1973 Prismatic Society Revisited. Riggs Fred W.

Q. “What do you mean by a 'prismatic society'? Give us a definition,”

R. “To answer directly would imply acceptance of a verbalist approach. I prefer a semantic mode that starts with the identification and definition of concepts as units of analysis, assigning terms to them only as a convenient means of identification. No doubt the expression, 'prismatic society', like any other word or phrase, can have a variety of meanings.”

Q. “You are dodging the issue. I understand that you mean by a ‘prismatic’ society what others mean by ‘transitional’ or ‘developing’ societies. Why not admit that you have just coined a synonym or an euphemism for an established idea?”

R. “Why admit what is not true? You may say, ‘Western society is secular,’ but surely you do not think that ‘secular’ is a synonym for ‘Western’. Similarly transitional societies are typically prismatic, but you cannot substitute prismatic for transitional. You can say ‘grass is green’ without thinking ‘green means grass’. Also grass might be brown, a transitional society might not be prismatic, and highly industrialized societies may be quite prismatic—indeed, I think they will probably become more, not less, prismatic.”

Q. “Still, I don’t understand what you mean by ‘prismatic’ and anyhow you have misused an analogy from optics. Why can’t you use a simple word like ‘transitional’ or ‘developing’ to say what you mean?”

Such, unfortunately, is the tenor of many conversations about the idea of a “prismatic society.” Since I wrote a book on the subject [1964] I sometimes impatiently refer questioners to the book, yet I know that if confusion persists, perhaps it is because the book is long and complicated and full of neologisms. Perhaps if I were to summarize my ideas in an essay, using more conventional language, some of these questions could be easily answered. Moreover, I have modified some of my ideas and repudiated others since the book was published, and I have incorporated in the essay a number of ideas that have been published since the appearance in 1964 of *Administration in Developing Countries: The Theory of Prismatic Society.* In order to help the reader locate these materials, which typically take up my ideas in more detail than is possible here without much documentation, I have appended a list of my relevant publications. They are referred to in the text by date and, in some cases, with page numbers. Since this “module” is essentially a “think piece,” a cumulation of ideas and a reinterpretation of earlier work, it is presented without the usual academic apparatus of footnotes and learned references, which is not to say, of course, that I am not profoundly indebted to colleagues who both orally and through the written word have deeply influenced my thought. Nevertheless, I assume sole responsibility for the outcome, for its defects and limitations as well as whatever merits it may have.

## The Prismatic Viewpoint

The theory of "prismatic society" grew out of efforts to explain processes of development and modernization that are taking place today in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Dissatisfied with prevailing modes of explanation, I began to hunt for more promising alternatives. I found prismatic theory promising because, although the scene remains unchanged, we need to see it in a different way. To grasp the point, take a prism, a three-sided piece of ground glass, and start looking through it while gradually rotating the prism. You will find that the scene about you, viewed this way, looks paradoxically different from the world we ordinarily see.

To appreciate the difference, take a look at the world as it appears through more conventional viewers. Two contrasting perspectives for looking at developmental processes and problems are common: the first *unilinear* and the second *relativistic.* Let us think of the former as a polarized view of the world and the latter as kaleidoscopic. After explaining these more usual modes of perception, it will be easier to explain how the *prismatic* perspective differs from them.

### *The Polarized and Kaleidoscopic Views*

When one looks through *polarized* glass, he does not see all the light that strikes the naked eye because only selected radiations are transmitted. Consequently a selective perception of reality—"without glare"—is created. Among the polarized lenses through which we often see the world are a pair marked "development" and "modernization." Our fathers viewed the world through similar lenses though with different labels, such as "progress" or "social evolution," and our grandfathers for their part often saw a "heathen" world in process of conversion to "true religion."

Although the labels have changed, the underlying polarization persists. One visualizes an original state of nature, of chaos or waywardness, upon which somehow civilization, truth, order, industrialization, or liberation should and will be imposed. The task incumbent, therefore, on all right-thinking peoples was to facilitate the historical process, so that God's will might be done, the invisible hand be felt, or the less developed enabled to achieve their manifest destiny, to become developed. Such a view of the world is unilinear, polarized, world ordering. Although new fashions have often replaced old styles in our images of the passing and the emerging order—we now see shifts from ascriptive to achievement orientations, from particularism to universalism—the polarized viewpoint has been remarkably long-lived and influential.

There is a more sophisticated dialectical variant of the unilinear viewpoint. It might be referred to as a visored rather than a polarized perspective. Visors are familiar in the form of eyeshades and are sometimes used above the windshields of automobiles—in former times knights wore them on their helmets. They divide the perceived world into two sectors, the shadowed and the lighted. From the visored (dialectical) point of view, reality presents itself in the form of continuing contrasts or contradictions, the thesis and antithesis, the ambiguities and ambivalences, the yin and the yang, from which in the

fullness of time, the synthesis, the universal, the perfected harmony of countervailing parts may be achieved. In the dialectical framework there is as much unilinearity and purposiveness in history as there is in the more simpleminded forms of developmental or evolutional thinking. Without ignoring the significant differences between the polarized and visored modes of looking at the world, we may group them together as variants of a unilinear perspective.

Paradoxically, a *kaleidoscopic* view has typically coexisted with the polarized. Anyone playing with a kaleidoscope can perhaps appreciate a child's perception of reality as a continuously changing and fascinating sequence of many colored but meaningless patterns. A classic model of this relativistic

view is presented by those schools of cultural anthropology which see every culture as distinctively and eufunctionally patterned, as providing the best of all possible worlds for its members, as "something of value" to be treasured and preserved against the encroachments of a hostile and disruptive universe.

The kaleidoscopic view, shaped initially by the study of tribal and insular societies, has now shifted to the agricultural village and increasingly affects our perceptions of new states as they burst into the world arena. The anthropological version of this kaleidoscopic view, however, is only one of its latest and more sophisticated manifestations. Earlier versions manifested themselves from diametrically opposed premises.

At one extreme there was a glorification of the "noble savage", the Rousseauan tradition of the 18th century and an insistent romanticization of primitivism in art and literature which persists to our times. At the other extreme may be placed the isolationist, racist, or genocidal views of those who depict the world as trapped in self-destructive savagery, incapable of salvation or development, and therefore hopelessly destined for oblivion—except perhaps for the embattled homeland where the adherents of this viewpoint see themselves as the narcissistic heroes of eerie Valhalla or the residual beneficiaries of a final Armageddon.

According to these relativistic views, development—or evolution or salvation—is either unnecessary (because each society has already found the solutions to its own problems) or impossible (because of the inherent incapacity of primitive peoples and races or the primal curse under which man's fate was sealed).

Just as there is a more sophisticated dialectical version of the unilinear viewpoint, so there is a more majestic variant of the relativistic, namely a cyclical mode of thought, which can be visualized as *helical.* The helix is a three-dimensional curve, such as may be found on the volutes of an Ionic column, the threads of a common screw, or in the voluted snail. Peering through a helixometer at the rifled bore of a carbine, the examiner searches among its repetitious markings for minor variations. This was, of course, the ancient, the primordial, the heliocentric orientation of the classic mind in which the diurnal transits of the rising and setting sun are paralleled in the periodicity of the moon, the annual cycles of the zodiac, the repetitive periods or ages of the universe, the "eternal return."

To the child's eye the changing patterns seen through a kaleidoscope are ever new and fascinating, but the same views for older spectators become monotonously repetitive. Thus the helical perspective turns out to be a jaded variant of the kaleidoscopic, the relativistic orientation become cyclical.

Although the helical mode of seeing reality is classic and essentially pre-modern (or Eastern), it recurs in contemporary thought, not only in anthropological relativism, as noted above, but more saliently in contemporary American neo-isolationism and in certain gloomy brands of world futurism. Predicting ecological disaster because of a population explosion, the pollution of water and air, atomic warfare or the exhaustion of natural resources, a new ice age or seismic disasters, these contemporary Cassandras have become increasingly articulate and influential.

According to this view, implicit in the Nixon doctrine, the various peoples of the world have made their own beds—we should let them sleep in them. We have our own problems to solve, our own people to care for. Let us therefore help ourselves, let us live and let live, let us withdraw from interventions and involvement, leaving each to his own: So go the cliches which come to mind when viewing the world kaleidoscopically or helicoscopically.

*The Prismatic Viewpoint: A Third Way*

The *prismatic* view of the world necessarily rejects both the polarized and the kaleidoscopic images. It seeks a middle, but not just an intermediate, road between the two extremes. The prismatic view is essentially dialectical but not unilinear, cyclical but not relativistic. Looking through a revolving prism one may see the upper half of his world inverted and the lower half superimposed. The normal objects viewed will also appear highlighted, fringed with a rainbowcolored halo. Suddenly the observer will see himself, upside down. The prismatic scene is ordered yet changing, less sharply defined and unified than the polarized view, but more meaningfully structured than the kaleidoscopic. It offers more coherent contrasts than the visored outlook and more resplendent views than the helical. Gazing through our prism, let us ponder the world it reveals.

Let us first think about the relation between the universal and the particular in change processes. Consider, for example, the Chinese. One cannot imagine that even under communist rule they will be anything but Chinese, not only by the year 2000, but also by the years 2100 and 2200. Short of a global holocaust, we are bound to think that a hundred years from now there will still be millions of people speaking Chinese to each other and perpetuating many ancient traditions in the area now known as "China." Yet they will surely also have become a part of our world's culture, industrialized, televised, mobilized, urbanized, computerized—in short, "modernized" or "developed" yet as recognizably Sinic as they were a thousand years ago.

Think, again, about the diffusion of the automobile. There is scarcely a city in the world today which has not already experienced the motor car, and with it traffic jams, gas fumes and air pollution, suburbs, anomie and urban slums, downtown offices, and exurban

commuting. The automobile, surely, has not been diffused primarily as a result of exogenous influences, the push of manufacturers in the industrial West striving to crash the markets of the third world—yet no doubt there have been exogenous pressures. The world has become a single market, and the Fords, the Fiats, and the Datsuns are its ubiquitous symbols.

There is also, however, a countervailing endogenous pull—for every car sold, there must also be a purchaser, someone willing to part with treasure, to work and save, in order to acquire the convenience, the mobility, the status, the capabilities that result from the possession of an automobile. The auto's appeal is so universal that it is transcultural, global, omnipresent. Reactions have already sprung up against the ecological costs of the motor car, but in historical perspective, our times—the twentieth century—may be viewed as the age of the auto or the Great Motor Mania, like the time of the dinosaurs or the period of the Barbaric Invasions.

No country is immune to the lure and the blight visited upon all men by the spread of the auto age. It matters not whether the driver-owner be a farmer in his Volkswagen or a city slicker in his Cadillac; the social and governmental implications are alike and inescapable. Consider only one consequence: the need for roads. A story is told about the highly placed bureaucrat, less than a hundred years ago, who was asked to comment on a report that automobiles had been invented. He replied that they could not go far since there were no highways that could carry them. How perceptive the remark, but how limited his time horizon!

I can still recall a drive with my father during the 1920s, from Schenectady to Sacramento over endless detours and rutted roads. For today's drivers on interstate super-highways, such an experience may seem unbelievably antediluvian, yet throughout the world the same transformation is taking place, thanks to the motor car. The worst traffic jam I ever saw was around a construction project outside of Amman, and paved roads now penetrate distant provinces which could be reached only by sedan chair or mule less than fifty years ago.

Road building, of course, is scarcely new—the Roman and the Chinese empires were justly famous for their achievements in highway engineering. But the age of concrete and the gas-eating road monster have brought more of a qualitative than a quantitative change. Roads now reach villages never before touched by urban and cosmopolitan influences. Vast programs of highway construction and maintenance must be mounted at fearful cost by newly expanded departments of government. Decisions must be made, equipment used, money raised, engineers trained, and traffic controlled. The problems generated by the need to build, maintain, and finance modern roads— problems arising out of the Auto Age—are world-wide problems. They may differ in scale from place to place, but every country has experienced them, and they will surely become more serious before they are solved.

In this sense the motor car symbolizes modernity. It is one of the universals of our times. Its ubiquity means the spread of technology, the rise of mobility, the urbanization of rural life, and the pollution of urban places. To the viewer with polarized glasses, it

represents development whether desirable or undesirable, an inescapable process leading to a common outcome, a world order, a procrustean future.

Yet the observer with a kaleidoscope can point to different aspects even of the motor age. If one tries to drive abroad, he will surely experience traumatic frustration from the unintelligibility of signs. Names and instructions written in Chinese, Arabic, or Thai will baffle him, and changing rules of the road may cost him his life. Thus every country clings to its own culture, not only to its language, but to many more intangible clues to its identity: its dances and music and art, the clothes people wear and the way they cook, the procedures of government offices, the history taught in school, the rituals used in temple or church, the style of family life, of social club, of games, even of courting and making love. It is these primordial particularities that give color and variety, that convey a sense of identity and distinctiveness, that may indeed be requisites for survival. If every culture were to become homogeneous, if uniformity were everywhere to prevail, the human race would probably abandon itself to utter boredom.

One of the paradoxes of industrialization is not only its capacity for standardization but also its potential for differentiation. Although the automobile is ubiquitous, the number of car models manufactured baffles memory. Would-be buyers of modern manufactures are confused by the vast array of possibilities from which they must choose. The range of choice offered customers in a modern department store greatly exceeds the stock in trade of a traditional bazaar or village market. Thus at the same time that the scientific revolution and industrialization have introduced a compulsion toward conformity, they have also made possible the proliferation of alternatives.

### *The Particular in the Universal*

The unilinear polarized viewpoint stresses the commonality, the universal aspects of the auto age (including its contradictions) as symbol of development or modernity; while the relativistic, kaleidoscopic perspective correspondingly emphasizes the diversity, the particularism of unique cultures and variegated forms, swirling in a manifold of polymorphic repetitiveness. From the prismatic point of view, by contrast, both perspectives are combined; one sees the many ways in which the particular can manifest the universal.

This has always been true, of course. Archaeologists can identify precisely which traditional culture produced each variety of painted pottery, yet the common problem, the need to shape a vessel as drinking cup or cooking pot, has been universally shared whatever the infinitely changing patterns, materials, and shapes of cup and pot. The prismatic view deliberately seeks out the universals, the commonalities that lie concealed behind a bewildering and ever changing display of patterned particularisms. From a prismatic perspective we can see the essential complementarity of opposites which frequently frightens and sometimes antagonizes observers who should welcome each other as allies.

For example, to take our universities as an exhibit, we find side by side, yet socially

distant, a congeries of disciplinary departments over against area studies programs. The area specialists, taking a humanistic interest in the unique, the idiographic, focus their attention on the totality of a social, historical, or cultural event. Here we find the Kremlinologists, the Sinologists, the Africanists, the Egyptologists, the specialist on Iceland in the tenth century or on a Kwakiutl village. By contrast, we find on the opposite side of the campus the nomothetic analysts: the peace researchers, the development buffs, the social change theorists, the economists, sociologists, and political scientists, the game theorists and the simulators. Impatiently they seek to overcome or reduce the diversity of concrete situations by compiling aggregate statistics and conducting surveys, by factor and canonical analysis, by mathematical formulae and universalistic propositions or models.

From the prismatic point of view, neither approach is complete, yet both are necessary. They complement each other, providing a continuing dialogue through which we can better discover reality. We cannot achieve a synthesis through either approach by itself; the idiographic particularist is needed to suggest hypotheses for testing by the generalizer, and the nomothetic universalist by reasoning both deductively and inductively can generate theories that provide starting points for application in, and the illumination of, concrete situations.

Can we now make use of this prismatic approach to help us understand one of the most perplexing and yet challenging sets of problems faced by the world in our time, namely the causes and consequences of developmental change? Can we perhaps discern beneath the innumerable variations—the infinite complexity of the cultural forms in which each country, society or culture of our times seeks its own identity and future—some common elements or universal patterns?

One characteristic that has been widely mentioned by development theorists as a concomitant of modernization in any of its forms is something known as “differentiation.” A long series of social analysts has pointed to the historic increase in specialization of labor, to the shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft,* from mechanical to organic solidarity, from primary to secondary associations. An underlying constant in all these formulations is the transformation from undifferentiated to differentiated roles and structures, from functionally diffuse to functionally specific modes of organization. The process of development somehow either is or requires a successful structural transformation of society from a less to a more differentiated mode. Herein lies, apparently, one of the underlying universals of developmental change. The patterns of specialization may differ particularistically, but the need for differentiation is universal. Polarize some iron filings on a sheet of paper and the resultant patterns will always differ from each other—but the underlying magnetic field will remain constant as the organizing principle behind diversity. Can the prismatic viewpoint help us understand development in terms of differentiation?

Perhaps so, but only if we also bring into the picture another universal, the need for coordination or “integration,” something not so well recognized in the literature on development as the need for differentiation. Looking more deeply into this need may also teach us something about the processes and problems of differentiation. Let us consider,

as an illustration of what I mean, the behavior of a symphony orchestra.

Bear in mind that each player in an orchestra is a specialist who makes a distinctive contribution to the music that can be created, however, only when every member coordinates his own efforts with those of his colleagues. The oboe, the clarinet, French horn, violins, and percussion are each necessary, yet each depends on the others for a perfected symphonic outcome.

Compare the sounds you hear from an orchestra while it is tuning up with the music it produces after the conductor has taken command. The orchestra during its tune-up stage is just as differentiated a social system as it is after the performance has begun, but during the preparatory phase it is not integrated; whereas under the conductor's baton it becomes a coordinated system.

The image of the symphony orchestra is more than a metaphor—it displays in microcosm the essential structure of any differentiated social system. It helps us to understand that development requires more than differentiation: it involves differentiation plus integration. Seen in this way, we can also appreciate that development—or at least any desirable form of development—does not necessarily vary directly with the degree of differentiation of a social system. Malintegration can occur at any level of differentiation. Indeed, the more differentiated a social system, the more catastrophic would be a crisis of malintegration for that system.

## Prismatic "Society" and Prismatic "Viewpoint"

The study of development and recognition of the problems arising in societies that are relatively differentiated but not integrated leads us to confront something that I call a "prismatic society." The prismatic "viewpoint," in short, brings into focus a social condition which may be called "prismatic," or perhaps, conversely, it has been the study of prismatic conditions which generated the mode of analysis that I have termed "prismatic."

It has been objected that the juxtaposition of these two meanings is confusing. Perhaps so, yet we are accustomed to similar distinctions in other contexts. As an American, I may be accused of thinking in an American way, which is to say that nurture in the American social system leads Americans to form an American viewpoint. Similarly there is a Japanese society and a Japanese viewpoint, a Russian way of life and a Russian outlook.

It may be said that the parallel is inexact. The Egyptian viewpoint grows out of the life experiences of persons living in Egypt, but the prismatic viewpoint is not necessarily held by those who live in prismatic systems. Quite so. However, let us try a different analogy. We may think of the Copernican viewpoint in relation to the Copernican system, by which we mean an astronomical orientation that facilitated recognition of the solar system,

including earth as a planet. The prismatic viewpoint is to the polarized and kaleidoscopic as the Copernican outlook was to the Ptolemaic. In both cases the new frame of reference leads to new perceptions; what is perceived, no doubt, has the same ontological reality under the new perspective as under the old, but our models of that reality are quite different and, hopefully, they come much closer to describing it.[1] If we are correct, it will also enable us to make better predictions and to influence or change the perceived social systems more effectively. The prismatic viewpoint gives us a way of discerning empirical phenomena easily recognized as prismatic.

