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Research Paper no. 14/01

**Models of human motivation in
sociology**

Jacob Alsted

Roskilde University, Denmark

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sociology**

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Research Papers from the Department of Social Sciences, Roskilde University, Denmark.

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Abstract

In recent years sociological theory has seen an increasing focus on the role of the agent. But the knowledge of this agent remains limited. Sociology can benefit by developing a model of the motivation of the agent drawing on insights from psychology. A draft of such a model, made by the author, has the following ingredients:

1. A survey of psychological literature indicates that there are 4 sources of psychic pleasure and anxiety. These are partly mutually exclusive and mirror the ambiguity of the world
2. The psyche is structured to handle these partly exclusive sources of satisfaction. This happens by “freezing” particular blends of satisfaction and anxiety in psychic defences. The defences protect the individual from the ambiguity of the world.
3. The efficiency of psychic defences develops throughout life. In normal development they become better at handling ambiguity and thus less rigid. The increasing efficiency of the defences augments the flexibility of the psyche

If this model is accepted, it has certain consequences for basic sociological concepts:

- Social structure: All social structures must be seen as common psychic defences of their constituents
- Structural properties: Social structures can be characterised according to the level of social defence they represent
- Evolution: It becomes possible to speak of different levels of maturity of organisations, institutions and societies
- Structure of social interaction: The structure of the psyche is mirrored in the structure of organisations and societies

Keywords: Psychology, psychic defences, motivation, social structure, agent-structure, evolution

Address for correspondence: jal@ruc.dk, ja@poulaelth.dk

Models of human motivation in sociology

By Jacob Alsted, Roskilde University, Denmark

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The argument of this paper

Since I was an undergraduate, it has puzzled me why psychology was so absent from sociology. There is no other purpose with history, than the motives of each human being (Runciman 1989, 297). So to understand society we must understand the motives of human beings.

This was clear already to the early sociologists. John Stuart Mill writings include very specific statements on the nature of the human psyche (Liedman 1991, 175). Other sociologists have since done the same. But sociologists understanding of the human psyche has since Freud been far behind that of psychologists.

In recent years some sociologists have acknowledged the importance of psychology. Runciman has stated that psychology points the way for a strengthening of sociological theory (Runciman 1983, 185). Some sociologists have gone even farther. Late in his career Neil Smelser has begun an inquiry into “the social edges of psychoanalysis” (Smelser 1998a). Another example is Slavoj Zizek, who with an astonishing production, has advocated the inclusion of psychoanalytical concepts in contemporary sociology (Zizek 1999).

The aim of this paper is to analyse how the human psyche influences social organisation. The main claim will be that society and groups works better/create more power and wealth, the better motivated their members are and that social evolution has favoured organisations with comparatively better motivational content.

In this paper, then, I will construct a model of motivation and demonstrate how it can improve our understanding of society¹. To be taken seriously a model of motivation must consider the most influential theories within psychology. So psychology will have a big place in this paper. The psychologists are the experts on human nature. The aim here is an integration of concepts from psychology and sociology. Furthermore it is the aim to clearly demonstrate that such a model adds new insights to our understanding of society. I will argue that the model of motivation presented here can increase our understanding of society.

How does human nature look?

One of the first questions to arise when trying to integrate sociology and psychology is that of essentialism versus anti-essentialism. To enquire into psychology’s potential contribution to sociology, is to ask how human nature influences the construction of society.

With regard to their view of human nature, the many different schools of social theory can be divided on a continuum. One end of the continuum consists of theories of an essentialist position emphasising in different variants that man has an inner essence, drive or motivation, that influences the way society develops. In the other end of the continuum there is a group of theories holding the position, that man has no inner essence or that it is too complicated to understand and that the

¹ The main points of this paper have been adopted from a doctoral thesis on the subject that I am preparing.

way society develops is governed by coincidence and that no larger patterns can be read out of history.

| Independent reality | | | | Reality dependent on us | |
|---------------------|------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Essentialism | Positivism | Structuralism | Critical realism | Social constructivism | Radical constructivism |

