indo-China: The Paradigm for a Generation", Essays in
Peace Research, Vol.V, ch.8

19. For maximum rank-discordance one would probably look at the
sum of all internal differences between the ranks in the various
systems, and identify the concept with the maximum of that sum.
Thus, if there are four systems there is more discordance if an
actor has two topdog statuses and two underdog statuses, than if
he has three of the former and one of the latter. More problematic
is system-incongruence. One might, however, make use of one of the
many parametrizations of structures, for instance in terms of how
big the difference is between the most central and the most peri-
pheral points in the structure with regard to centrality. Thus,
in Fig. 2 there is a difference between the central and the two
peripheral points in the first system, but no difference between
the three points in the second system - and this difference between
differences could be the measure that would be at its maximum in
the case of maximum system-incongruence.

20. This proposition is not quite obvious, however. On the one
hand it is close to a tautology: when there is no segmentation,
there are no multiplicity of systems either, there is only a
single system. As segmentation starts, systems separate and the
basis is laid for system-incongruence and/or rank-discordance.
However, as this process continues it may be argued that one comes

to a point where the systems are so segmented that a person no longer compares: his experiences in one are no longer relevant for his experiences in the other. And this separation may in fact be the technique of resolution of the conflict of a problem. Thus, a person in a racist country like parts of the United States, at least up till recently, who could be characterized as "well educated, Negro" might keep the two contexts of interaction, with less educated Negroes, and with whites, so separate that nobody else could be witness to the difference in rank in the two systems, in a sense not even the person himself, as they would be defined as belonging to two different worlds. For that reason the proposition might be reformulated so that it becomes curvilinear rather than linear.

21. The idea of "complication" (as opposed to "complexity") plays a certain role in a particular and important approach to ecology, as developed in Sigmund Kvaløy, "Ecophilosophy and Ecopolitics", North American Review, Summer 1974.

22. One could even express this mathematically:

Synchronically:
$$\sum_{1}^{n} r_i = k_1$$

Diachronically:
$$\int_{b}^{d} r_i(t)dt = k_2$$

In the first case the idea would simply be that for each person, member of n systems, the sum of ranks should be constant; and in the second case that for each person, over time, the sum of ranks of the systems he goes through should be constant. The integration in the latter case is carried out from b(irth) to d(eath) - believers in Christianity might extend the upper limit to include the afterlife; believers in Hinduism might in addition extend the lower limits so as to include the "beforelife". Thus, the synchronic model would compensate for a low prestige, dirty, highly uninteresting job with - for instance - high salary; the diachronic model would compensate with high status at old age, and the religious models with possible compensation in the afterlife. The latter point is made very explicit in the Sermon of the Mount which is a sermon over the theme of diachronic rank compensation: the poor, the poor in spirit, the down-throdden will all get their compensation in afterlife.

23. In a career-oriented society it might not be so difficult to organize synchronic rank compensation, but diachronic rank compensation would run against the idea that promotion and demotion are asymmatric concepts - even if one is not promoted, one should at least not be demoted.

24. The examples usually contrasted are that of the professor and the garbage collector.

25. The idea of role-playing in this connection is used very fruitfully by, for instance, Thomas Pettigrew, in his work on Negro American Intelligence (pp. 116-117). His data seem to indicate that the Negroes perform consistently better on intelligence test when interviewed by other Negroes than when they are interviewed by whites; "For both groups, the mean I.Q. was approximately six points higher when the test was administered by an examiner of their own race". A similar phenomenon is reported in the classical article by Mirra Komarovsky, "Cultural Contradictions and Sex Roles", American Journal of Sociology, 52, No.3 (1946, pp.184-189). Today her point sounds trivial, via that there is such a thing as a feminine role, trivial among other reasons because Mirra Komarovsky analyzed her data in that particular way.

26. Although there might be some agreement with the first of these datas, the second idea would hardly meet with enthusiasm. One reason for this difference in reaction is probably that education is seen as more distributed than money and power.

27. Thus, in the book by J.P.Gibbs & W.T.Martin referred to in footnote 1 above, 160 out of 175 coefficients are in the direction anticipated by the major theorem (pp. 197-198). For an other interesting investigation that can be interpreted as being along the same lines, see Odd Steffen Dalgard: Migrasjon og funksjonelle psykoser,(Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1967).

28. The idea of "social outer limits" is found within the parlance of the United Nations Environment Program.

29. An investigation should be made of the conditions under which a social problem is recognized as a "problem" - what are the filtering mechanisms it has to pass before it gains problem status? The simple guess that it has to hit physically or psychologically the rich and the powerful and the educated, directly or indirectly, has an air of the banale; yet it may be a rather effective way of predicting when problems become"problems".

30. In the preceding article, "Rank and Social Integration" (Essays in Peace Research, Vol.III,ch. 5) this is the major theme, see section 3.

31. Both experience and research seem to come to the conclusion that such correlations are more likely to be positive than negative - for instance the correlation between scholastic achievement and physical achievement in sports competitions etc. at school.

32. For an exposition of the theory of self-reliance, see Johan Galtung, "Self-Reliance: Concept, Practice and Rationale", Papers, No.36, Chair in Conflict and Peace Research, University of Oslo.

33. This is explored in some detail in the paper referred to in footnote 12 above.

34. A typical example here is the concept of being a "citizen"
- even entitled to vote. This would be the common status, and
could be constructed so as to overshadow internal differences
but only if the inside-outside distinction is kept in mind all
the time. To have something in common is only meaningful in
this context if there are others, neighbors, outsiders, who
visibly do not share the corpus mysticum. Another example: we are
all equal in front of death - one reason why death is forgotten.

35. Generally, the utopian literature focusses around two
themes: how to arrive at more egalitarian, equitable society,
and how to increase human freedom and diversity - only rarely
do they focus on both things at the same time. Generally speaking
utopian societies are small, or at least limited insides - a
conclusion also arrived at here. Also see reference in footnote 12.

36. For further elaboration of this concept see the reference
mentioned in footnote 21 above.

37. This ecological principle, that in diversity there is strength,
of course presupposes that the relationship between these diverse
elements is positive or at least not negative. Mutually hostile
components that tear each other to pieces and only bolster the
invulnerability of the total system when challenged from the out-
side, may be more detrimental than useful. And this has something
to do with the idea of a country practicing X number of different
school systems in X different parts of the country: it will have
X + 1 systems to draw upon, if one of them fails for one reason
or another, but may also loose enormous energy and resources if
these X systems engage in a war of all against all instead of
establishing a system of peaceful coexistence.

38. And this is the basic point in the article referred to in
footnote 21 above.