The distinction between a prismatic viewpoint and prismatic systems was not well formulated in my book on administration and prismatic society published in 1964. Moreover, the interpretation of the prismatic model as a differentiated but malintegrated social system is essentially new in this reassessment of my earlier work. It will open up, I believe, some novel and challenging lines of inquiry. However, much that I wrote a decade ago about the detailed characteristics of prismatic society remains, in my opinion, true for the new model also—I shall not attempt, therefore, to repeat or summarize that work. Rather, in this new look, I shall try to bring out some aspects and interpretations not included in the earlier work.

### *Differentiation without Integration*

The new definition of a prismatic society offered above forces me to clarify and amend an interpretation offered previously in my book. This amendment grows out of the notion that if the prismatic condition arises when a social system is differentiated and malintegrated, then the more differentiated a society becomes, the more prismatic it could be if it were also to be malintegrated. Since my earlier work was based on and focused attention on some characteristic problems found in many contemporary countries of the third world—where it was clear that a fairly high degree of differentiation accompanied by malintegration prevailed—I arrived at a misleading conclusion, namely that the so-called developing or transitional societies were necessarily more prismatic than the so-called developed or modern societies are or were likely to become. This mistake—for I now believe it was a mistake—led me to think in a kind of unilinear fashion that was in fact quite unprismatic. To illustrate, this *mistaken* conceptualization visualized the type of scale in figure 1. Although useful semantic distinctions could be made between the three sets of terms in figure 1, they seem to refer substantially to a single scale of variation seen, perhaps, from different points of view.

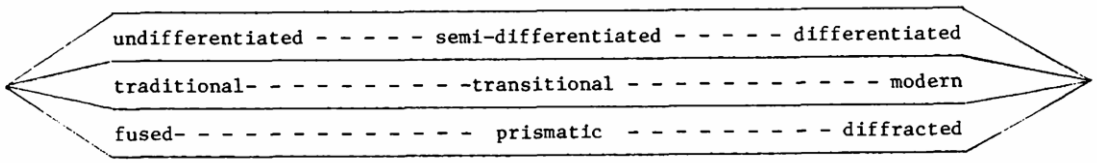


*Figure 1. One-dimensional approach.*

I now regard this framework as misleading and offer as a substitute the two-dimensional scheme in figure 2. As figure 2 suggests, the more differentiated a social

system, the more prismatic it could be; a semi-differentiated system might also be relatively diffracted. What the use of a two-dimensional model suggests is the possibility that prismatic conditions need not be specific to particular stages of economic development or modernization but may affect societies at any level of differentiation.

If these possibilities can occur historically, then prismatic conditions need not be confined to less developed countries. Moreover, the more differentiated a society, the higher the level of integration it requires in order to become diffracted and the greater the risks, the more catastrophic the results, of prismatic breakdowns.

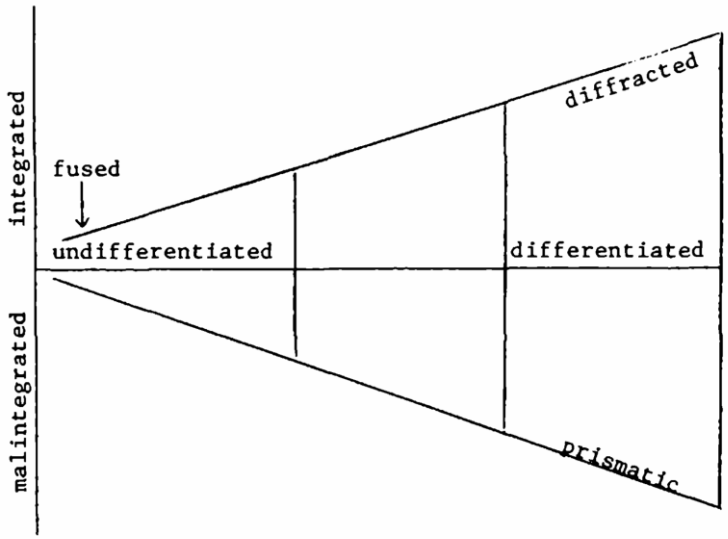


*Figure 2. Two-dimensional approach.*

Recent developments in the United States and other Western countries have begun to manifest prismatic characteristics in ever starker fashion. We can see on every hand the manifestations of increasing malintegration in the form of urban crises, race riots, student uprisings, popular apathy, the hippy phenomenon, and the profound turbulence wrought by a continuing war in Vietnam. But looking backward ever so slightly, we can recall the rise of Nazism and Fascism in Europe, the major upheaval of World War II, the great depression of the 1930s, and the massive purges in the Soviet Union. There are some among us, moreover, who forecast even more profound upheavals and turmoil during the decades that lie immediately ahead.

At various times I have suggested in my writings that prismatic characteristics can be found in varying degrees in many if not most countries, including the most developed. It now seems clear that prismatic phenomena may well appear in their most dramatic (and devastating) form in the near future precisely in those countries which have heretofore considered themselves the most developed, the most modern. Nevertheless, it is also understandable that, during the 1950s and perhaps most of the 1960s, the crises of malintegration that affected the new states of Asia, Africa, and Latin America attracted widespread attention and stimulated a flood of literature and concern about

developmental problems. Concurrently, the industrialized countries—including Western Europe, North America, the Soviet Union, Japan, and Australia-New Zealand—appeared not only to have attained a high level of differentiation but to have reached a developmental plateau where the major crises of integration had been solved, leaving only a few relatively simple problems to be tackled during an indeterminate future of post-industrial affluence, stability, and widening social justice.

Clearly, however, this complacent sense that the "developed" countries had somehow "arrived" was an illusion that has now been rudely shattered. But at the same time, we can also understand how our efforts to analyze the problems of non-Western societies might have generated some new conceptual frameworks which, while still useful in the study of modernizing societies of the third world, may also prove increasingly important in helping us understand some of the new crises that have already broken out in the West and are likely to become far more acute than they are now before they can be, if ever, eventually resolved.

### *Types of Prismatic Society*

If the characteristics and severity of prismatic problems vary with the degree of differentiation of a society, then it may be useful to be able to distinguish between different types of prismatic society by some appropriate terminology. Accordingly, I propose to use three simple prefixes (*eo-, ortho-,* and *neo-)* to make these distinctions. Since prevalent conditions in third world countries provided the initial impetus and data for creation of the prismatic model, it seems fitting to apply the label "orthoprismatic" to the characteristic syndrome of the kind of malintegrated differentiated society that we find best illustrated in some, though not necessarily all, the countries of the third world.

By contrast, the prismatic characteristics that may already be seen in the West can be called "neoprismatic." This is not to say that there are not also in Western contexts older prismatic manifestations which could easily be recognized as orthoprismatic.

Extending our framework, we can then apply the label "eoprismatic" to patterns of malintegrated differentiation that manifested themselves during the trying times when the industrial revolution was taking place in the West. The writings of Karl Marx, among others, dramatically characterized some of these eoprismatic conditions. Figure 3 provides a simple way of visualizing this scheme and remembering the proposed terminology.

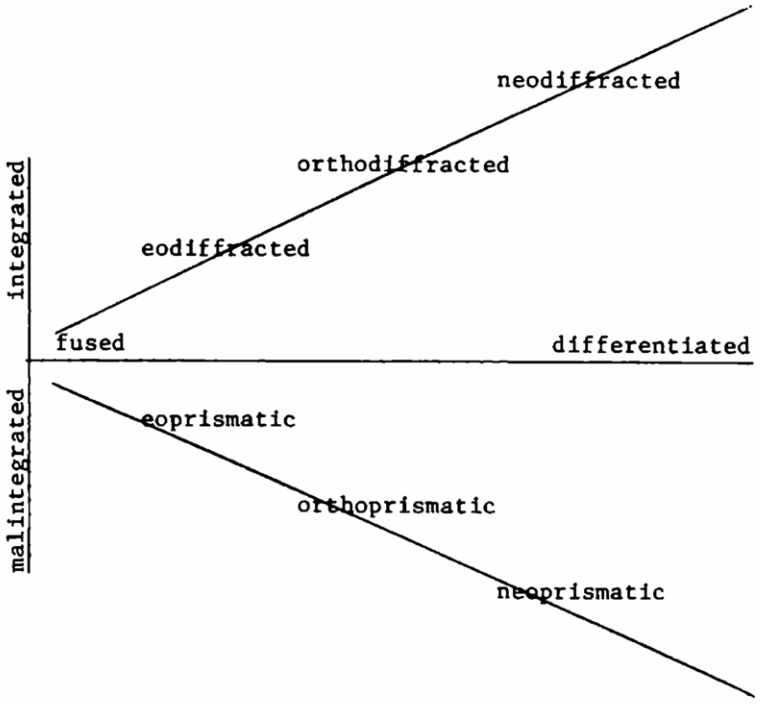


*Figure 3. Prismatic types*

Figure 3 suggests several additional points. If there are stages or types of prismatic society, then there could also be levels of diffraction. If so, we might refer to the most stable or integrated patterns of contemporary differentiated, industrial society as "orthodiffracted." We can speculate that if post-industrial societies solve their neoprismatic crises, they may also be able to achieve higher levels of integration as "neodiffracted" systems. We could also, perhaps, look back to societies on the eve of industrialization, which had achieved not only a significant degree of differentiation but also of integration, and derive from them a model of "eodiffracted" societies.

Thinking also of the vertical dimension between orthoprismatic and orthodiffracted (or between neoprismatic and neodiffracted) we can visualize a variety of levels such that a society with a given degree of differentiation might not be fully integrated or fully malintegrated, but would rather experience some degree of partial integration or partial malintegration. Statistically speaking, we might expect more societies to exhibit intermediate characteristics between the orthoprismatic and orthodiffracted extremes than to show clearly marked polar traits on this scale. For simplicity of presentation in this essay, however, it seems desirable to ignore these intermediate possibilities and focus our attention on the prismatic "ideal types" in order to make dramatically clear some of the essential (universal) features that tend otherwise to become lost in the welter of distinctive (particular) characteristics that distinguish each concrete society from all others.

### *Dynamics of Change*

The characteristics of any prismatic system are deeply affected by the source of pressures for change, something that also needs to be considered. Clearly pressures for

change can originate both from within and from outside any society. As the world has become increasingly interdependent, the weight of external pressures as a source of change has increased.

These pressures have been widely discussed under two headings: *imperialism* and *modernization.* The former term refers to externally imposed pressures, often implanted directly under colonial rule. The latter term refers, by contrast, to internally designed efforts to emulate foreign models. In practice, of course, the dichotomy is rather artificial, and it may be difficult to determine whether, for example, the creation with foreign aid of a university or the establishment of an international airline by a small African or Asian country is a manifestation of "cultural imperialism" or of "assisted modernization." The exogenous character of the transformation, however, is clear insofar as external (whether voluntary or involuntary) impulses are more decisive than internal pressures in the management of change. The discussion of the automobile given above illustrates one of the most penetrative spearheads of exogenous change.

By contrast, of course, transformations are predominantly endogenous if internal pressures are more significant than external as agents of change. In this sense the invention and spread of the motor car in the West served as an endogenous force for change.

The character of prismatic systems varies with the degree to which the changes inducing them stem from endogenous or exogenous forces. We can, accordingly, speak of "endoprismatic" systems if they arise predominantly in response to internal forces, and "exoprismatic" if based chiefly on external pressures. These characteristics may be built into a general typology of prismatic systems, as shown in table 1.

In practice, fortunately, it is unnecessary to use these rather cumbersome neologisms to refer to the various possible types of prismatic societies if the context can show which type is meant. So far as this paper is concerned, attention will be focused on characteristics observed in contemporary third world countries and hence on the orthoprismatic model. Moreover, reflecting the powerful influences exercised by a dominant industrialized West, the patterns of prismatic change to be noted are predominantly exogenous. In short, what I shall refer to as a "prismatic society" is essentially the "exoorthoprismatic" model.

*Table 1. Typology of prismatic systems.*

| | *Neoprismatic* | *Eoprismatic* | *Orthoprismatic* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Endogenous | endo-eoprismatic | endo-orthoprismatic | endo-neoprismatic |
| Exogenous | exo-eoprismatic | exo-orthoprismatic | exo-neoprismatic |

*Some Prismatic Dilemmas*

We are now ready to take a closer look at the prismatic model. To help us visualize these characteristics I shall not repeat the imagery presented in my book [1964, pp. 27-30] although I still consider it a useful way of launching the subject. The prismatic metaphor has additional aspects, however, that were not mentioned in the book. It seems desirable to add them to our repertoire for prismatic analysis.

Moreover, I had not conceptualized very well the problem of integration when I wrote the book, so a new way of using the prism as an evocative metaphor seems justified because it can help us deal with the problem of integration. It does so by suggesting several fundamental prismatic dilemmas.

Let us consider the prism not so much in terms of its effect on light—the process of diffraction (or more precisely, "double refraction") discussed in the book—but rather from the point of view of someone looking through a prism at the scene around him, i.e.. stressing the prismatic viewpoint. A prism, as has already been mentioned, is a bar of polished glass with three flat sides, related to each other as are the sides of a right-angled isosceles triangle, with the hypotenuse lying flat on the table, and the two equal sides at right angles to each other. Holding the prism before your eyes, rotate it and note the variety of reflections and transformations of the scene viewed through it. Observe at least three different impressions, corresponding symbolically to each of the three sides of the prism.

First, through a prism you see naturalistic images superimposed upon one another, apparently overlapping and also sometimes inverted, sometimes not. Thus the prism divides the conventional scene into parts that are juxtaposed in paradoxical ways. Corresponding to this first prismatic view, let us consider the *dilemmas of power* faced by any society, especially one that has become significantly differentiated.

Rotating our prism further, we shall see the quality of light changing so that ordinary objects are highlighted by a rainbow fringe, creating auras not visible to the naked eye. Corresponding to this second prismatic view, let us consider the *dilemmas of structure* faced by any differentiated society.

As we turn the prism around to a view from below, we suddenly find ourselves looking, as in a mirror, at ourselves, but paradoxically again because the reflection is inverted. The prism gives us once more a strikingly different view of the familiar. Let us consider the *dilemmas of belief* as corresponding to this third prismatic scene.

We may now take up each of these dilemmas in turn.

## Dilemmas of Power

The superimposed and inverted images of reality seen through a prism remind us of the countervailing centripetal and centrifugal forces that sustain a continuing tug-of-war in the heart of any social system. The idea of a system denotes by definition a set of interrelated elements. Clearly, the maintenance of any system therefore involves something (the centripetal force) that holds the system together and something else (the centrifugal force) that safeguards the distinctness of its constituent elements. The manifestations of these countervailing forces are extremely diverse and varied as found in contrasting social systems. Let us take a look at several of them.

In primitive or relatively undifferentiated social systems, the primary manifestation of power thus counterposed may be thought of as *centralization* and *localization.* Social subsystems in a fused society are, by definition, self-contained since each is capable of performing for itself all the functions that must be fulfilled to make survival possible. They are the social equivalent of the amoeba, viewed as a biological system. Yet even undifferentiated (or fused) social systems may agglomerate into relatively larger societies, while retaining the autonomy of each local component. An uneasy balance of power then arises between the centralizing (centripetal) forces—expressed by a tribal chief or king—who holds the system together and the localizing (centrifugal) forces—expressed through families or villages—that maintain the distinctiveness of its parts. The survival of a fused system is not contingent on its scale or size, but power typically remains localized.

As differentiation occurs, however, the degree of interdependence of specialized parts increases. Eventually a point is reached at which the services (functions) necessary for the survival of any segment of the system can only be performed outside of that component. Thus interdependence becomes organic, essential to system maintenance. As differentiation increases then, the character of the centripetal and centrifugal forces changes from place-centered to function-centered. The basic lines of conflict shift correspondingly from centralization-localization to *concentration-dispersal.* Concentrating (centripetal) forces are those which compel specialized structures to mesh together so as to create interdependent synergies or joint products. The conductor of an orchestra exercises such powers par excellence. By contrast, we think of the dispersing (centrifugal) forces as those that arise from the desire for autonomy of participating units or their demands for more recognition and rewards. The aspiration of musicians in an orchestra for personal recognition or a special interpretation of the score illustrates this countervailing pressure. A balance, an integration, of these countervailing forces is at best precarious and often enough impossible to achieve. To the extent that a viable balance is accomplished in a differentiated social system, we may think of it as integrated; i.e. as a "diffracted" system.

By contrast, to the degree that a differentiated social system fails to achieve a balance between its concentrating and dispersing forces, it becomes prismatic. Clearly some prismatic societies may be more malintegrated on the centripetal side, as authoritarian or oligarchic despotisms, while others may be more malintegrated on the centrifugal side,

as anarchic or chaotic disorders. However, these contrasting tendencies are not really polar opposites because in fact both are typically found together– one of the paradoxes of a prismatic system. Consider that the more anarchic (centrifugal) a society, the more severe will be the countervailing (centripetal) efforts by its ruling elites to impose order. Thus a highly prismatic system is characterized by violent excesses on both the concentrating (and centralizing) and on the dispersing (and localizing) fronts.

The image of a circle can help us visualize these possibilities, as is shown in figure 4.

In general, the centrifugal-centripetal countertensions of a social system are ecological in character, involving circular causation, escalation, or reciprocal reinforcement. These tendencies may be conceived of as vicious and benign circles. Thus as anarchic (centrifugal) tendencies grow, threatened rulers respond by imposing harsh restraints, thereby striving to compel obedience and discipline. These authoritarian (centripetal) tendencies, in turn, reinforce the pressures for insurgency, for alienation, disobedience, and disorder. In short, the more naked the centrifugal pressures become, the more brutal the centripetal counter-pressures, thereby escalating a set of mutually reinforcing tendencies that generate a highly prismatic condition. Such is the vicious circle of prismatic society, symbolized by E in figure 4.

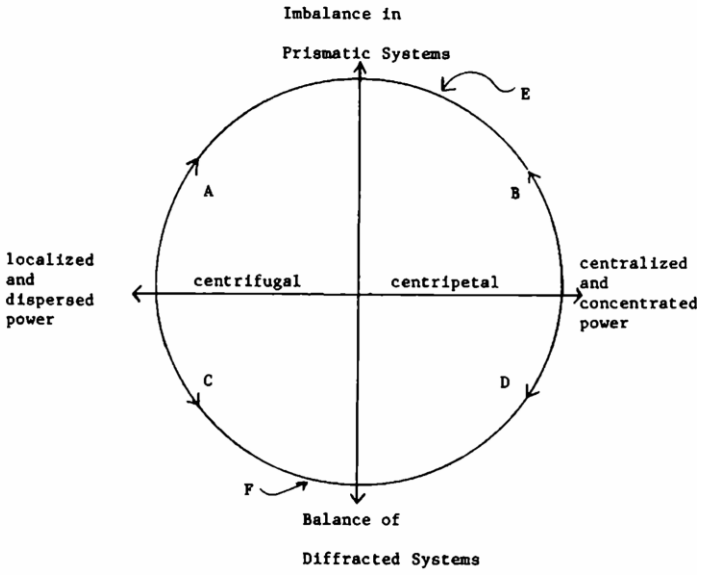


*Figure 4. Differentiated societies.*

By contrast, a benign circle tending toward diffracted harmonies may arise if, for example, a regime can enhance its legitimacy, cultivate its responsiveness, improve its capabilities, and by a service orientation, improve the lot of its citizens. Thus the centripetal forces assume a tempered character, leading in turn to voluntary compliance with laws and regulations, cooperative participation, identification with and loyalty to the regime; i.e. to a reduction in the impact of centrifugal tendencies. A benign circle accelerates as the sense of popular support and cooperation induces a regime to reduce further its reliance on police methods or on threats and compulsion, to depend more

confidently on the effectiveness of popular or representative institutions, and to rely on voluntary participation. Such a condition is symbolized by F in figure 4.