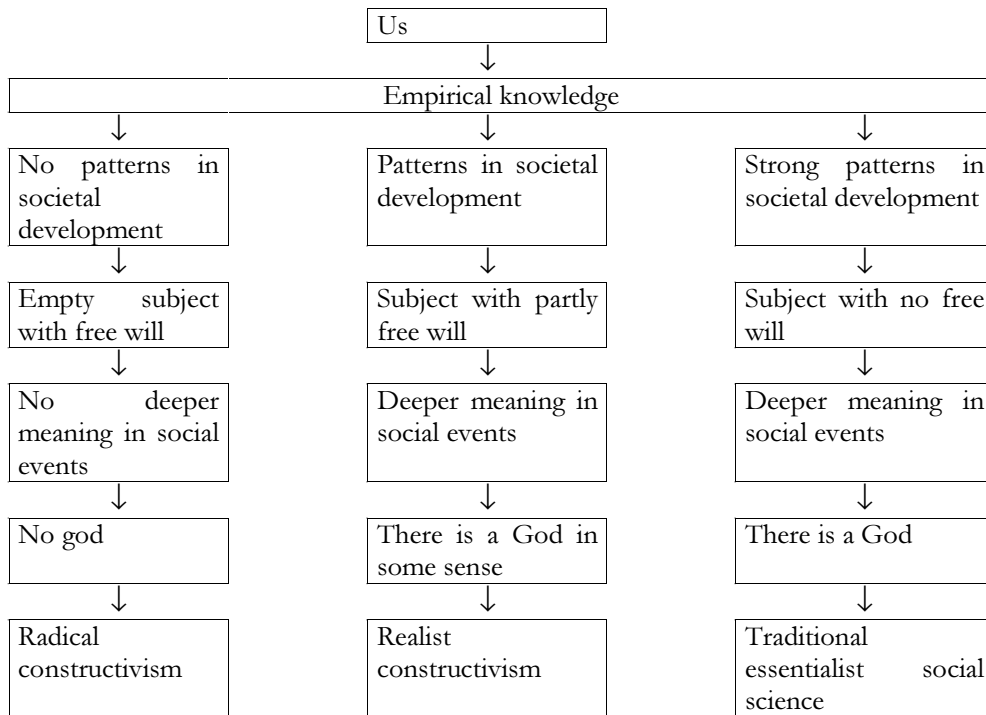
The first group is commonly criticised for being overdetermined and rigid in its view of social change, whereas as the second group is accused of relativism and empiricism. Both criticisms are correct.

The essentialist positions have commonly reduced individuals to creatures devoid of will captured in the structures of society. What these theories have failed to see is that there is no such thing as the structures of society, since they are only present as psychological ideas shared by many people. So social structure is in effect psychic structure (see section 1.2). The essentialist conception of the dominating social/psychic structure has been very inadequate. Marxism claimed that human beings are guided by the economic structures, Parsons that we are guided by the normative structure and structuralism that societal structures dominate us. These mysterious structures have rightly been criticised of being far from a world experienced as susceptible to individual influence.

The anti-essentialist positions, on the other hand, have commonly refused to accept any deeper reasons for observed patterns of behaviour. Giddens have denied that the concept of evolution has a place in social theory, while his own historical accounts documents clear large-scale developmental patterns. Social constructivism has rightly pointed to social reality as psychologically constructed phenomenon. They are therefore very concerned with relations and the need for dialogue, but has almost nothing to say of why we construct social reality as we do. This leads easily to relativism and context-near studies with no ambition of generalising findings.

Rorty has seemingly dealt with the problem of relativism by separating the world out there from truth. Since the establishment of truth is always based on language, it cannot exist independently of the human mind (Rorty 1989). This view presupposes that all truths about human desires and ideas emanate from language.

There is a third theoretical position between the two radical poles: realism. It is important to separate realism and essentialism. Essentialism is the notion, that there is one and only one correct description of reality. Realism is the notion that there is a physical world/reality existing independent of human construction, Collin 50. Realists argue that the frames of human ideas and desires are set by biological and existential conditions that can be grounded in the outside world. The ideas and desires are then realised through language (among other things). Collin and Wenneberg argues for a constructivism that accepts an independent existence of the physical world and thus of human intentions (Wenneberg 2000, 179).



Today most mainstream sociologists are either realist or radical socialconstructivists. Since Berger and Luckmans book it has been clear that the social world is a construction. The recent history of social science can be described as an oscillation between the standpoints of realists and radicals. Whereas arguments and concepts in a wide range of fields with-in social science have been revised, sharpened and improved throughout its history, the positions of realists versus radical socialconstructionists has only slowly, if at all, come closer to each-other (Wilson 1998, 186).