Although the countervailing forces suggested by this characterization pull in opposite directions, toward more prismatic or toward more diffracted social systems, there are many variants among the possible outcomes. For example, in any given society the centripetal forces may well be stronger than the centrifugal, or vice versa. Thus, in figure 4, position A represents a partially prismatic condition in which centrifugal forces are dominant, as measured by the prevalence of widespread alienation and insurgency, by local war lords, powerful political machines, industrial tycoons, labor bosses, feudalistic sectarianism, and other manifestations of the localization and dispersal of power. By contrast, position B in figure 4 represents a different but equally prismatic condition marked by an oppressive ruling oligarchy or military dictatorship, by the domination of a revolutionary party or an established church.

Similarly, moving along the benign circle, we see the possibility of a type C system in which within an increasingly harmonious society heavy emphasis is placed on local autonomy and self-government, independent private institutions, and voluntary associations. By contrast, a type D system (figure 4) also marked by growing cooperation and voluntary participation may nevertheless place relatively greater stress on centralized planning, socialization of property, and a multiplicity of official coordinating mechanisms.

*Role Specialization and Power Distributions*

It is possible to analyze the dilemmas of power from both a macro and a micro level. Eventually both starting points converge on the same dynamisms, providing some insight into the relations between any social system and its component parts. Let us start at the micro level by taking a look at the implications of role specialization as it occurs, by definition, in any differentiated society.

We have defined a differentiated system as one in which functionally specific substructures or components prevail. Consequently we would expect to find in any such society that many if not most individuals specialize in activities of limited scope, relying on others to perform functions which they do not perform for themselves. This has an inherently concentrating effect, contributing to the centripetal thrust of any differentiated system by rendering individual participants increasingly dependent on the services provided for them by others in the system. However, it also strengthens the dispersing effects, contributing to the centrifugal thrust of any differentiated system, by making participants more and more self-conscious about their ego-needs and systemdependence and simultaneously more aware also of their own power to disrupt the system if it fails to meet their requirements or demands.

Let us take a closer look at these effects, and the contrasting ways they operate in diffracted and prismatic systems.

A school teacher in a differentiated society clearly requires textbooks, a library, the

stimulus of colleagues, and an assured personal income. Similarly a doctor needs access to medicines, equipment, journals, and supporting services which provide facilities and knowledge he cannot generate for himself. He also requires income at a level high enough to maintain his role as a respected physician. The more specialized and professional the role, the more interdependent and demanding it tends to become. There are obvious economies of scale in the production and distribution of advanced technical knowledge and skills. Consequently the more specialized and esoteric the field, the fewer its practitioners and the greater the need for centralization and supporting services.

Functional specialization also enhances centripetal forces that contribute to concentration and centralization. Clearly the specialized knowledge and equipment required by professionals for success in their specific roles makes them dependent on those who are able to provide essential facilities. Consequently control over the production and distribution of the knowledge and equipment required for advanced professional roles becomes an important basis for power in a differentiated society.

Those who control the production and distribution of these resources are able to make life rewarding or intolerable for professionally specialized persons. By contrast, however, specialists also find that they control the production of services or goods that are much needed by the rest of society. Consequently the "strike"—overt or covert—becomes a critical instrument in the struggle for power waged in any differentiated society. Although an individual who withdraws his services from the system may not make much of an impact on it, if everyone specializing in a given type of work or participating in a particular organization stops work simultaneously, drastic repercussions on the system ensue. This means that although role specialists in a differentiated society are highly dependent on the system, they also can, if they wish, hold the system to ransom for high stakes.

Role specialists not only need technical facilities for the success of their role, but they also require personal rewards from society in the form of status, security, and income. These rewards may have to be rather high to motivate candidates to undertake the arduous preparatory work and self-discipline that may be a requisite for the conduct of these roles. It is not only difficult to determine the appropriate levels of compensation, but a society may well find that it cannot afford to maintain the costly positions required to attract highly qualified specialists, and that it cannot recruit well-qualified persons who are willing to fill the positions that can be afforded.

Thus malintegration in a differentiated society may take the form of unemployment (especially acute when there are large numbers of unemployables) and of labor shortages (especially acute when openings for highly skilled and professionally qualified persons cannot be filled) Malintegration in these forms heightens both the centrifugal forces generated by individuals (e.g., unemployables) demanding role enhancement and the centripetal forces generated by society (e.g., when shortages prevail) to mobilize and train persons.

Demonstrations, riots, and rebellions by unemployed and dissatisfied workers illustrate the centrifugal aspect of malintegration. A military draft to compel individuals to serve, to undertake unpopular tasks, or to take required training illustrates a

countervailing form of centripetal pressure. These acute and often violent centrifugal and centripetal pressures typically arise simultaneously in a prismatic system.

The apparently contradictory yet mutually reinforcing counter-pressures typical of prismatic societies are both expressed and reinforced by the rise of organized "professionalism," by which I mean the jealous demand by persons occupying highly specialized roles for more autonomy and for suitable (and expensive) rewards. The more specialized, the more abstract, or technical the basis of a role, the more its incumbents tend to insist that anyone not equally qualified to occupy this role cannot understand its problems and therefore cannot control or direct those who work in it, thus intensifying the demand for autonomy by members of the profession concerned. However, professionals also require costly and complex services, so it would be surprising if any society did not make countervailing demands on the professionals in return for meeting their requirements.

### *The Institutionalization of Rewards*

A diffracted society is one that has somehow resolved these apparently contradictory requirements, in contrast to prismatic systems where such countervailing centripetal and centrifugal tensions remain unresolved. Perhaps we can understand the difference better if we think of the institutional mechanisms whereby reconciliations are attempted. We might contrast, for example, the institution of salaried appointments with tenure as one mode of rewarding yet controlling professionals with the system of private professional practice under the fee-for-services principle. Salary-with-tenure can provide substantial autonomy, security, and status for professionals, while subjecting them to the institutional constraints of a formal organization in which they are employed. By contrast, the private practice-with-fees system maximizes the independence of a professional within the loose curbs of a market system, but it does compel one to provide specific services for clienteles capable of paying—or of withholding payment.

Each of these structures can, ideally, provide an institutionalized framework for integrating the countervailing centripetal and centrifugal pressures generated by professionalization in a differentiated society. But equally clearly, each mode can also fail to provide such integration.

Much of the contemporary debate in Western circles tends to relate this institutional distinction to ideological controversies. "Socialists" praise a salaried mode of organizing professional services as more compatible with the needs of society; "liberals," by contrast, insist that a fee-for-service basis, while protecting the needs of the professional, can also serve society more effectively.

Taking a prismatic viewpoint, it seems clear that, ideally speaking, each type of system can work well, and both can integrate countervailing pressures to the degree that a society is diffracted. Thus the incumbent of a salaried position with tenure, having been selected for this honor because of his distinguished achievements, may be counted on to continue to serve society with distinction and honor. However, it is also apparent that the system

may be abused by reserving tenured positions for persons with social or political influence—indeed, even qualified persons may after appointment turn their responsible appointments into sinecures.

Similarly, under the fee-for-service system, professionals may exercise self-restraint and follow high standards in responding to the needs of their clients, but they may also charge unreasonable rates, refuse service to those who cannot pay, and by other means exploit the operations of a market system to gratify their personal greed or ambition without responding to the problems of a victimized society.

Insofar as different social systems are in contact with each other, migration of persons and information may reinforce the benign and vicious circles that lead to these outcomes. Much has been written about the "brain drain" as a serious contemporary problem. Looked at in terms relevant to this essay, we can see that highly qualified persons working in a society that fails to provide either the autonomy or the services needed for their professional role will be tempted to

emigrate in order to find employment in societies providing both—whether through salaries or fees—in more acceptable form. As a result, we can expect the quality of service offered by professionals in the more diffracted systems to improve; whereas reciprocally the quality of such services available in more prismatic systems will correspondingly decline. Thus the "backwash effect," internationally, can reinforce a vicious circle domestically that aggravates the pathologies of a prismatic situation. If integration levels can be raised, however, the same society might find it could attract returning professionals and benefit more constructively from the "spread effect" of international development programs.

*Resource Misallocation*

Although phenomena like the "brain drain" can aggravate prismatic tendencies and escalate discrepancies between the more diffracted and the more prismatic societies, they do not explain the origins of these contrasting conditions. Let us therefore inquire more broadly into circumstances directly affecting the distribution of power (and the allocation of resources, a closely related phenomenon) as they bear upon the successful conduct of differentiated (professionalized) roles.

Let us begin by remembering that there remain in every differentiated society some elements that are relatively undifferentiated. It is not easy to give everyone a skill or to provide advanced schooling and professional training for all. Social transformations cannot be accomplished overnight, so lagging sectors remain even in the societies whose leading sectors are most entrenched. Consequently we find in all contemporary societies, not only in remote rural districts but also in the heart of urban ghettos, social subsystems which constitute "pockets of poverty." In countries that are poor, where the processes of social differentiation associated with modernization and industrialization have only recently been started, these marginal or residual areas and cultures typically embrace the majority of the population. Their socioeconomic position declines, both absolutely and relatively, while the situation of other or leading elements in the population improves. The unequal distribution of power is both a consequence and a cause of the socio-economic

inequalities. Inevitably the widening social gap leads to a growing feeling of these marginal populations that they have been oppressed and discriminated against. Thus they become mobilized or semi-mobilized, while refusing to assimilate. They reinforce their own inferior status by standing apart from the increasingly interdependent larger society. While striving to retain their own relatively undifferentiated sub-culture, they often try to sabotage or overturn the emergent system, not only by participating in insurgency movements but also by deliberately violating its norms, supporting illegal or criminal activities. By their apathy and contentiousness they generate costly problems for the emerging more differentiated society.

From the point of view of government, or the center, the non-mobilized population is a major obstacle to success, a challenge to its authority and effectiveness. It responds with political penetration, striving to bring the underlying elements of the population within its sphere of control by mobilizing, socializing, and disciplining them. Thus the centrifugal and centripetal forces meet in confrontation—no machinery for orderly conflict resolution can work since issues are not posed in resolvable form, and there is no consensus on acceptable means of settlement. Two giant contenders face each other implacably; neither is capable of victory, nor willing to accept any instrument of reconciliation. The more prismatic a society, the more severe these confrontations between the mobilized and assimilated, and the semi-mobilized but unassimilated.

In any differentiated society there are also mobilized, specialized, and assimilated persons who, nevertheless, cannot find appropriate roles for themselves. Some unemployment, underemployment, or misemployment seems to be unavoidable in even the best integrated and differentiated society. But if the proportion who have prepared themselves for specialized roles yet cannot find positions consonant with their training and aspirations rises to any substantial degree, then malintegration will surely also increase. Not only will a potential resource of great value be lost to society, but also the unemployed or misemployed will become increasingly disaffected. They will join movements to overthrow or destroy the regime that fails to give them meaningful and acceptable roles to perform. If the underlying, relatively undifferentiated population is sufficiently alienated, these fully mobilized but disaffected individuals have the organizational skills and political acuity needed to form effective resistance movements, striving for violent revolutionary change.

Even if they do not opt for such radical alternatives, they may nevertheless carry out whatever selfdemeaning tasks are offered to them in such a sullen or perfunctory fashion as to undermine the developmental effectiveness of the regime. Others may seek escape by emigration, joining the '"brain drain" to which reference has already been made.

However, the prismatic problem goes well beyond the difficulty of employing qualified individuals in suitable positions. There may be whole communities which because of differences in language, race, religion, or political attitudes are systematically discriminated against, even though they may be highly mobilized and quite capable of professional work within the system. Thus human resources of considerable actual or potential value may be lost to a society, while those affected are alienated to such a degree that they too may in various ways undermine the effective operation of the social

system. Thus the centripetal efforts of elite decision-makers to provide coherent direction for a differentiating society are frustrated by social elements who, though capable of participation, deeply resent the persistent hostility of the regime toward them. They therefore pull away from the system, regard it as alien, and consider themselves to be its prisoners rather than participants. Thereby, while strengthening the centrifugal tendencies of the system, they also reinforce the hostility of ruling elites toward them.

Finally, even those who are suitably employed in a prismatic system may find their own situation so frustrating as to induce them to sabotage the very purposes they are officially working to support. For example, if the salaries paid to them are not high enough to maintain an acceptable standard of living—acceptable, that is, to themselves in relation to their own reference groups—then this alone can generate serious dissatisfaction. Consequently prismatic office holders typically look for and find ways of supplementing their salaries. They may, for example, hold several positions, something that naturally diminishes their ability to perform well in each.

They may also augment their income illegally, that is, by taking money or other values in exchange for violating norms that they are otherwise expected to uphold. The prevalence of corruption is a typically prismatic characteristic, with various dysfunctional consequences. Clearly it strengthens centrifugal tendencies by leading office holders to violate the manifest norms of the roles they occupy; if they did not do so, there would be no incentive for paying bribes. This necessarily undermines the effectiveness of any organization in carrying out its manifest functions. However, corruption also demoralizes those involved by imposing upon them cross-pressures to violate principles to which they may be more or less sincerely committed. Thus corruption reinforces psychological stress, strengthening demoralization and interfering with effective job performance.

The dilemmas of power in a prismatic system then grow out of a variety of vicious circles which lead progressively to the (centrifugal) alienation of persons whose specialized—and even unspecialized—skills and moral support are needed for the development of the society, while conversely the growing sense of insecurity and frustration experienced by elites who are trying to coordinate and rule the society compel them to take more and more arbitrary and coercive (centripetal) steps to raise the standards of performance of their subordinates and to impose responsibility on various alienated social groups and underlying communities as well. The more they strive to impose coordination by authoritarian means, the more they alienate those whose cooperation and support they need, thereby further strengthening the centrifugal dynamisms of disaffection and revolt.

### *The Organization of Power*

It may well be argued that the problems pointed to above are universal and that no differentiated society could avoid them. If so, we would expect prismatic conditions to prevail everywhere, and we could not imagine that any differentiated society would be able to achieve integration. Indeed, I believe that even in the most diffracted contemporary societies prismatic conditions are clearly present.

No doubt historians will assign a variety of circumstantial and particularistic reasons to explain how the most diffracted contemporary societies have achieved the degree of integration which they have somehow managed to attain. But speaking institutionally and in terms of the structure of power that somehow explains a great deal about the allocation of resources and hence the integration of a diffracted society, we have to note the importance of *constitutionalism* as a major explanatory variable.

Although the essence of constitutionalism is often shrouded by a mass of details concerning the particular forms in which it is found in various countries and the events leading up to decisive historical moments, it is important to discern the essential principles involved. I see them as including, fundamentally, a set of institutionalized restraints on the exercise of both centripetal and centrifugal powers. This is not to gainsay the importance of selfrestraint and deliberate acts of leadership and political choice. Rather, it points to unrestrained uses of power as the critical or key motors of the prismatic model.

Centripetal power is restrained, first of all, by imposing limitations on the arbitrary exercise of authority by ruling elites, and this is typically the most essential restriction. Without this constraint, those exercising key governmental powers in any society are frequently tempted to abuse that power for selfish purposes—even though in the name of social values. Consequently no entrepreneur in a prismatic system is immune from the confiscation of his property, no intellectual is safe should his inquiries lead him to question the ways in which power is used, no journal can be secure in reporting the news, nor can religious convictions be safeguarded from persecution.

It is not enough, of course, to promulgate a formal charter imposing limitations on the arbitrary exercise of power, for there must also be institutionalized centers of authority capable of exercising enough power so that serious resistance can be brought to bear on elites whenever they use their positions of power in an arbitrary or oppressive fashion. This means, of course, that constitutionalism also implies specific safeguards for a variety of autonomies such as we find expressed in various “bills of rights” protecting freedoms of speech, of assembly, of press, of religion and, indeed, of “property.” It is precisely through such autonomies that constitutional restraints are imposed on the elites.

There is, however, another face of constitutionalism that is rarely mentioned because it is taken for granted, yet in prismatic contexts it needs equal emphasis; namely, the safeguards necessary if centralized and concentrated authority is indeed to work. These are the restraints on centrifugal power. They start with the obligation of citizens to obey the law, to respect duly constituted authority, to behave as members of a society and not as outlaws or nonparticipants. The barriers against arbitrary rule imposed by constitutional safeguards would be meaningless unless counterbalanced by limitations on antisocial irresponsibility imposed on the general membership of any social order. Just as the institionalized restraints on ruling elites need to be matched with self-imposed discipline and voluntary adherence to standards of public stewardship and accountability, so also the institutionalized restraints on antisocial behaviors need to be coupled with self-governing norms of citizenship and public morality.

Constitutionalism, then, entails more than the mechanical imposition of legalistic

limitations on the exercise of power by governing elites; it includes both a self-governing and an externally imposed set of restraints not only on the rulers but also on the citizens of a constitutional polity.

There is a corollary of constitutionalism which seems to me to be a necessary companion of the principles just asserted, but it is a corollary that is not often recognized. This corollary comes under the general heading of capabilities or capacities. If the limitations imposed by constitutionalism on ruling elites are to be enforced, then the governed must also be capable of organizing and exercising controls on those who govern. The institutions of constitutionalism do not operate as automatons; they can be energized only by human beings willing and able to operate them.

Conversely, of course, the obligations of citizens to exercise self-restraint and to obey the laws of the land can scarcely attract much compliance if government is unable to govern; the administrative capabilities of ruling elites and the organizational adequacy of governmental institutions are, therefore, as important for the successful cultivation of civic responsibility as the capacity of private citizens to act is crucial for the effective imposition of constitutional restraints on those who rule.

In short, we may expect to find in diffracted societies that governmental powers are both limited and yet exercised in a creditable fashion, while the population is both willing and able to participate, yet confident that its essential autonomies will be respected and restrained in the way it uses its freedoms. These are the critical elements of constitutionalism. They enable the benign circle leading to integration in differentiated societies to work. They provide a means for the reconciliation of centripetal and centrifugal forces. Herein, then, lies the essential clue to positive development, to the achievement of a diffracted society.

By contrast, of course, the failure of constitutionalism activates the vicious circle leading to accentuated prismatic conditions. Prismatic governments exercise power arbitrarily and incompetently, and therefore ineffectually. In response, various social groups, the population at large, feel that their essential autonomies are violated, their needs are unmet—they therefore withdraw their support for the regime. They are neither able nor willing to make the social contributions that are needed if a differentiated system is to work, to become integrated.

Compared with these basic institutional factors, other contributory elements appear less significant. It is fashionable, for example, to blame individual leaders or oligarchic elites for the difficulties experienced by developing societies. Some ideologies, as we shall see below, blame the ruling circles of any government—whether it be a socialist or a capitalist regime—for the failures of social and economic development.

No doubt the personal reactions of an absolute monarch who faces a revolutionary movement for constitutionalism—or confronts the emissaries of a foreign power demanding extraterritorial jurisdiction for its resident citizens—will affect the subsequent course of events. The ability of members of a ruling military junta to agree among themselves, rather than engage in violent disputes which could factionalize a whole

country, will also have far-reaching political and social consequences.

Nevertheless, the underlying institutional forces that determine whether or not constitutionalism will prevail in a country surely transcend the influence of particular persons or groups. Indeed, one may see the prevalence of personalism and charisma in politics as a symptom of the prismatic condition rather than as its essential cause. The arbitrary exercise of power by prismatic elites is a symptom of malintegration and tends to perpetuate or deepen prismatic crises—but we should not blame individuals for conditions of which they are more victims than the cause.

It has also become fashionable to blame underdevelopment on the developed, to see imperialism and neo-imperialism as the root causes behind poverty, oppression, and instability in many parts of the world. According to this view, the wealthy and the powerful have enriched themselves at the expense of the poor and the weak; the maintenance of their special privileges is allegedly contingent on their ability to keep the rest of the world down. Again, there is no doubt some validity to this point of view—enough to give credibility to the thesis.

Nevertheless, I think we can build an equally persuasive case for the opposite interpretation, namely that the rich and powerful have benefitted from their own success in achieving integration together with differentiation, and that the poor and powerless suffer from their inability to make similar social adaptations. For evidence, one might point to the fact that some countries, like Denmark and New Zealand, have prospered though no one would think them powerful, and one could also mention the fact that the more affluent countries have done much—though not as much or as well as might be wished—to help the less fortunate societies improve their condition.

It is unnecessary to argue this case here—it is a complicated and contentious subject. Certainly there are respects—including the “brain drain” and unequal terms of trade—in which the rich lands continue to impoverish the poor lands, to perpetuate the “backwash effect.” But there are also many compensatory ways in which late developers can benefit from the experience (and the mistakes) of early developers to accelerate and facilitate their own modernization and industrialization. The Japanese experience is an excellent case in point.

Prismatic analysis, if systematically pursued, can help both aid-giving and aid-receiving countries to understand more deeply some of the causes of underdevelopment. It should also—though this remains to be shown—provide new insights into the necessary conditions for development. Prismatic theory, as such, does not include a formula or strategic design for achieving integration in differentiated societies, but it does point to the crucial need for such integration. Moreover, it can indicate why some of the most familiar recipes for development are likely to have consequences that are the exact reverse of those intended by their sponsors. It may also provide a foundation for the design of developmental strategies that must, in any case, be adapted to the special conditions that exist in any given country. It can do this by directing attention to the crucial importance of constitutionalism.

In order to gain further insight *into this* subject, let us pursue further the prismatic mode of analysis by rotating our prism, and taking up the dilemmas of structure.

## Dilemmas of Structure

As the view from all sides of a prism, though shifting, remains the same, so it is arbitrary to distinguish between three characteristic dilemmas of any prismatic society; they overlap and intersect at many points. We may nevertheless learn something new by focusing our attention on a second aspect of the scene viewed in a prismatic way. Let us think of that aspect of the prismatic image which throws a rainbow-hued aura about any highlighted objects brought within its purview. Let us interpret the aura symbolically to represent the latent functions of any structure, functions that are always present but by definition not formally acknowledged. The prismatic viewpoint draws attention to them—they exist in every society—but in prismatic societies they become so overpowering that to ignore them is to neglect a basic explanatory variable.

The distinction between the manifest or formally prescribed functions of any structure and its latent, its unconsciously or surreptitiously performed, functions is well recognized, but the more basic distinction between structures and functions still remains obscure, partly because the everyday terminology we use obstructs clarity. All too often the definitions we use for structures imply their functions, and it is difficult to dissociate patterns of action from the consequences that are normally expected (or intended) to flow from them.

The point may be illustrated briefly by reference to the concept of an "educational system," or of an "educator." The image this term brings to mind is of a role or set of roles that imparts knowledge to students. Here we see a structure, a pattern of actions, defined in such a way as to imply its functions, that is, its consequences for the social system in which it occurs. However, it is easy to separate the two ideas: schools and schoolmasters form the structure, while learning or educating is the function. If school—not a building but a set of activities engaged in by schoolmasters and school- children—is defined as a structure that makes knowledge available in systematic fashion, and learning as a function whereby knowledge is acquired by students or learners, then we can hypothesize that schools are structures that normally facilitate the function of learning.

Once the distinction between actions and their consequences, between school as structure and learning as function, is clearly made, we can see that the normal relation between school and learning has exceptions. In other words, there are some schools that fail to induce learning, and children clearly also learn outside of school. Undifferentiated societies lack schools, for example, yet their members learn what they need to know to participate in these societies. Moreover, some schools, especially those in non-Western societies, designed in accordance with Western models may well impart knowledge or attitudes that are inappropriate for the needs of their pupils. What they learn outside of

the schoolroom may therefore be far more useful to them than what they learn in their classes.

Educational institutions provide only one illustration of a widespread terminological problem. Consider governmental structures for example. We often think of a “legislature” as an institution specializing in law-making. However, if we separate the structure from the function that it normally performs, we can immediately distinguish between elected assemblies and the authoritative prescription of norms for a social system. Although we normally expect the bills adopted by governmental assemblies to be subsequently accepted as authoritative guides to action, this relationship does not necessarily prevail. In other words, there may be situations in which assemblies adopt rules that are generally disregarded, and other institutions actually make laws, even though the assembly may subsequently endorse them.

The very word “government” itself implies, in addition to the formal structures of government, the set of political and administrative functions (governing) normally performed by them. Yet the essence of the problem in a prismatic society may well be that governments are not able to govern and that political and administrative functions may be largely performed outside of government.

The point can be made more generally: In a well-integrated social system the prevailing institutions are well adapted to, and meet the functional requirements of, their society. The more diffracted a society, the more likely are its institutions to be used in fact for their manifest purposes, and the more likely are the needs of that society to be met by the institutions available to it. To the extent that malintegration exists, by contrast, we expect to find structures that fail to perform their manifest functions and, conversely, to find functions that are performed by structures ostensibly designed for different purposes. These are the dilemmas of structure with which we must now concern ourselves.

Malintegration may be said to exist in any social system to the extent that its component structures fail to satisfy its functional requisites for survival. At this point it is worth commenting on the widespread idea that the functional needs of all societies or social systems are identical. It may well be true that there are some least common denominators of all societies, some functions that are universally requisite for survival. However, there are surely also some additional functions that need to be performed in some but not all societies. Moreover, these more limited functions may even be the most interesting ones to study.

In particular, we can see that the more differentiated a society, the greater are its needs for institutions capable of integrating or coordinating its component specialized structures. Conversely, the more differentiated a society, the more catastrophic for it would be a failure of its integrating mechanisms to achieve effective coordination of effort among its constituent specialized roles and institutions.

There is no easy correspondence between institutions and functional requirements. Frequently needs arise before institutions emerge capable of meeting them, but sometimes it also happens that institutions are established, especially by imitation of

foreign models or in response to external pressures, before the needs become apparent that they were originally designed to meet. Alternatively, the new institution may be established in such a way as not to be able to meet these needs.

Although it is often possible for several different structures to perform the same function, we should not assume that a given function can be performed by any structure. Indeed, it may frequently be true that an important function can only be performed by one or a limited number of institutions, and if one of these structures is not available, then the function in question simply cannot be performed. Moreover, even if an institution that normally is expected to perform a given function has been established and is therefore available, we cannot assume that it will in fact be able to perform the function for which it was originally designed. There may well be a host of environmental and contextual constraints that prevent an institution from serving its manifest functions, while at the same time an institution may come into being and be maintained because it performs latent functions quite different from those that its creator intended it to fulfill.

To the degree that the manifest functions of an institution or structure do not correspond to its latent functions, we refer to the resultant situation as "formalistic." In this sense, formalism is the opposite of realism or correspondence between manifest and actual functions of patterned behavior. We must be careful not to confuse formalism with formality, which is the opposite of informality.

If we now consider that the more differentiated a society, the more important to it are its institutions for the coordination of structures and roles, then we may also see that these integrating mechanisms must work successfully in order for a society to become diffracted. If a prismatic society has integrating institutions, then these institutions do not achieve their manifest functions. Alternatively, of course, a prismatic society may be one in which differentiation has outpaced the established integrating behaviors. This was typically the case in early or "eoprismatic" societies of the pre-industrial Western world. By contrast, in the "orthoprismatic" conditions of contemporary non-Western societies, where modernization programs have led to the importation of alien institutions, we find that structures intended to assure coordination are frequently present but inoperative. The result, then, is a high degree of formalism, the pervasive touchstone of structural-functional incongruities under prismatic conditions.

We are now able to identify the essential dilemmas of structure in prismatic societies; they involve discrepancies between the intended and actual consequences of patterned behavior, the failure of manifest functions to be performed, and the salience of latent functions. These discrepancies are symbolized in our prismatic imagery by the spectral aura surrounding objects highlighted in the scene viewed through a slowly rotating prism.

As we proceed, remember to distinguish between structures and their functions, even when—especially when—the words we commonly use for institutions imply the functions they normally perform. If we are to utilize a prismatic viewpoint, we must be able to dissociate patterned behaviors from their consequences, and this will often compel us to take liberties with the normal terminology given to us by everyday English. We may have to resort to neologisms in order to escape the confines of a terminological prison which

frequently, if not consistently, melds actions with their consequences, structures with their functions. Neither the polaroid nor the kaleidoscopic viewpoints require such a dissociation of ideas, one reason both are easily understood and accepted by the conventional wisdom. To secure a firm grasp on the more unconventional prismatic outlook and thereby to gain insight into prismatic systems, we must accept some inconveniences and mental strain, including the need to tinker with some key words in our vocabulary.

Let us now continue our inquiry into the dilemmas of structure by taking a closer look at the relation between structures and functions.

*Functional Specificity of Structures*

When distinguishing between structures and the functions they perform, it is important to think about the range of functions performed by any structure. In general, the more functions a structure performs, the wider its scope, the more functionally *diffuse* it is said to be. By contrast, a structure that performs a limited number of functions or only one function is said to be functionally *specific.* The more differentiated a social system, the more functionally specific are the manifest functions performed by its component structures, and conversely the more undifferentiated a system, the more functionally diffuse its structures.

Because of the tendency, perhaps, to confuse structures with the functions they perform, the very concepts of “specificity” and “diffuseness” are also often incorrectly linked with structures or functions, However, I doubt that any structure or any function can, properly speaking, be considered more specific or more diffuse than any other. Specificity and diffuseness refer to the quality of relationships between structures and functions. Here again, the phrases we frequently hear, like “specific structure” or “diffuse function” are confusing and misleading.

Let us think, instead, of the relation between structures and functions as a variable, measured by polar extremes of specificity and diffuseness. At the former pole, structures perform one function only; whereas at the other, they perform a very large number. Once we understand this point, we can see that the same structure without change in its intrinsic patterns of behavior may serve few or many functions. Conversely, the same function may be performed by only one structure or by a variety of structures. A structure that in one setting is “functionally specific,” i.e., performs only one or a few functions, may well become “functionally diffuse,” i.e., perform many functions, in another setting.

Everyday English inhibits our ability to express this idea clearly. To say “functionally specific” is to suggest the idea of functions which are especially specific, an idea that we want to avoid as meaningless. However, to say that a structure has a limited scope of consequences or that its relation to functions is relatively specific is to belabor a point that should be easily grasped. I shall, therefore, use the convention of referring to structures as “functionally specific” or “functionally diffuse” as a shorthand way of characterizing relations between structures and functions without imputing specificity or diffuseness

either to structures or to functions considered apart from each other.

If the specificity/diffuseness polarity is treated as a variable relationship rather than as a dichotomy, then we can well imagine intermediate positions on the hypothetical scale measuring the variable. In my book [1964] I suggested that such an intermediate position might be called "poly-functional." However, if one keeps the distinction between manifest and latent functions in mind, remembering our prismatic aura, then one can also separate the relation into at least two parallel variables, one measuring the manifest functions performed by a structure and the other its latent functions. If so, then a structure may be expected formally to perform only a few functions, but in practice perform many. This of course is one kind of "formalism."

However, bearing in mind the distinctions made above, we can now distinguish several kinds of formalism. One variety arises when a structure that is expected to be functionally diffuse becomes relatively specific in practice. Let us refer to such transformations as a "narrowing" or "focusing" of functions. By contrast, if the manifest function of a structure is specific, but in practice its latent functions are significantly diffuse, we may speak of the relationship as functionally "perverse."

We are now able to establish the prismatic paradigm: Whereas the salient relations between structures and functions in a fused society are diffuse, and in a diffracted society, specific; in a prismatic society we expect these relations to be poly-functional or more exactly functionally focused and/or perverse.

### *Functional Perversity and Predictability*

We can now approach an understanding of the dilemmas of structure by reflecting on the phenommenon of intentional or designed change. The situation with which we are most familiar—one that is, at least ideally, relatively diffracted—is a system in which structures are—if not always, at least often— relatively specific in the functions they perform. To the extent that this is true, one can manipulate, establish, and dissolve structures while predicting with some confidence what the consequences will be. Bear in mind that functions as consequences of action patterns cannot be modified directly, but only by changing the behaviors that lead to socially relevant consequences. The more specific the functions performed by a structure, the greater the predictability of functional modifications resulting from changes in the structures. This leads to the typically polarized viewpoint in which relatively simple relations between structures and functions are assumed. Institutions, having been defined in terms of their manifest functions, are blithely established, dissolved, or transformed with the tacit assumption that their manifest functions will be the only ones affected.

An absolute contrast, of course, marks the approach of those who deal predominantly with undifferentiated (or fused) societies. Here many, if not all, structures are functionally diffuse. It is virtually impossible to predict with any confidence the likely consequences of any institutional change since all social functions are likely to be affected as a result in extremely complex ways. Consequently institutions cannot be evaluated in terms of their

functions but only intrinsically. Actions are thought to have a sacred value, quite apart from their concrete results. In this sense behaviors take on a ritual quality; whereas in a diffracted system, they are predominantly instrumental. This distinction also explains the sacred/secular dichotomy, for in the latter, actions are valued in relation to their consequences; whereas in the former they are assessed as intrinsically good or bad, which is to say that their causal impact cannot be empirically demonstrated. Clearly the undifferentiated, functionally diffuse type of system leads to a kaleidoscopic mode of viewing social realities. If every action is intrinsically good or bad, one cannot discern unidirectional change processes, separate ends from means, or engage with any confidence in programs of international social change.

The prismatic viewpoint is not simply intermediate between the polarized and kaleidoscopic. It rests on an awareness that actions may be instrumental, yet lead to unintended consequences or "side effects" that are more significant than the intended outcomes. This of course has always been true empirically, even in the most differentiated societies. The contemporary ecology movement as applied to technology assessment is based on an awareness of this fact, for it sees the manifold consequences of new technologies as frequently counter-productive or disastrous, outweighing the primary benefits of proposed innovations. The ecologists, however, have scarcely yet become conscious of the extent to which their essentially "prismatic" orientation applies also to deliberate social change.

This ecological view of social and institutional modernization is, of course, most easily tested or dramatized in the contemporary non-Western world. Here we can easily find many examples of situations in which functionally specific structures or practices have been introduced with the expectation that they will lead to predictable and desired consequences; yet in practice the actual and important changes resulting from such innovations have been quite different from those anticipated. Sometimes these actual consequences have been both surprising and abhorrent, leading to a violent reaction against the innovations. But often the results have been more paradoxical; there have been some who welcomed change precisely because they perceived the advantages to themselves of the latent functions of structural modifications, while those who have promoted the changes remain blind to these side-effects, having polarized their perceptions to such a degree that they discount the unintended consequences of change, remaining transfixed on the hopes pervading their well-intentioned efforts.

One simple though dramatic example may suffice. The United States has consistently carried out military and economic assistance programs abroad in the expectation that they would strengthen both the economy and government of the beneficiaries, despite mounting and inescapable evidence that these efforts are self-defeating. For reasons that are complex, and that I have discussed in more detail elsewhere [1968c; 1969a], the latent functions of these programs under prismatic conditions involve the erosion of a regime's ability to make and carry out decisions, the intensification of black-market conditions and corruption, the demoralization of society, and the eventual collapse of assisted governments. By contrast, military aggression and political hostility may have the functionally perverse effect of strengthening the polity and economy of the society under attack.

These are prismatic manifestations, of course. To the extent that societies subjected to aid or attack are diffracted rather than prismatic, actual consequences are likely to approximate those intended. Unfortunately for those who seek to do good by encouraging development in poor countries, the prevalence of prismatic configurations is likely to mean that the actual outcomes of institution-building and resource-enhancing efforts will tend to be functionally perverse.

### *The Myth of "Eurhythmia"*

In order to deal more insightfully with transformations generated by the introduction of new and presumably "specific" institutions under prismatic conditions we must face up to the myth of "eurhythmia." According to this idea or doctrine, all the structures found in a social system are so rhythmically interlocked or functionally interdependent that they must stand or fall as a whole. To introduce a radically new set of structures, therefore, is to precipitate an inescapable confrontation out of which, after a transitional or crisis period, either the old survives, rejecting the new, or the new triumphs, dissolving the old.

This idea arises, I believe, out of a failure to understand the essential differences between structures and functions. It seems to presuppose that functions are somehow bonded into the structures which perform them. However, if we clearly separate functions from the structures by which they are performed, then we can easily understand that old structures may well persist in a society where new structures have also been introduced. Indeed, this is the typical situation, and I have frequently argued [1970, pp. 214-217] that established practices and institutions are extremely tenacious, not only in Asia and Africa but also in Western countries—indeed, in any society. New practices, behaviors, structures, or institutions do not drive out old ones but simply add to them. The structural amalgam of any society, therefore, is a cumulative mixture of very ancient and older patterns together with more recent and utterly contemporary inventions and borrowings.

Every new structural mix in any social system, however, typically generates a realignment of functions, or rather it entails modifications in the functions performed by the structures found in the system. Typically older structures that were more functionally diffuse may lose some of their former functions and even gain some new ones, but characteristically they become more functionally focused. By contrast, new structures that may have been functionally specific in the more diffracted societies from which they were imported are likely to become more diffuse in their new prismatic habitats, which is to say they become functionally perverse. This is not to say that such changes necessarily occur, but only that they are likely. We need to study patterns of change empirically to discover just what transformations do in fact take place. However, in general we expect older remaining institutions to continue to perform a variety of functions, and we expect new structures to be more functionally specific, but we must also look for notable exceptions to this rule. To make our discussion more concrete, let us now have a look at some examples.

A dramatic illustration is provided by the institution of kingship, ancient and relatively unspecialized, which has survived in many contemporary polities. Unquestionably the

functions performed by kings in a constitutional monarchy, such as those of the United Kingdom or the Netherlands today, are quite different from those formerly performed by kings in traditional and absolute monarchies. The structural, the institutional continuity of kingship is readily apparent, but a functional narrowing or focusing can be seen.

One of the newer institutions to which monarchies have transferred some of their former functions are national elected assemblies, such as the House of Commons in the British system and its counterpart in many other countries. Legislatures have assumed, frequently after a long struggle, many of the lawmaking functions formerly considered to be monarchic prerogatives. Yet in the process they have frequently enough—though not always, of course— permitted the institution of kingship to survive, though with narrowed functions.

It is interesting to note that elected national assemblies have become so specialized for the rule-making or legislative function in Western polities that it is widely assumed that this is the essential or only function that such bodies can perform. In the course of modernization, the overwhelming majority of non-Western countries have added elected assemblies to their repertoire of governmental institutions. In practice, however, these new structures have performed in a functionally perverse way, often failing to serve effectively as law-makers, while nevertheless fulfilling a variety of other functions.

In order to achieve a closer understanding of such structural dilemmas, let us take up several ancient structures that are normally considered to be functionally diffuse and examine the transformations to which they have been subject in response to the superimposition of new functionally specific structures. In particular, let us consider the family, the "community," and the bureaucracy.

### *The Family and the Bazaar*

The family is no doubt the oldest and most diffuse of social institutions. In a fused society it performs virtually all of the social functions required for survival. Families survive, of course, even in the most diffracted societies, but their functions are typically reduced in range and importance as many new functionally specialized structures become institutionalized.

Understandably, the family remains more influential in prismatic societies than it is in diffracted systems. Even so, it must compete with newly introduced institutions designed to be more functionally specific. Consider, for example, the market. It is based ideally on the concept of the rational allocation of goods and services, whose values can be measured by price, i.e., by quantities of money used in such a way as to equalize the supply and demand for any utility.

Market places, of course, are quite ancient, but the "market" as a formal institution for the allocation of goods and services by a pricing mechanism is a relatively modern structure. Traditionally the exchange of utilities was governed by social and political, as well as economic, forces. It was not so much based on "barter" as on reciprocity and

redistribution.

In exchanges governed by reciprocity, for example, although the intrinsic value of commodities and services may be considered, much more weight is given to the personal and political relationships of the persons engaged in any transactions. Thus political leaders involved in the reciprocal exchange of valuables might thereby symbolize and consolidate their relative status positions, as manifested in ceremonies associated with the payment of tribute and the reciprocal offering of gifts. Among ordinary individuals similar exchanges are used to confirm friendly relations, to celebrate marriages, births and deaths, and for many social occasions. Such structures survive in the United States, of course, in the form of Christmas and birthday giving, the exchange of gifts, and social reciprocity in entertaining and hospitality.

The introduction of the market simply means the dissociation of social and political implications from many exchanges that are reduced to the level of purely economic transactions. Rather than exchange commodity for commodity, however, as in a barter system, the market relies on the use of money, something of value that can be exchanged for any good or service desired. Moreover, through price fluctuations, the market can also serve as a regulator of supply and demand, equating the amount of any utility offered for sale with the amount of it required by potential buyers.

The effective marketization of exchanges requires a radical transformation of values and practices, which is often overlooked. The personal and political connotations of any exchange must be dissociated from its economic connotations, a process that may not be easy to accept. In short, the market is a functionally specific structure for exchanges measured by economic values alone. It can operate successfully only when the socio-political connotations of any exchange can be separated and achieved independently through non-market institutions.

What happens if one introduces market patterns of behavior in a society where family-based or politically-rooted reciprocity in the exchange of goods and services remains prevalent? It should not be difficult to see that a new form might emerge characterized both by the use of money and prices and simultaneously by non-economic considerations. Concretely, we can see this pattern already at work in the traditional bazaar where haggling or bargaining over the price of goods is normal. Clearly the price that a buyer pays is not, under these conditions, solely a result of the interplay of supply and demand, since interpersonal relations between merchant and customer also affect the final price. This price will clearly be higher for buyers in certain categories than for others. Thus the bazaar-model, which is to a particular bazaar what the market system is to a market-place, involves a combination of economic with non-economic considerations in price-making such that the non-economic aspects of any bargain frequently prove more decisive than the economic.

Bazaar behaviors have often been noted, but their implications for social structure are less frequently seen. For example, if someone selling goods is able to offer a different price to each customer, it is essential that the salesman command the utter confidence of the owner of the establishment—frequently only the owner himself can engage in

bargaining, or it must be a relative or close friend in whom the owner has absolute trust. This means that a business firm engaging in bazaar as contrasted with market transactions cannot be organized impersonally along the lines of a modern corporation. In effect, the firm must be a "family" enterprise in the sense that its employees have a relation to the head of the company like that of children to parents or nephews to uncles.

In order to comply with new laws intended to institutionalize a market system, a family firm may comply with regulations giving it the appearance of a corporation, and it may even be compelled to prepare financial reports for auditing and tax-paying purposes, yet the head of a family firm cannot afford to permit such records to reflect the true state of affairs. In other words, whether to avoid taxes or to permit bargaining on prices, he must prepare one or more sets of artificial records as a façde to disguise the true state of his financial affairs. The resulting discrepancy between what actually occurs and what is formally said to occur is another example of "formalism," the most characteristic sign of a prismatic condition. Thus formalism marks the dilemma of structure whereby a functionally diffuse institution, such as the family can become functionally narrowed as the operational framework behind the facade of a new, but functionally perverse, institution, i.e., the corporation.

### *The "Community" and the Canteen*

The bazaar is but one of many forms through which the quasi-market operations of a prismatic system occur. More interesting, though less frequently noted, is a form that may be called the "canteen." A canteen, essentially, is a bazaar writ large, institutionalized in a more systematic and influential way. Whereas the bazaar merchant relies on personal feelings to decide when to "soak" one customer and give another a "bargain," canteen prices are more determinate and hence predictable. However, canteens come in countervailing sets such that prices in some are outrageously high in relation to what open market prices might otherwise be, whereas elsewhere canteen prices are ridiculously low.

Everyone would naturally want to use the canteens in which low prices prevail. Consequently, access to such canteens must be carefully controlled so as to restrict access to privileged customers. Moreover, since such a canteen typically loses money, its operations must be subsidized. We refer to it, therefore, as a "subsidized canteen" in which, by definition, prices are reduced and access restricted. By contrast, no one would want to trade in a canteen with arbitrarily high prices. Consequently, its customers have to be the prisoners of what can be called a "tributary canteen."

In order to understand the dynamics of canteen behavior, we need to look beyond the family as an underlying structure. Something more like a "tribe" is involved, but frequently it may be a matter of race, religion, language, nationality, or some other ethnic but super-familial identification that provides the underlying dynamism. The market, as we have seen, is impersonal in the sense that it tends to equate supply to demand as an outcome of the operation of purely economic forces, not taking into account the identity of either the buyer or the seller. This means that economic interests must be detached from the personal, social, political, and ideological concerns that everyone manifests in non-

economic settings. It also means that merchants in any traditional society are despised by others to the extent that they disregard personal and social reciprocity in favor of impersonal trade.

Shylock can be taken as a universal symbol of this traditional dislike for the merchant and money-lender, but Shakespeare's play also illustrates the association between this role and an ethnic minority. It seems clear that persons who could attain positions of high status and security in any traditional society are not likely to engage in activities that would automatically lower their self and social esteem. Thus independent trading and financial roles devolve, traditionally, on social categories that are distinguished by race, religion, language, or caste as socially inferior.

The phenomenon of social discrimination is related very broadly to inequalities in the distribution of power, something that we find in every society. Moreover, in traditional civilizations the basis for socio-political inequality is essentially “ascriptive,” which is to say that one is typically born into a superior or inferior status. Whole classes, castes, races, religious or language groups are denied access to power. They constitute second or third-class citizens, the penalized communities.

Whereas the phenomena of domination and oppression are widespread, if not universal, the specific criteria invoked vary greatly. Thus in some societies the stigmata may be skin color or race, but elsewhere they may be language or religion or caste. Unfortunately, we lack a simple word in English to refer to any category of persons who may be subject to discrimination by reason of such ascriptive traits. The word “communalism” typically refers precisely to an attitude of jealous exclusiveness that arises when ascriptively defined groups are accorded especially privileged or underprivileged status. Our terminological problem arises because we lack a convenient noun to refer to communal categories against whom communalism is directed. It would be misleading to call them “communes” or “communities” without special qualifications. We might call them “ascribed categories,” but the connotations of this term are too broad and technical. The phrase “primordial group” has also been used for this meaning, but not without ambiguity.

In the present essay, let us agree to use the word “community” in quotation marks to designate a category of persons subject to special discrimination—or preference—because of ascriptive criteria such as race, religion, language, nationality, or any other characteristic not achieved by personal choice.

Returning now to the canteen, we can see that subsidized canteens are open exclusively to members of a privileged “community;” whereas members of penalized “communities” are the victims of tributary canteens. A dramatic example of such canteen phenomena can be seen in countries that have instituted foreign exchange control as an instrument of economic development. Typically, scarce foreign exchange is supposed to be allocated under these controls only to entrepreneurs who engage in activities that the government wishes to encourage. In practice, however, only members of a privileged “community" are in fact given access to this scarce resource, another manifestation of “formalism."

Normally, successful applicants for foreign exchange can turn around and sell it

secretly and illegally to members of a penalized “community" through the “black market." Clearly members of such a penalized “community" cannot escape the tributary canteen, since they are systematically denied access to foreign exchange at the official rate, whereas members of the privileged “community" can benefit from low prices (a subsidized canteen) simply because they belong to the favored group.

Why are such canteen phenomena prismatic? It is because they arise from the overlap between traditional diffuse (communal) structures and imported specific (market) structures. In many, though not all, traditional civilizations a variety of tribes, castes, racial, linguistic, and religious groups live side by side, each relatively self-contained or, if interdependent, governed by customs and rituals, by rules of reciprocity and conflict settlement, which ameliorate and govern their interactions.

With the introduction of new functionally specific institutions such as the market, the various “communities" find they can now exchange goods and services through impersonal mechanisms that immediately begin to undermine older institutions for resolving inter-group conflict. These new institutions also provide opportunities and means for the centralization of power on a larger scale than had hitherto been possible. In short, one or more “communities" begins to monopolize political power and to impose its domination on other “communities." Frequently, of course, in the history of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the dominant “community" was “Western,” i.e., European or North American, but indigenous “communities" also secured dominant positions in those societies that never came under Western imperial rule and, since independence most of the new states of the third world have witnessed the rise to power of indigenous privileged “communities.”

Is it realistic to expect that new ruling “communities" would permit the operation of impartial and impersonal market institutions that would, without doubt, enable members of penalized “communities" to gain wealth and—on the assumption that wealth might be converted into political influence—corresponding power also? Is it not more reasonable to expect ruling “communities" to manipulate the operation of market institutions so as to assure favorable opportunities for the acquisition of wealth by members of their own “community" and to deny similar opportunities to members of penalized “communities"?

Exchange control and black market operations are, of course, only one of many patterns by which ruling groups can pervert the formal structure of impersonal market institutions to consolidate their own power, to protect members of privileged “communities," and to discriminate against those who belong to penalized “communities." This example illustrates well the principles of the canteen, a prismatic institution compounded of traditionally diffuse but functionally narrowed communalism overlaid with a functionally perverse “market” system. The canteen, in short, demonstrates another aspect of the prismatic dilemmas of structure.

### *The Bureau and the Sala*

Let us look next at another traditional institution that has also been drastically affected

by the introduction of differentiated structures, namely “bureaucracy." The word “bureaucracy" has unfortunately acquired a variety of meanings, some laudatory and some pejorative. Max Weber’s ideal model of bureaucratic organization has captured the imagination of contemporary analysts, giving many the impression that bureaucracy is a modern and a rational-legal phenomenon. It would be more true, I think, to see bureaucracy as an ancient and traditional institution—though not nearly so ancient as family and “community." However, in modern times bureaucracies have been strikingly modified by the impact of relatively specific, universalistic, and achievement-oriented structures, including the market, courts of law, elected assemblies and political parties. Consequently modern or complex bureaucracy has acquired many of the properties identified in Weber’s classic analysis as a result of functional narrowing.

However, some of these characteristics may or may not be exhibited in particular bureaucracies, yet they are often included in definitions, with the result that the concept of bureaucracy has become unnecessarily confused. In the interest of clarity, let us use a simplified structural definition: A bureaucracy is a hierarchy of offices that forms a component of an organization, such as a polity, government, corporation, church, or political party. By this definition, a governmental bureaucracy includes all the offices under the direct authority of a head of state, regardless of how they are filled, how long they are held, or what duties are attributed to them.

Bureaucracies clearly can vary with respect to each of these characteristics; offices may be filled by appointment or by inheritance, by hierarchic superiors or by others, for long or for short tenures, and for military or civil functions. People often think of a career civil service as a “bureaucracy”; whereas by my definition a career civil service is often part of a bureaucracy, or, perhaps better, a career civil servant may fill a position in a bureaucracy, but the term refers to a set of hierarchically related roles, rather than to their incumbents.

Bureaucracies are, as noted, quite old, but their origins may perhaps be traced in historical records, notably those of the Roman, Chinese, and Inca empires. I do not know if bureaucracies originated independently elsewhere, but it may be possible to trace the history of most if not all modern bureaucracies to either the Chinese or the Roman model. The traditional structure of bureaucracies was functionally quite diffuse, and each official typically performed a wide range of duties, affecting political and economic as well as administrative functions. The traditional functions of bureaucracy may not have been as diffuse as those of families and “communities,” but they were surely almost as diffuse.

There is a great difference between the institutional history of bureaucracies and families, however. Whereas the family, at least in the West, has tended to lose many of its former functions to new specific structures, retaining only a few diffuse residual functions, bureaucracies have tended to expand and to become more functionally specialized for administrative tasks. Meanwhile, they have often lost some of their political and economic functions to market institutions or to a new set of predominantly “political” structures, including elected assemblies, political parties, courts of law, and other para-bureaucratic institutions of governance.

In a well-integrated differentiated (i.e., a diffracted) system, bureaucracies are typically well enough controlled yet sufficiently influential to provide effective means for the achievement of goals predominantly determined by the new para-bureaucratic institutions. Thus diffracted bureaucracies have increasingly become functionally specific as the chief—though by no means the only—agents for performing administrative tasks. An essential condition for the integration of a highly differentiated social system may well be the emergence of one or more bureaucracies capable of serving as the leading organs of administration— provided they are effectively restrained from exercising political domination. Thus a functionally narrowed bureaucracy may well be one of the requisite institutional means for achieving integration in a differentiated society.

This outcome of the processes of differentiation, however, can by no means be taken for granted any more than the evolution of an impersonal and effective market system can be assumed. Indeed, the creation of an impersonal, functionally specific, administratively oriented bureaucracy is something that requires explanation.

Perhaps a more common pattern of bureaucratic transformation, under the impetus of the exogenous models provided by contemporary industrialized societies, is to be found in the "sala," which differs from the administrative bureaucracy of a diffracted society in the same way that the "bazaar" and "canteen" differ from the market system of a diffracted society. In order to understand the "sala," as I shall call the prismatic bureau, let us consider the impact of several new differentiated institutions on traditional bureaucracies. The word "sala" is widely used in Spanish, Arabic, Thai, and other languages—though not in English—to refer to a general-purpose room or hence, by derivation, also to government offices.

Think first about the market, which modifies bureaucracies to produce the sala, much as the market impinges on families to produce the bazaar, and on "communities" to generate canteens. To understand this, let us recall that traditional bureaucracies rarely if ever used the "salary" system. Essentially, the concept of a salary grows out of the marketization of personal services. Anyone who works for a salary expects to receive payments at a predetermined level and at fixed intervals of time, according to a legally enforceable contract. Moreover, the salary system implies that most, if not all, of the income of a salaried employee will be included in his salary. He is not expected, typically, to secure much supplementary pay for work outside of his office, i.e., for "moonlighting."

No doubt traditional bureaucracies often did provide for some direct payments to office holders. However, these tended to be infrequent, irregular, and marginal in the sense that they made up only a small part of the total income required for a livelihood. We can think of such payments as "prebends" or "livings" rather than as "salaries." In fact, they resembled rents on property more than payments for services rendered. Traditionally, bureaucrats thought of themselves as owning a position and therefore as owning whatever income or perquisites the post generated. Typically they depended more on other forms of income, resembling fees for particular services or gifts, rather than on wages or salaries.

In order to understand an exogenous orthoprismatic society, we have to remember that

bureaucracies, financed on a prebendary basis, arose as traditional diffuse institutions long before the introduction of functionally specific market systems. By contrast, the idea of salaries came as a modern novelty. The notion that public officials should be paid adequately and regularly no doubt appealed to incumbents who must often have found it difficult to make a secure living. The countervailing idea that they ought to perform services commensurate with the value of their salaries no doubt seemed less attractive to them. Rulers eager to consolidate their power—whether as indigenous or imperialist elites—also recognized that the salary system would enhance their ability to hold and exercise power. The Indian Civil Service, created on the financial side by a British trading company, though emulating the Chinese mandarinate, was surely one of the first such market-based bureaucracies. The salary system of payment to officeholders spread rapidly thereafter during the nineteenth century, until virtually every bureaucracy in the world had adopted it.

However, in many countries it worked out quite paradoxically. It can be readily understood that the ability to pay salaries depends not only on a decision to use the system, but also on the availability of resources. Many poor countries simply do not have enough revenue to finance an adequate scale of salaries for all the office holders in their governmental bureaucracy. Understandably, therefore, older prebendary systems of compensation have continued despite the formal installation of a salary system. However, the change in formula generated an important shift in attitudes which actually undermined the legitimacy of government. Under a prebendary system, direct fee payments to officials were regarded as legitimate, but under a salary system, such payments are viewed as "bribes". Thus, whereas the average citizen considers it proper, though perhaps difficult, to pay fees, he rebels against the need to pay bribes, resenting the attitudes and circumstances that make it necessary.

In short, the marketization of public services as expressed by the transformation of a prebendary into a salary system can lead to a substantial increase in the effectiveness of administration, the improved implementation of public policies. When this happened, the functional narrowing of a major institution of governance contributed to the integration of a differentiated social system. By contrast, however, the formalistic adoption of a salary system, veneering over a prebendary mode of compensation for bureaucrats, leads to the transformation of a fee or gift system of payments into a system of bribery, thereby corrupting and undermining the effectiveness of public administration. Typically fees are paid for performing socially sanctioned services, but bribes are paid not only to assure the performance of what should be done, but because they are paid secretly, they are also paid to prevent the enforcement of legally prescribed norms. Consequently, corruption corrodes administrative performance, leading to a decline in the credibility of government, and hence to malintegration, to prismatic outcomes.

Other aspects of bureaucratic performance may also be considered in this context. Think, for example, about training and professionalization. In traditional bureaucracies, pursuant to their diffuse functions, the public official was a generalist, a mandarin, a guardian, in short, an "official." As such, his duties or functions involved dispute settlement, tax collection, ceremonies, military work, keeping records, and any other tasks that might come his way. The "district magistrate" in British colonial administration and

the Confucian scholar mandarin, its Chinese prototype, best illustrate this multifunctional or diffuse orientation of the traditional bureaucrat. Preparation for these bureaucratic roles involved exposure to classical learning and established values, literature, history, and a knowledge of etiquette, sports, horsemanship, marksmanship, and other personal skills that signalized a gentleman, one acceptable in elite circles. Among the functions performed by a traditional official might be listed the judicial, political, and military, as well as the administrative.

By contrast, the public servants attached to modern complex bureaucracies are expected to be experts, including expertise as "generalists" in the management and coordination of work done by subordinates who are, of course, also specialists. The modern bureaucrat, in the Weberian image, has become a specialist, someone whose role requires him to perform in a functionally specific fashion. He may be a career military officer, a tax collector, policeman, agricultural extension officer, highway engineer, foreign service officer, statistician, social welfare worker, teacher, or file clerk—whatever his occupation, it fits like a piece in a jigsaw puzzle into a complex pattern, all of which is designed, ideally, to serve rather specific administrative functions. As the individual bureaucratic role was converted from that of a diffuse generalist into that of a specific specialist, many of the political and judicial functions previously performed within public bureaucracies were transferred to new judicially and politically oriented structures of governance.

Clearly it is difficult to maintain this separation of functions, and the integration of disparate specializations is a difficult operation. Politicians must learn to prescribe general policies or norms without interfering in the processes of day-to-day administration, and conversely bureaucrats must learn to apply their skills to the implementation of policies with which they may personally be in disagreement. Such are the conditions of constitutionalism which, as noted above, provides the foundation for diffracted systems.

By contrast, in prismatic systems, without constitutional safeguards, we find both political and administrative "interference", which is to say that persons occupying posts in political parties, elected assemblies, and other para-bureaucratic institutions strive to play administrative roles, and officials in public bureaucracies become actively involved in policy formation and pressure politics. It is easy enough to see why this must be. Let us consider several reasons which are mutually reinforcing.

Under prismatic conditions it is extremely difficult to create favorable conditions for professional work, and the more prismatic a society, the more vulnerable it becomes to exogenous pressures for the rapid institutionalization of new functionally specific structures. Since these innovative activities are organized predominantly through public bureaucracies, basic malintegrative pressures are intensified. To a considerable degree the required resources of knowledge, equipment, and the like are not available in any modernizing country. Consequently its professionalized bureaucrats must perforce face abroad as they look for the training, information, and materials they need to operate successfully in a functionally specific manner. However, this external orientation clashes with nationalistic values; the costs of securing foreign training, assistance, and information are high, and the guidance provided from abroad is often irrelevant to the real

problems faced in a developing country. Consequently the sense of frustration felt in a prismatic society by professionally trained bureaucrats is inherently overpowering.

Moreover, the attitudes and practices appropriate for a traditional type of bureaucracy inescapably persist. These include an interpretation of bureaucratic authority as legitimizing command-giving and rigid controls. In a traditional bureaucracy, where everyone is a generalist engaged in functionally diffuse activities, the superior is normally an older and more experienced man than his subordinates and exercises the relation of parent to child, of teacher to student, or of patron to client as a normal aspect of bureaucratic operations. He instructs and guides his subordinates, giving them rewards and punishments to secure obedience and conformity to his wishes.

This attitude and pattern of behavior, however, is highly dysfunctional for a complex, functionally specific bureaucracy, where rewards and punishments derive more from success or failure in professional tasks than from interpersonal sanctions. Often enough the superior officer in such bureaucracies may be junior to his subordinates, having been promoted rapidly because of "merit" or achievement, and in any case he may have on his staff experienced professionals who are older and know much more about the particular tasks in which they specialize than the superior himself does. Consequently, the task of the "manager" or the superior officer is to help create a supportive environment in which the members of his staff can work together as a team to achieve the organization's goals by whatever means. Thus the tasks of management or supervision in a professionally oriented bureaucracy involve essentially the function of "integration" itself, which is to say that the supervisor helps his staff secure the resources they need for the successful performance of their responsibilities, while providing an atmosphere that is sufficiently permissive, sufficiently responsive to the self-respect and need for autonomy of the professional man, to enable him to carry out his official role with energy and satisfaction.

Clearly if the older attitudes—attitudes quite appropriate for a traditional type of functionally diffuse bureaucracy— are carried over into the new types of professionally oriented and functionally specific bureaucracy, then they produce severely malintegrative effects. They lead, in short, to what may be called the "sala."

The sala is, of course, the typical Bureaucratic role to be found in prismatic societies. It somehow combines the traditional diffuse aspect of older multi-functional bureaucracies with the more specific aspects of modern professionally oriented bureaucracies. Although a man may be well-trained professionally and willing to serve as a public servant in an administratively focused bureaucracy, the conditions of work in a sala force the same person to behave quite differently. The lack of resources and continuous interference in day-to-day operations make one frustrated and discontented. If possible, he will leave home for a permanent career abroad, thus contributing to the "brain drain." But if no such solution is possible, he remains as a demoralized and bitter office-holder. In his frustration and alienation, he compensates by imposing petty tyrannies on his own subordinates.

Finding that the pitiful salary paid to him is inadequate, he looks about for supplementary ways to enrich himself. Having been frustrated in his efforts to follow professionally sanctioned norms, he experiences few pangs of conscience when called upon to violate

them, whether by his hierarchic superiors or by someone bribing him to violate official rules and practices.

Strangely enough, the prevalence of corruption in the sala makes it possible for some officials—surely not all—to enrich themselves despite the pitiful inadequacy of their official salaries. Their conspicuous consumption incurs the envy or emulation of the less fortunate. Others, the insecure ones, struggling to remain in the sala, become its "workhorses," carrying burdens for those who can afford to be slackers. Moreover, the characteristic lack of constitutional safeguards for autonomous non-bureaucratic roles under prismatic conditions means that many citizens of a transitional society still see careers in the government service with all their limitations as more attractive than any other alternatives open to them. Consequently, we expect to find, typically, tremendous pressure from job-hungry applicants for posts in the public bureaucracy. Responding to such pressures, public employment becomes more a means for meeting the needs of office-holders than a response to the requirements of the citizen public. A characteristic result in the sala is therefore substantial overstaffing and lack of commitment to official responsibilities. Large numbers of subordinate officials without much to do and without rewards for meeting high standards of performance tend to take the easy way out, to avoid difficult decisions, and to hunt for extra-legal (or even illegal) ways to supplement their meager incomes.

If we assume that the national treasury represents a limited source of funds, then the more the overstaffing, the more these funds have to be partitioned among growing numbers of underpaid office holders. Prismatic governments, faced with increasing unemployment among college and university graduates, not only create more positions in the public bureaucracy, but increase the money supply in order to pay them. This in turn generates inflationary pressures, further reducing the real income of public officials and reinforcing their need for extra-legal funds. Moreover, the more hard pressed governments are to pay salaries, the less they have for equipment, supplies, buildings, and other resources required if professional persons are to carry out their duties effectively and with self-satisfaction. This further frustrates and demoralizes the would-be professional in public careers. The vicious circle of malintegration in short both contributes to and is strengthened by the appearance of the sala.

### *Para-Bureaucratic Institutions*

Many of the difficulties encountered in the effort to transform a traditional functionally diffuse bureaucracy into a complex, professionally oriented, and functionally specific instrument of administration can; be explained only if one considers the obstacles to the' creation of politically effective para-bureaucratic institutions in differentiating societies. Clearly such institutions are needed, not only to take over functions previously performed within the bureaucracy, but also to impose upon the bureaucrats the constitutional restraints discussed above.

The creation of para-bureaucratic institutions is by no means an easy task and should not be taken for granted, any more than one should assume the facile creation of an

economically specific (rational) market system or of a controlled and hence administratively oriented bureaucracy. Some of the essential obstacles to be overcome in creating politically effective parabureaucratic institutions—difficulties that are especially thorny wherever the state bureaucracy has itself already become well entrenched and swollen by the appointment of many persons previously trained to believe in professional norms—have been examined in an earlier essay and will not be repeated here [1963].

Despite many obstacles, almost every contemporary state has, in fact, created an interlocking package of para-bureaucratic institutions which, for convenience, may be called a "constitutive system." I use this term because the successful operation of a constitutive system appears to be a *sine qua non* for the institutionalization of constitutionalism and hence for the integration of a differentiated society. However, the formal establishment of a constitutive system by no means assures its effectiveness as a basis for constitutional government. It is a necessary but not a sufficient condition.

The term "constitutive system" refers to a major component of government which is not often recognized as such although it is composed of very familiar elements, each of which is typically thought of as a different institution. These elements are built around an elected assembly which must clearly have an electoral system if its members are to be elected, and this in turn presupposes a technique for nominating candidates. The most usual nominating system— though not the only one—is a party system. We may therefore consider the assembly, the electoral system, and the nominating system as sub-systems or components of a constitutive system.

A constitutive system packages the main elements of an effective para-bureaucratic institutional alignment. We need to understand the wholeness of this component of government in order to understand the institutional nexus of prismatic as contrasted with diffracted societies. The conventional view—typically polarized—fastens attention on the party system and the legislature as independent variables, relating them to the degree of democratic openness or totalitarian closure in political systems. The former is associated with effective legislatures and competitive party systems, the latter with ineffective legislatures and one-party regimes.

However, in my opinion both types of polity can be fairly well-integrated and therefore relatively diffracted. In order to understand the institutional basis for malintegrated but differentiated and hence prismatic systems, we need to see that both the party system and the elected assembly are components of a larger structure, the constitutive system. The fundamental determinant of integration is not the relative power of the assembly or whether competition prevails in the party system, but the capacity of the constitutive system as a whole to enter into a creative balance of power with the bureaucracy and the executive [1969, 1971].

The distribution of power within a constitutive system may, of course, vary widely between one in which the assembly is powerful and the party system open or competitive, and one in which a single party monopolizes power and the assembly is greatly reduced in power. Such differences no doubt have the greatest importance in explaining variations in the distribution of power within various kinds of relatively diffracted political systems.

But to understand the prismatic polity, we must explore a different dimension of variation, namely the relation between the constitutive system as a whole and the state bureaucracy. If we accept the proposition that constitutionalism lies at the heart of the capacity of a differentiated society to achieve integration, then the next step in our analysis is to ask what institutional conditions may be necessary for the achievement of constitutionalism. I believe the answer lies not just in the institutionalization of a constitutive system, but also in the maintenance of an effective balance of power between that system and the bureaucracy. Such a balance seems to be as essential for the cultivation of administrative professionalism in the bureaucracy as it is for the establishment of effective political participation and the maintenance of responsibility by the ruling elites. To understand prismatic dilemmas of structure, we need to see this problem of balance, and to see this problem we need the concept of a constitutive system, a concept we cannot grasp if we deal only and separately with the chief components of a constitutive system.

Just as there are different types of diffracted polity in which an effective balance of power between constitutive system and bureaucracy is sustained, so there are several types of prismatic polity, depending on the type of imbalance that exists between the constitutive system and bureaucracy.

### *Types of Structural Imbalance*

Three main types of inbalance are theoretically possible, and they may also be found empirically. In one type the bureaucracy remains dominant with the constitutive system playing a subordinated and largely ceremonial role; the constitutive system may also become dominant and subject the state bureaucracy to a purely secondary role; and thirdly the office of chief executive may become overwhelmingly powerful so that both constitutive system and bureaucracy become mere pawns manipulated by an executive who shores up his monopoly of power by pitting these fundamental institutions of government against each other in a protracted and destabilizing war of nerves. These alternatives are discussed in more detail elsewhere [1969b, 1970, 1971] so it is necessary here to consider only some of their consequences for bureaucratic performance.

If the constitutive system is too weak to enter into an effective balance of power with the bureaucracy, then the political arena becomes primarily intrabureaucratic. The main struggles for power take place between rival groups within the bureaucracy. In such an intra-bureaucratic struggle, those who command the means of violence will almost always triumph. Elections are won by votes, and monarchic succession can occur by primogeniture or some similar selection ritual, but it seems unlikely that a peaceful rule can be found for selecting a head of state by and within a bureaucracy. When bureaucratic power prevails— remember that military officials are as much a part of the state bureaucracy as are civil servants—then the main mode of selection must be violence or the threat of violence, giving the upper hand to persons who are trained in the strategic use of violence and control armed units.

What happens to performance standards in a bureaucracy governed by military

officers who have organized a successful seizure of power? Clearly a situation is likely to arise in which the intrabureaucratic struggle for power, including the effort to safeguard one's personal fortunes in anticipation of future emergencies or *coups d'état,* whether successful or not, takes precedence over administrative duties and professional responsibilities. Understandably few office holders can afford to make martyrs of themselves on behalf of an unorganized public that cannot effectively impose its will by political methods or reward faithful public servants.

Rather, office-holders (military and civil) have to compete for positions of power and influence and seek protection from rival elements within the bureaucracy if they are to advance their careers and protect their personal and family welfare. Moreover, if public officials have been schooled to respect legitimate authority in government, they may well question the authority of men who have seized power by violence. They may even conspire to overthrow their governments under a façade of formal compliance with the commands given by persons who have themselves seized the highest positions in government by violent means.

Less attention needs to be paid here to the second and third alternatives, both of which are more uncommon than the first, but their consequences for administration are similar. If the constitutive system is overwhelmingly powerful, then it is typically also dominated by a single ruling party. It characteristically subordinates the bureaucracy by appointing to all key positions persons who are known for their party loyalty and activism rather than for their professional competence. The resulting prevalence of spoils and partisanship, of course, downgrades professional and. administrative values in the bureaucracy.

Similarly, if an all-powerful chief of state (whether king or president) seeks to maintain his personal rule by balancing bureaucracy (mainly the military) against the constitutive system (chiefly one or more parties), then a similar sense of uncertainty and demoralization will afflict members of the bureaucracy.

We need not inquire further into these differences. The main point, I believe, is clear. It highlights the characteristic dilemmas of structure in prismatic systems We have seen that the effort to transform a functionally diffuse bureaucracy which exercises political, administrative, judicial, and economic functions into one which is professionally oriented and functionally focused for administrative purposes will surely fail if new para-bureaucratic structures, specialized for political functions and co-equal in power with the bureaucracy, cannot be created. In short, the integration of a differentiated society requires the creation of a balance of power between its old bureaucracy and a new constitutive system. The achievement of such a balance, however precarious, between these two fundamental institutions of modern governance seems essential for constitutionalism and hence also for the maintenance of integration in a differentiated society. We have also seen that the recognition of this problem has required us to identify the concept of constitutive systems as a basic structural component of modern governments, instead of reducing this institution to its several parts.

The maintenance of a structural balance at the governmental level is closely linked with the creation of other structural balances in a society. These include the way the family

system and “communities”

respond to the establishment of market institutions, as noted above. Rather than explore these relations further, however, let us turn to our third set of prismatic dilemmas, those relating to belief.

## The Dilemmas of Belief

We have now reviewed some of the salient problems that must be solved by any differentiated sociopolitical system in order to become integrated. To do this we have used a prismatic viewpoint to examine the dilemmas of power and structure. Turning now to the dilemmas *of belief,* we may start by looking at the third face of a prism, the face in which we see a reflection of ourselves, albeit upside down. The prismatic image thereby reminds us that in the realm of belief we do not perceive the external world directly, but interpret it as transmuted by our own ego needs. In so doing we invert or distort reality to suit our private ambitions and fantasies.

Persons living in any differentiated society, confronting the dilemmas of power and structure described above, must somehow relate these perplexities to their personal needs and life experiences. We may understand better their religious faith, their ideologies and utopias, their myths, histories, and conventional wisdom if we see them as variant stereotypic modes whereby men seek to relate themselves more effectively to their settings. Thus the dilemmas of belief refer not so much to alternative views about the existential or external world as to the different paths men take as they relate themselves to their own social settings. It is the ego involvement, the psychological dimension, which gives the dilemmas of belief their distinctive character. Yet beliefs are also instruments of action, agents of change in a continuing ecology of development [1964a, 1970a]. They not only reflect reality, whether clearly or obscurely, but they also react upon and change that which is perceived.

Persons living in a differentiated society, vaguely sensing the dilemmas of power and structure, but recognizing more directly and intimately their own individual needs for role fulfillment—to achieve a meaningful status and function in society—continuously seek more satisfying interpretations of the situation in which they find themselves.

Responding to the dilemmas of structure, individuals in a differentiated society typically experience in their private lives the transition from functionally diffuse to functionally specific orientations that any modernizing society undergoes at the macro level. Every child relates in a functionally diffuse manner to its family and neighborhood, but with schooling and experience the maturing adult in a differentiated society is compelled to choose a role, to prepare for it, and—with whatever success or failure—play out his (or her) self-selected role. One may model oneself after one’s father or some admired friend or teacher, but the more differentiated and the more rapidly changing the society in which

one lives, the more individuals have to design new roles for themselves— indeed, they typically demand the right to do so. The roles of women in our society remain more diffuse, but the feminist movement—"women's liberation"— insists on more specific functions and demanding tasks.

By contrast, of course, in a traditional, relatively undifferentiated society the range of personal choice is minimal, and recognized social roles remain functionally diffuse throughout one's lifetime. This means that although individuals in such societies may feel a sense of shame if they fail to perform the generally accepted role of a human being according to the prescribed norms, they do not have to face the anxieties of choice, the perplexing alternatives and responsibilities, that confront members of a differentiated society.

Not everyone in a differentiated society, of course, actually makes or is capable of making such choices. There are some who remain in the relatively undifferentiated sub-cultures of the urban ghettos and rural hinterlands, the unmobilized and unassimilated nonparticipant residents in complex industrialized societies. Perhaps even more significantly, among those who have made the effort to adapt, to find functionally specialized roles for themselves, we can find a wide spectrum of patterns of alienation, ranging all the way from revolutionary commitment to violent or far-reaching social change to the psychotic or apathetic responses of regression, of "copping out" or social withdrawal.

The more integrated a differentiated society, i.e., the more diffracted, the easier it presumably is for a maturing personality to make his personal role selection, the more rewarding the consequences, and the fewer the cross-pressures. However, as we have seen, under prismatic conditions many individuals after conscientiously and responsibly selecting new and functionally specific roles for themselves face endless frustrations and contradictions. Small wonder that many of them seek escape by flight to another society, by promoting revolutions or *coups d'etat,* by withdrawal and alienation, by rejecting a mode of life which they perceive as a road to disaster.

Shall we not then understand the ways of thought, the ideologies, of persons caught in these varying social systems as rationalizations by which they seek to explain their predicaments to themselves and outline a strategy for dealing with them? In making such ideological responses, members of any society must take into account the prevailing distribution of power and the countervailing centripetal-centrifugal pressures associated with it as well as the structural or institutional formations.

Remember that in differentiated societies, anyone accepting a specialized or professional role is extraordinarily dependent on facilities provided by others, including both the creation of positions from which he can secure his livelihood and the provision of resources needed for the performance of whatever specialized role he has decided to fill. Consciousness of interdependence makes anyone occupying a functionally specific role vulnerable to the centripetal powers of organized society, aware daily and hourly of one's need to conform to externally imposed requirements.

At the same time, however, roles selected by each person in a differentiated social system may also convey a sense of power, and the more highly specialized—the more professionalized—the role, the greater that sense of power can become. Moreover, through organization, through unions and associations, by collective bargaining and the threat of a strike, role specialists can give reality to their sense of power. The countervailing strain of unavoidable duties juxtaposed against realizable rights becomes then, at the personal level, a counterpart to the centripetal and centrifugal forces which traverse each other at the macro level in every differentiated society. The extent of these countervailing strains varies directly with the degree of differentiation of the social system.

Insofar as a society is integrated, however, these strains become acceptable and mutually compatible, but insofar as prismatic malintegration prevails, these same countervailing rights and duties become both formalistic and intolerable. The duties become not only unacceptable but unavoidable, and concurrently the rights claimed become both inflated and unattainable.

The contrasting situation in an undifferentiated society needs to be remembered in order to appreciate the significance of what has been said. Here we find neither the sense of dependence on society nor its corresponding obligations. Because his role is not organically interdependent with that of others, the individual in a fused society escapes the countervailing pressures both to do his duty and to claim his rights. Rather, he is far more sensitive to constraints imposed by nature, the availability of food and shelter, the pressure of climatic changes, the coming of the rains, and other elements in his physical environment which sensitize him to supra-human forces. Understandably magic, religion, and sacred powers occupy much of his attention.

Insofar as authority becomes centralized in a relatively fused society, it must be expressed and sustained by sacred means, by the divinity of kings, the power of priests, and the mandate of heaven. The right of anyone to rule is accepted only insofar as the ruler speaks for divinity or, indeed, may actually be possessed by or be a reincarnation of the divine. No doubt in practice power may be seized by violence in traditional as in contemporary societies, but its long-term legitimation rests on some variant of the principle of divine sovereignty. At the personal level reciprocal rights and duties relate to neighbors and relatives—the “kith and kin” of archaic English— rather than to society or nation.

By contrast, in a differentiated society the conditions of concentrated governance requisite for the effective integration of the system are far too exacting for societal control by the authority of any supernaturally based legitimacy, and the individual becomes unavoidably sensitized to his dependence on society. Those who are subject to government, whose cooperation is also a necessary condition for the success of the system, must somehow be engaged in social action as participants, as citizens not merely as subjects or victims. This entails the transfer of sovereignty, of the source of legitimate authority, from a divine to a human base. The idea of popular sovereignty provides a widely acceptable rationale for the creation of effective governments which are also necessarily costly and demanding. Moreover, social differentiation gives persons occupying specialized and professional roles not only a stake in the operations of

government but also, if they are dissatisfied, the ability to disrupt it. It is not enough to prevent them from opposing the regime, their positive cooperation is needed.

Upon these premises various formal structures of government have been created. They require uniformly, however, some expression of the principle of *constitutionalism,* often expressed through a formal document or charter that is widely accepted as a statement of how the government should be conducted and its operations legitimized. Constitutionalism, as noted above, involves not only the imposition of limitations on the power of elites and the protection of individual and group autonomies, but also the obligation of members to support the system, the capacity of the regime to govern well, and the ability of private citizens to organize and apply restraints to their rulers.

In different diffracted societies these principles are not all given equal emphasis. No doubt the history of a society and its perceptions about the most likely threats to constitutionalism dictate the aspects that are most emphasized. Accordingly, the hierarchic principles involved in bureaucratic organization and in the obligations of citizens to the state are stressed in socialistic forms of constitutionalism, where the risks of anarchy are most feared. By contrast the polyarchic principles involved in the structure of assembly-oriented constitutive systems and the corresponding rights of citizens are stressed in liberal forms of constitutionalism, where the dangers of regimentation and tyranny are most dreaded.

Within the context of relatively diffracted societies, the salient dilemmas of belief for individual participants typically lie between these two polarized modes of thought, the former stressing one's obligations to serve society and hierarchic superiors, and the latter emphasizing the rights of the individual, collegial decision-making, and limitations on authority. Adherents of the socialist view point to the risks of private power and social irresponsibility inherent in the liberal version of constitutionalism; whereas adherents of the liberal alternative emphasize the dangers of tyranny and the infringement of private freedoms inherent in the socialist version of constitutionalism.

Both views, however, are equally irrelevant to the prismatic scene, insofar as constitutionalism in any form does not prevail. Projecting their typically diffracted dilemmas of belief upon prismatic societies, nevertheless, those who see the world through polarized glasses reinterpret the theoretical controversies of the third world in terms of their own ideological preoccupations, some demanding socialistic and others liberal roads to salvation.

The kaleidoscopic view, while recognizing the irrelevance of the socialist-liberal controversy in transitional societies, goes to the opposite extreme by rejecting the possibility of any meaningful ideological struggle in these contexts. Instead, it suggests that some historical, cultural, or religious myth based on the particular traditions of a given society can most appropriately meet its needs. It rejects the idea that there are any general ideas, doctrines, or ideologies that speak to the problems of many societies.

Following the prismatic approach, however, I see on the one hand the urgent need for the emergence of appropriate ideological debate in prismatic societies, a debate that speaks

to the critical agonizing problems that individuals face in these societies. On the other hand, we can predict that the actual ideological controversies found in prismatic societies will be characteristically formalistic and largely irrelevant to their basic problems.

Insofar as prismatic conditions arise in societies undergoing a transition from traditional to modern values and practices, much debate will surely focus on this transformation.

Some will advocate *neo-traditionalism*, a new interpretation of traditional cultural and particularly religious or sacred institutions, as the basis for dealing with problems of the modern world. They may say, for example, that authority should be based on supernatural sanctions, and government should be organized around the institution of monarchy, or at least great influence should be allocated to priests and scholars who can interpret sacred scriptures and apply them to contemporary conditions. They will also stress personal and spiritual values as against materialism and the expansion of state power.

In opposition to neo-traditionalism, we will find many advocates of *modernization,* who call for the secularization and rationalization of government and society in compliance with foreign models, adapted of course to the particular exigencies and circumstances of the borrowing society. Among the modernizers controversies arise between those who advocate a socialist or communist form of secularization and others who follow a liberal or free enterprise line of argument.

Insofar as the essential conditions for integrating a differentiated society have not been satisfied, such debates are largely irrelevant since neither neotraditionalism nor modernization theories in their socialist or liberal forms can help the society concerned identify and cope with its essential problems. The debate between modernizers and neotraditionalists essentially overlooks the conditions under which both traditional and modernizing goals can be attained in differentiating societies. Indeed, many inherited cultural values and forms can be maintained even by a radically modernizing society, provided it can achieve integration. Moreover, modernization (as the intentional borrowing of foreign models) will not help a society achieve the capacity to accomplish its collective purposes until the principles of constitutionalism become institutionalized. These principles are now well enough understood so it may be possible to accelerate their institutionalization by encouraging more widespread debate on the subject.

The essential problem for a transitional society that finds itself caught in a prismatic trap is, therefore, not whether to modernize or to retain traditional values or whether to follow a socialist or a liberal path, but rather how to achieve a high enough level of integration so that it can both retain the traditional values and cultural treasures which it cherishes most and at the same time apply selectively whatever foreign technologies will most appropriately help it meet its needs.

A number of new ideological themes have now appeared in third world countries which strike many observers as indigenous, or at least as germane to the real problems of the area. They seem to transcend the older traditionalism-modernization and socialist-liberal debates. From a prismatic viewpoint, however, these themes also seem to miss the

crucial issues. They focus essentially on *economic growth,* on *nationalism,* and on *political tutelage.* Let us take a closer look at them.

### *Economic Growth*

The concept of "development" has been appropriated in considerable measure—thanks mainly to the influence of economists as planners—to stand for the goal of economic growth. There are no doubt those who understand that growth is only one possible consequence of development and that for highly developed societies, further growth may be quite undesirable, but the popular view has been widely and deliberately spread that "development" is the main goal to be sought, and that the essence, or at least the principal measure, of development is growth as indicated by a rising gross national product.

Since development involves, as I shall attempt to show more fully below, the increasing capacity of a social system to make effective choices, we should be able to see an increase in national production or income as only one of several alternatives that a developing society may choose. Thus the ideology of "development" is not, I submit, an authentic reflection of the basic need for developmental change, but rather a distortion of this idea, giving primacy to one possible outcome of development, namely economic growth. The distinction may be made clear by using the word "development" in quotation marks to symbolize the ideology that makes economic growth its exclusive or essential goal.

The cumulative impact of the ideology of "development" is fantastic. The richer countries and international organizations have combined forces to preach the gospel of growth and to offer a wide array of incentives to countries that accept this road to salvation. Most of the governments of the third world, whether explicitly or implicitly, as manifested in their proclamations and economic plans, have also accepted these goals. The debate, therefore, has typically turned, not on the desirability of encouraging economic growth but rather on the choice of the most appropriate means.

No doubt it is essential for any society to increase production, to overcome poverty, to improve public health and education, to increase its capacity to sustain the means of national defense. However, as we have seen, there are many other important issues also: problems relating to self-actualization, to social justice and equity, the sense of security and purpose achieved by persons forced to choose increasingly specialized roles for themselves, their sense of autonomy and security in relation to government and to inter-communal and international strife, the preservation of the natural environment in the face of pollution caused by economic growth, and the quality of life and human relationships.

If development is the ability of a society to confront issues, to weigh alternatives, and to make increasingly appropriate decisions about how to deal with them, then no doubt the more developed a society, the more able it is to use whatever resources it commands to improve the livelihood of its members. However, it is certainly possible to be affluent but not developed, as some oil-rich sheikhdoms demonstrate. A society that is not

developed but is well endowed with natural resources may well have a higher per capita income than one that is far more developed but less fortunate.

In short, we cannot measure a country's level of development by its per capita income or even by its capacity to grow. A highly developed society may well prefer other values and temper its rate of economic growth in order to achieve other goals. Moreover, in terms of the dilemmas of belief, the ideology of "development" characteristically and paradoxically appeals more to the elite, who are already well off, than to the masses, who stand most in need of higher incomes. Typically, inequalities in the distribution of income are increased by economic growth in poor countries. Consequently the masses are likely to experience both an absolute and relative sense of growing impoverishment as a result of a country's economic growth. How cruelly ironic the ideology of development must be for the underlying population in prismatic societies.

The idea that economic growth ("development") can be a popular ideology in the "developing" countries is an illusion fostered by elites—both domestic and foreign—who expect indeed to be the main beneficiary of such changes. Instead of directing attention to social changes that make economic growth possible, the ideology of "development" tantalizes by exploiting the urgent needs of the impoverished without explaining the likely consequences of growth policies or the necessary price of development as the underlying precondition for achieving a variety of social goals. Small wonder that public policies focused on economic growth lead to increasing popular discontent and political instability! The ideology of "development" reflects real problems in prismatic societies, but fails to direct attention to the essential roots of their solution.

*Nationalism*

A second ideological theme that appears to have taken deep root throughout the third world, but one that is also derived essentially from the experience of Western countries, is the ideal of nationalism, in whose name the new states fought for and won their independence from colonial rule. Nationalist goals continue to inspire governmental elites in these states, both as a means for strengthening their authority in domestic politics and as a potent weapon for enhancing their image and influence in international politics.

The contemporary international system rests on the ideal of the nation state as a constituent member, and the countries that have become most affluent and powerful also accept nationalist goals as legitimate. Thus the world scene is one that powerfully reinforces the validity of nationalist ideals, just as it also undergirds the ideology of "development." Since the concept of nationalism involves a sense of identification rather than the production of goods and services, it might be argued that any country, however poor, can afford to gratify its peoples' need for identity by enabling them to share a common nationalist dream.

Unfortunately, just as with the "developmental" theme, the nationalist ideology draws its warmest support from governing elites but wins only indifference or active hostility from most of the underlying population in prismatic societies. Why this may be so can be well

illustrated by a parable. Let us consider the mythical republic of Midlandia, born in 1957 from the womb formed by a Western imperial power. The guiding slogan of the independence movement was “Midlandia for the Midlandians,” and its subsequent history is not unlike that of many countries in the third world.

The counter-elites who created the independence movement are the main beneficiaries of the new Midlandian regime. They monopolize positions in government, in the ruling party, in state enterprises and the professions; they own all the best land, and the high priests of the national religion are drawn from the same social elements. But what of the masses who had little to do with the independence movement and who are still largely the passive subjects of the regime?

There are the south Midlandians who speak a different language and would like either to be independent or to become part of the neighboring state of Southlandia. There are those in the western region who profess a heretical religion and accuse the dominant elite of trying to impose their state religion on them in the name of national solidarity.

There is a shop-keeping and vegetable-growing minority, scattered throughout the countryside and concentrated in the urban slums, whose hair-color differs from that of the dominant Midlandians; it is grey rather than brown. Although some Greys have been known to dye their hair in order to pass as Browns, they are ashamed of themselves for doing so, and their friends ostracize them—they also risk discovery and exposure by Browns. The Greys who “pass” often become the most fanatical nationalists, promoting Anti-Grey movements, hoping thereby to protect themselves from exposure. For most of the Greys, however, Midlandian nationalism is a nightmare, posing the perennial threat of anti-Grey communalism and pogroms. Meanwhile, they seek safety by depositing their savings in Swiss banks and by bribing officials to avoid paying taxes and to evade anti-Grey ordinances.

One might add a variety of other religious, linguistic, cultural, racial, and tribal minorities in Midlandia, none of whom find Midlandian nationalism a satisfying basis for personal or social identification. Moreover, there happens to be a large Midlandian minority living in Westland, right across the border from Midlandia. Some of them, reacting negatively to Westlandian nationalism, have asked for union with Midlandia, whose government is now actively disseminating propaganda about the persecution of Midlandians abroad and promoting the idea of a boundary rectification. There is even talk of war, and young Midlandians are conscripted into the army in preparation for a new national liberation struggle. Some units of the army have also been dispatched to suppress a possible uprising by the south Midlandians or to ward off an attack by Southlandia.

There is scarcely a country in the world whose national identity fully coincides with the territorial boundaries and ethnicity of an existing state. Consequently the more mobilized a population, the more nationalist ideals accentuate the fears of minorities and spur pressures for boundary changes. They raise demands for the unification of divided peoples and for the separation of those who have been united against their wills. The main beneficiaries of nationalist ideologies are not the people in whose name wars of

liberation are fought, but rather the elites of existing states—and the counter-elites who strive to become the elites of the future. For them, nationalism is a means to consolidate the power and wealth they already have or to acquire the power and wealth they wish they had. Nationalism also gratifies outsiders who hope that once a country has been established with a nationalist ideology, it will be able to carry on as a docile participant in the world of nation-states. Such illusions substitute for the hard thinking required if they would understand more deeply the nature of the changes taking place in our world.

This is not to say that anti-nationalism is a more acceptable ideology than nationalism. Indeed, resistance to nationalist ideals may be little more than a cover for imperialism, actually an exaggerated and pathologically intensified form of nationalism. It is but a short step from belief in the nation as a sacred object of loyalty and identification to acceptance of the myth of national superiority and the obligation to impose order and civilization upon conquered, and therefore presumably inferior, peoples. What is needed to explain and guide action in a prismatic society is neither the nationalist nor the imperialist dream, but rather a more penetrating understanding of the roots of the prismatic malaise.

### *Political Tutelage*

There remains a third ideological theme that is often advanced as an answer to the fundamental political dilemma of countries caught in a prismatic trap, namely the theme of *tutelage.* The underlying conception—which was first clearly stated perhaps by Sun Yat Sen in his lectures on the "Three Peoples' Principles"—has been widely disseminated. The essential doctrine is, first, that the traditional sacred basis of authority is incompatible with the requirements of modern life and must be rejected; second, that the legitimate basis of contemporary government must be popular sovereignty, but that the people are not yet ready to exercise the responsibility of electing their own leaders or helping to shape government policies; and third, that to provide a transition from traditional to modern government, an interim period is needed during which a benign tutelage regime will prepare the people for democratic self-government.

The ideology of tutelage—of "guided democracy," of a "transition period," of a "guardian regime," or the "leader principle"—lends itself well to the image-building needed by someone in power, to the creation of charisma. Its apparatus includes pictures, dances and plays, mass meetings and demonstrations, study groups and drill sessions. But it suffers from several weaknesses. First, the basis for choosing tutors is indeterminate. No doubt any king, leader of a political party, or chairman of a military junta can claim the privilege and duty of guardianship. But how shall choices be made between rival contenders? The ideology of tutelage, in short, provides a rationalization for the maintenance of authority by anyone already in power, but it provides no criteria for the selection of future leaders.

Moreover, and this is the second fundamental weakness of the tutelage theme, the idea scarcely gratifies the population of any society. Even ycung people tend to resent the idea that they need to be taught, and students now claim the right to share with their teachers the authority to make academic decisions. How much more likely it is that

experienced adults will reject the claims of anyone who has seized power to be their tutors! Those who are already trained to accept professionally specialized roles for themselves will quickly detect the self-serving deception of the tutelage myth. The unmobilized population, by contrast, while rejecting the requirements of modernity and pressures to undertake new roles, will be equally dissatisfied with the idea that they must be tutored to accept a way of life that contravenes their inherited and still cherished values.

This is not to say that the myth of political tutelage is not an ideological response to an authentic dilemma of the prismatic society. Indeed, of the three ideological orientations discussed here, I suspect that it comes closer to the heart of the prismatic problem than either of the other two. However, by emphasizing the special role of those who have seized power it directs attention away from the need for constitutionalism. It is, essentially, an elitist doctrine, and one can scarcely expect the main beneficiaries of the tutelage myth to repudiate a doctrine so aptly designed to uphold their claims to power and authority.

But this is no reason for those who are subject to oppression and obscurantism to rejoice in or give credence to ideologies thus superimposed upon them. I believe a more penetrating analysis of the prismatic dilemma and an understanding of the crisis of constitutionalism can be made the basis of ideological debate, and that these ideas can even become widely understood and disseminated in countries subjected to arbitrary rule, whether by foreign or domestic despotisms. Certainly there is no need for external

observers, who are not constrained by fear of reprisals, to accept and propagate ideologies whose chief function is to confirm and perpetuate the authority of those who have taken power by force and exercise their authority without restraints.

### *A Recapitulation*

We can now see that three of the themes that have been most widely heralded in the countries of the third world as offering an appropriate ideological framework for grappling with the complex and perplexing problems of our times are largely delusions fostered by ruling groups and by foreign powers, but for the most part irrelevant to the real needs of most of the people inhabiting this world of transition and confusing challenge. The basic dilemmas of belief for citizens of a prismatic society, in other words, rest largely on ideological premises that are not directly germane to the real problems that beset them. Remembering that formalism is a major characteristic of prismatic society, we can well appreciate this dissociation between image and reality, between what is perceived and what is experienced. “Polynormativism” is another way of expressing the point. Quite contradictory opinions can be held by different people—indeed, by the same person—without real confrontations since each view is largely non-operational, largely divorced from an effective impact on society. To think of the ideologies of “development”, nationalism, and political tutelage as prismatic is, then, to recognize their formalistic and elite-serving character.

Having recognized the prismatic essence of polynormative belief systems in a

prismatic society, it would perhaps be unprismatic to expect people caught in prismatic traps to formulate more meaningful theories to explain their own problems to themselves and to find appropriate and effective modes for dealing with them. Certainly if counter-prismatic ideologies were to be widely held in prismatic situations, they might soon provoke social and political transformations that would stimulate changes leading the societies concerned to become less prismatic, more diffracted. In other words, the maintenance of prismatic conditions requires the perpetuation of prismatic modes of (irrelevant) thinking, whereas the dissemination of more perceptive ideologies might hasten the liquidation of prismatic systems.

As to the nature of counter-prismatic ideologies that might help a prismatic society achieve more integration I have no simple panacea, but I can offer a couple of suggestions. First, I suspect that in support of the relativists with kaleidoscopic vision, every society will have to articulate its own road to salvation in terms of its own history, culture, language, religion, and traditions—in short, by striving to find its own distinctive identity. But secondly—and here the polarized, unilinear view is germane—I also think that unless a country's recipe for development—not in the ideological sense—provides for the institutionalization of constitutionalism, it cannot succeed.

The precise constitutional formula can vary within wide limits, and certainly the mere promulgation of a written charter by no means assures success. Constitutionalism will, however, surely involve the imposition of effective restraints on the arbitrary exercise of power by elites and correspondingly the safeguarding of effective autonomy by individuals and groups within the society. Conversely—and this is the seldom appreciated underside of constitutionalism—it must also involve the willingness of individuals to accept responsible participative roles in their society and the corresponding ability of government to govern, to design and carry out policies and programs. It is this aspect that attracts the primary attention of students of development administration, and it may well be on this side, too, that the entering wedge for effective development can most often be found.

It should by now be clear that the three prismatic dilemmas of power, structure, and belief are organically associated with each other. The countervailing centripetal and centrifugal pressures that threaten to rend a prismatic system apart can be brought into a mutually compatible and reinforcing equilibrium only by the institutionalization of constitutional structures, and I see no better way to encourage movement in this direction than by drawing attention to the problem and repudiating the prismatic ideologies which, perhaps inadvertently, tend to perpetuate and even intensify prismatic tensions by reinforcing the centripetal and centrifugal strains of unconstitutionalism in prismatic societies. We have now reached the point where we should be able to recognize the wholeness, the interrelatedness, of prismatic systems.

## The Prismatic Gestalt

Without making any of the metaphysical or theoretical assumptions of Gestalt psychology, we can at least borrow the idea that a holistic view is necessary if we are to understand social systems in general and prismatic society in particular. Take another look at the prism, and you will see from either end that the three sides are but facets of a single entity. Again, looking through the prism as you rotate it, you will see that the various aspects that have been related to the characteristic prismatic dilemmas all merge by imperceptible transformations into each other, generating a single, though paradoxically complex, scene. As we have seen, the three prismatic dilemmas mutually reinforce each other by circular causation.

There is a serious tendency in much contemporary social science to think that something can be understood by reducing it to parts, each of which can be analyzed separately in the expectation that eventually the whole can be reassembled and understood. This reductionist approach misses a fundamental point, namely that the essence of wholes consists of the relation between rather than the sum of the parts. Try snapping your fingers. Now explain it. Can you do so by examining the thumb first and then the middle finger? Do you need to explain the anatomy of the digits in order to understand the snapping? Can you do it with your first or little fingers? If not, is it because they are so anatomically different from the second or third fingers, or because of their relation to each other? One of the seminal paradoxes of Zen calls upon initiates to contemplate the problem of snapping with only one finger—truly a prismatic puzzle.

Each of the prismatic dilemmas has grown out of such problems. One cannot understand the centripetal aspects of power without simultaneously considering the centrifugal aspects. The dilemmas of structure cannot be grasped unless one first distinguishes the functions performed by structures from the structures themselves, and then examines how they are related to each other. To do so we must clearly distinguish between the criteria used to identify structures and those appropriate for the recognition of functions. Similarly one cannot understand the dilemmas of belief without first detaching the perceiving individual from his perceptions and what is perceived from its image, considering then the degree to which beliefs both reflect and change the situation of the believer. Prismatic ideologies are both far from reality and likely to intensify the acuteness of prismatic dilemmas.

Clearly all three dilemmas are as much related to each other as are the counterbalances built into each. Power relationships arise only between structures—eliminate structure and power vanishes. Structures, as patterned action, arise out of and generate belief. Subtract belief in the pattern, and the pattern dissolves, for pattern and belief are reciprocally involved with each other. And how can we think about power without belief; the authority of legitimacy rests on belief and changing beliefs can transform the structure of power.

Folk language gives us words for wholes, yet somehow our analytic training compels us to divide them into fragile abstractions. Nevertheless, we need concepts that capture the wholeness, the inner-relatedness of experience, of systems. Systems theory itself is necessarily holistic since systems are defined by the relations between their parts. Can we then recognize prismatic systems as wholes, not simply by analyzing their parts or

even by probing their aspects, as we have just done through the examination of prismatic dilemmas?

Take another look at, not through, the prism. While rotating it, we are aware of its three sides, yet we know that it remains the same prism. The prismatic viewpoint includes the prism as well as the im-prism'd scene.

Rotating a prismatic system, we observe three signs—three stigmata if you will—which distinguish the prismatic from the non-prismatic, although clearly if these are polarities, then every society will, of course, display prismatic features to some degree. I have already identified and illustrated these stigmata elsewhere [1961, pp. 98-143; 1964a, pp. 12-19], but by repeating them here, we may summarize our image of a prismatic society as a whole. They include *formalism, overlapping,* and *heterogeneity.*

### *Formalism*

Let us distinguish between behavior which is formally prescribed (the manifest functions attributed to a pattern of action) and the actual behaviors that occur (the latent functions resulting from a pattern of action even though they are not intended). No doubt there is always some discrepancy between the prescribed and the actual, between the manifest and the latent, but there are surely differences in the degree of such discrepancies. The greater the discrepancy, the more formalistic the system involved.

The word formalism can refer to one extreme on a scale of variation between realism and formalism, but it can also be used for the index that measures this scale. Thus the lowest degree of formalism is realism, but the highest degree is extreme formalism.

To avoid confusion, remember to distinguish between formalism and formality, as already noted. To be formal is to insist on behaving according to the rules. We may therefore find formality without formalism. Realism can be found with both formality and informality, as may formalism.

Each of the three prismatic dilemmas entails a high degree of formalism. If the allocation of power in a society is malintegrated, then governments struggle in vain to centralize authority by continuously imposing new and more compulsive laws, while most of the population stoutly resists these centralizing efforts, bribes officials, conceals infractions, and generally blocks the government's efforts to centralize power. The discrepancy between centrally imposed rules and actual practice, always present, is significantly higher in more prismatic systems.

Similarly, the dilemma of structure involves discrepancies between the prescribed functions of newly created, functionally specific, and professionally oriented structures, and the functionally perverse consequences of the actual operation of these structures. The latent functions of differentiated structures tend to be more important than their manifest functions; the more prismatic the society, the greater is this discrepancy.

The dilemmas of belief are also formalistic, as we have seen, for while pretending to cope with the acute problems of individuals in a changing society, the available ideologies or belief systems are either totally irrelevant or serve to buttress the power of ruling groups and to soothe the anxieties of foreign powers. Thus formalism is a major consequence or concommitant of the dilemmas of belief, tending to intensify rather than counteract the prismatic dilemmas of power and structure.

The concept of formalism can also be used to link the three dilemmas of a prismatic system more concretely if we focus our attention on any distinctively prismatic institution, such as the bazaar and canteen, or the sala. Think, for example, of black marketing, a form of tributary canteen. Clearly the persistence of a black market involves the institutionalization of illegality. If a government could eliminate black marketing, it presumably would, so the persistence of this tributary canteen reveals that a government is either unable or unwilling to enforce its own laws, thus manifesting the dilemma of power.

The black market similarly expresses a discrepancy between the way markets are supposed to work as a functionally specific institution and the political forces that distort their operations—thus again exhibiting formalism in the dilemma of structure. Thirdly, according to nationalist ideals, all elements of a society should identify with the whole, yet clearly those who have to pay excessive prices in a black market because of communal discrimination cannot experience a sense of national identification. Members of a penalized community, compelled to pay black market prices, are unlikely to accept the government's claim for loyalty in the name of tutelage, and they can easily and bitterly see how the black market impairs economic "development." Thus a black market reveals in microcosm the formalism inherent in all three prismatic dilemmas.

### *Overlapping*

When different lands of institutions coexist in a society and claim to be performing the same functions, or when one institution makes the claim but fails to perform the function, while another does not make the claim but actually does perform it, we may say that overlapping exists. Although overlapping may be found in all societies, the more prismatic a system, the more it will display overlapping. We need to distinguish overlapping from competition that occurs when rival structures both claim to and do perform similar functions, within a framework of rules that recognize, regulate, and even encourage competition while also providing institutions for the resolution of conflict. Thus we see competition between entrepreneurs, political parties, advocates in law courts, basketball teams, and trade unions—but this is not overlapping.

Examples of overlapping, by contrast, include situations where schools claim to be providing an "education" but effective preparation for life occurs in the home or temple; where an elected assembly is supposed to make laws that are in fact made by bureaucrats; where formal courts of law are supposed to administer justice but in fact disputes are settled by police officers, political machines, or religious tribunals. As with formalism, we can see that overlapping is both a scale of variation and the name for one

of the poles on such a scale. Overlapping is typically prismatic and closely linked with formalism as well as the three dilemmas.

Thinking of the dilemmas of power, we can see overlapping where decisions are supposed to be made, officially, through central government authorities but are in fact made by counter-elites who bribe officials and conceal their illegal or underground activities. In a prismatic country torn by insurgency, two governments may even coexist, one ruling by day and the other by night, each contradicting and nullifying the work of the other. Officials ostensibly working for the government may also be collaborating with insurgents and black marketeers. No consensually based institution exists to resolve conflicts growing out of such overlapping—not competing— forms of power.

As to the dilemmas of structure, consider the "elect" [1962] as an example of overlapping. Here we see in a single organization the persistence of a diffuse traditional family-type structure working under the shelter of new patterns of formal, functionally specific organization. A common type of elect, under prismatic conditions, is a formal organization (a

"front") [1969c] which is ostensibly dedicated to one set of purposes, but secretly manipulated by a ruling undercover cabal for a very different set of objectives. Such overlapping structures combine functional narrowing and functional perversion in one institution.

The dilemmas of belief are also illustrated by "fronts," which are an extreme form of elect. The ostensible ideology of a "front" masks its effective practices which rest, secretly, on a contrasting set of purposes. Thus the phenomenon of overlapping under prismatic conditions reinforces the dilemmas of belief, of structure, and of power.

*Heterogeneity*

When conflicting doctrines, patterns of behavior, or modes of life coexist in a society, heterogeneity prevails.

It is important to distinguish pluralism from heterogeneity. Competition according to mutually understood norms is prescribed under pluralistic conditions. Thus we fully expect to find competition between management and labor, between interest groups, between politicians seeking election, or bureaucrats seeking a promotion. The underlying assumptions or values in each of these forms of competition are similar, perhaps identical. Hence pluralism is not only compatible with homogeneity, but presupposes it.

By contrast, where heterogeneity prevails, pluralism is not possible. Rather, opponents view each other as enemies who must be destroyed, rather than as rivals in games that can be played repeatedly with the same partners.

The dilemma of power is epitomized by a prismatic government's struggle against underground gangs or "syndicates." The gang cannot overthrow or replace the

government, but neither can government destroy the gang. Each regards the other as an enemy to be destroyed if possible, but effective power is divided between the two. Under prismatic conditions, heterogeneity in the distribution of power polarizes around mutually hostile privileged and penalized communities, leading to what some call a "plural" society—not to be confused with pluralism—but I think we would do better to call it a poly-communal society. Polycommunalism should be distinguished from multiethnicity, for the latter is compatible with pluralism and homogeneity, whereas poly-communalism is not; it reflects heterogeneity instead.

The dilemmas of structure also involve heterogeneity. New structures, for example, may be supported by one community in sharp opposition to old structures linked with hostile communities. Thus the inherent rivalry of communities in a poly-communal society reinforces the bitter struggles that occur between different structures, notably where clashes over religious values, language, race, and ethnicity undergird structural heterogeneity.

The acute differences between communities in a prismatic system are also braced by diametrically opposed beliefs about the nature of reality and socio-political forces. Thus instead of ordered rivalry between parties, corporations, or clubs, each of which shares the underlying values and beliefs of its rivals, we find that the more prismatic a society, the more incompatible are the fundamental ideologies of its different communities and groups.

The stigmata of formalism, overlapping, and heterogeneity, in short, enable us to recognize prismatic systems, and at the same time they give us tools for understanding the interrelatedness of the dilemmas of power, structure, and belief as inseparable aspects of a whole, of a prismatic society.

## Change and the Prismatic Viewpoint

The prismatic viewpoint provides a frame of reference for the study of social change, but it should be made clear that this essay has not dealt with the subject. The analysis presented here has been essentially static, striving to identify and place prismatic societies in context, to show their relation to fused and diffracted systems, to degrees of differentiation and integration, to varying patterns of power distribution, of structural-functional relationships, and to divergent belief systems or ideologies.

However, the prismatic mode of analysis does offer some key variables around which a theory of social change can be built—a task that remains to be performed as a sequel to the present study. In particular, prismatic theory should be compared with the various approaches that have been taken to the study of developmental change. A few observations on this point are offered by way of conclusion.

First, the polarized viewpoint seeks a unilinear path of change, and our contemporaries have chosen "development" as the key variable or "differentiation" as the clue to development. We have seen that there are other variants of this unilinear vision: modernization, evolution, revolution, liberation, progress, institutionalization, conversion. Each variant offers a different vision, both of the *summun bonum,* and of the dynamics of change, the dialectics of social transformations.

By contrast, the kaleidoscopic viewpoint rejects the idea of purposeful change and denies the possibility of convergence or of a common human destiny. Rather, it stresses the uniqueness of each historical experience, of each cultural syndrome, or of each ecological manifold. For every gain in social transformation there are compensating losses, outcomes of change cannot be predicted, and means are imbued with ends to such an extent that deliberate efforts to control man's fate are doomed in advance, while the great transformations that happen without social choice are either fortuitous or reflect the playing out of supra-natural forces. They typically generate cycles, like rising and falling waves, which lead to no climax or fulfillment, or to Spenser's "ever-whirling wheele of *Change,* the which all mortall things doth sway."

The prismatic view of change combines elements of both the unilinear and kaleidoscopic. It recognizes cultural and historical continuities, the interdependence of structures and functions in complex social systems, and hence the uniqueness of particular societies, nations, and cultures. It recognizes the tenaciousness of institutions, the persistence of established modes of behavior and rooted technologies, despite the introduction and assimilation of new and more complex forms and practices.

At the same time, the prismatic view recognizes underlying uniformities or commonalities, convergences, and universal dilemmas. However, its view of change is not unilinear but multi-linear, recognizing a variety of interdependent dimensions on which the themes of social change are worked out. There are typically trade-offs such that increases in one dimension are associated with decreases in another. Even on one dimension, change is likely to be helical, dialectical, or step-wise rather than straight-line incremental. It may be necessary to retreat a step in order to advance two steps. Tensions and dissatisfaction have to build to critical thresholds before the impetus for change becomes strong enough to dislodge established and relatively satisfactory or at least widely accepted practices and behaviors.

The prismatic view also steers a middle course between extremes of voluntarism and determinism. It recognizes the importance of environmental factors as ecologically influential both in system maintenance and system change. Any given environmental circumstance may be both a constraint on change and a resource for change, setting limits within which changes can be made, yet providing some degrees of freedom for voluntary choice. What is more, an understanding of social ecology shows the extent to which human social systems can modify their own environments so that elements which are at a given moment constraints on change can be transformed into resources for change.

The prismatic viewpoint is hospitable to the idea of developmental change, but it

rejects most of the variables commonly associated with “development,” such as economic growth, as valid characterizations of development itself. If there are different and mutually incompatible dimensions of desired change such that progress in one direction entails regress in another, then hard choices are necessary. If so, development cannot be associated with any single dimension of desired change, but rather with an increasing ability in social systems to weigh alternatives realistically, to make value choices, and to adopt and implement policies likely to optimize the achievement of desired goals.

By distinguishing between differentiation and integration as major social system variables, prismatic theory explains how development may be negative as well as positive, how more differentiated systems may also become more malintegrated, thereby posing a perennial dilemma for changing societies between the quest for order and social sanity on the one hand and the desire on the other for adventure, the willingness to take risks in order to move toward new frontiers of achievement. Closely associated with, but cutting across, this developmental dilemma is a perennial historic dialectic, the tension between strains toward greater social equality, participation, and freedom as against the countervailing strains toward more hierarchy, regimentation, and social capacity or productivity. These two dilemmas of developmental change are suggested schematically in figure 4, the former by the vertical dimension pulling toward E or F and the latter by the horizontal dimension, a continuing tug between A/C and B/D [1967; 1968a].

As readers of this essay should realize, change in prismatic societies is essentially paradoxical in the sense that actual outcomes of intentional change are likely to be the opposite of what is intended. In undifferentiated social systems, determinist views prevail to such an extent that few if any efforts are made to induce social change by self-conscious voluntary choice. By contrast, to the extent that a society is diffracted, it is possible for collective decisions to be made with some assurance that in most instances outcomes will largely correspond to predictions, and unintended side-effects will not nullify the achievement of planned results.

In a prismatic society, however, the idea that planned change is possible, that deliberate choices can lead to intended consequences, is so widely prevalent that efforts are typically made both by indigenous leaders and external advisers to manipulate the social, economic, and political systems. However, without an understanding of prismatic systems, the agents of change are typically surprised by the bitter fruits of their well-intentioned efforts. Consequences are seldom those intended—the latent functions of innovation are typically more important than the manifest ones, the side-effects more salient than the intended.

If one is interested in development, in innovation, in deliberate and planned change, and one finds himself working in prismatic situations—regardless of whether one is an indigenous leader or an external change agent—then a thorough knowledge of the complex and paradoxical dynamics of change in prismatic systems is clearly called for. Such an analysis remains to be made, but an understanding of system maintenance in prismatic societies as outlined above in this essay may at least furnish the foundation on which a dynamic analysis can be built.

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Note:

1. Objections have been raised to this mode of analysis on the grounds that we have no way of knowing whether any reality exists apart from our ability to know or perceive. The point of this module is not to explore such metaphysical and epistemological issues. However, even accepting the criticism, I would argue that anything is real to us upon which we can agree—thus social consensus creates reality, and what is “real” to us is really “illusory,” i.e. *maya.* If so, then a new perceptual mode, if it became a matter of consensus, could create a new “reality.” Adopting this standpoint, I believe that the prismatic viewpoint which is already real to me could, if it became the basis for new collective perceptions, generate new social realities that would enable us to solve our political problems more easily and effectively. The prevalent polaroid and kaleidoscopic viewpoints do not need to be faulted on ultimate philosophical grounds—they simply don’t work. We keep tying the knots that bind us more tightly while struggling vainly to undo them.

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