This paper will of course not provide proof of which of the two strands is the correct one. Such a proof is not attainable but is ultimately a question of belief. This does not mean however that it is impossible to increase our understanding of human nature. On the contrary, the main argument of this section is that we should not allow the lack of such proof to hinder an improvement in the precision of sociological models. I think the conflict between essentialism and anti-essentialism is one of the main reasons that social scientists have been reluctant to incorporate psychological concepts into their theories. But this is a mistake. To look closer at human nature it is not necessary to choose between the above alternatives. Only it moves the problem from one level to another. The problem of god should not be discussed by reference to the question of human nature, but instead by reference to the question of how it is created (Wenneberg 2000, 144). Whereas this paper describes the human nature, it does not offer any evidence as to how it has come to look this way.

This being said, the position of this author is in favour of realism. The realists are right in assuming an inner motivation, but it is far more flexible than is allowed for in contemporary sociological models. My claim is that if we do not accept some

level of inner determination or motivation, we do not do justice to our empirical material and we end up with less informing theories, than we need to. To the radical socialconstructionists I concede that social reality is extremely complex and deeply influenced by factors such as context, co-occurrence, free will and social construction of norms and institutions. Actions of small groups of individuals can have a very large impact on other people and we are not “cultural dupes”. But these claims are not valid to a degree, that we cannot establish general knowledge of social change.

Rorty says lucidly that essentialism ultimately is to believe in a god. Since we know today that there is no god, there is no place for essentialism, only for contingency (Rorty 1989, 21). But we do not know that there is no god. We do not know what was before the big bang, we do not know, why matter can occur where emptiness was. As long as questions like these remain unanswered it is valid to search for an essence. Because what is the consequence of the denial of essence for the social sciences? It is theoretical poverty, paralysis. If we believe that there is no essence, we do not have to go through the troublesome pain inflicting work it is to discover it. Social constructivists are in the danger of letting the lack of an essence be an excuse for not looking for the basics of humans. Life does have an essence. It is extremely flexible and evanescent but it is there. It is this essence we will try to trace here.

The social sciences have the material (theory and empirical knowledge) to tell a clearer story it does today. This can be seen from the following example. It seems that large-scale history has certain patterns to it; i.e. technology seems to have improved continuously throughout human history, it seems that we have become better and better to organise ourselves across time and space, it seems that our respect for the lives of others have increased etc. However these patterns remain largely unexplained or explained by the loose concept of contingency by contemporary social theory (Alsted 2001; Giddens 1984; Mann 1986). I do not believe these patterns to be understood by claiming contingency. On the contrary, I think they can be explained by certain motivational elements in the human psyche. Society is deeply affected by our unconscious motives, as is the group (Ashbach and Schermer 1987, 27). These motives are by no means simple or easily understood and we may not ever understand them. But there is no reason for not looking. This is what the anti-essentialists fail to see and what the essentialists fail to conceptualise correctly.

Refining the agent-structure analysis

The second question to answer when working with both psychology and sociology is that of the relation between agent and structure. This question is closely connected to debate on the essence of the world. How one conceives of social structures is highly dependent on which viewpoint one has on the deeper meaning of social life. It is the problem of the free will versus determinism. Are the actions of the individual determined by the free will of the individual or by the structural constraints on the individual? The discussion of the relation between these two aspects of social life has been with us since the antiquity and it remains a major issue today (Sorensen 1992). It is fair to say that the agent-structure problem is the most fundamental in the social sciences (Lloyd 1993).

The agent-structure relation is normally depicted this way:

Structure

↓ ↑

Agent

The problem for any social theory from groups to societies is that both the system and agents must be modelled (Hodgson Forthcoming, 15). The present agent-structure debate has run for nearly 20 years. Are there any truly new comments to add? I think there is, but let us first see what different strategies that are adopted in the question of agent versus structure. There are roughly three strategies.

The first strategy is to focus on the individual. This is the classic historical approach where important individuals' decisions in crucial moments in history are analysed. For a recent contribution within this line of thought refer to Simonton's "Greatness" (Simonton 1994). This kind of analysis rests on the assumption that strong individuals can form history according to their own conscious will and tends to underplay or ignore the effects of largescale and structural factors. This is in many ways contradicted the empirical material.

The second strategy is to focus on the structures or other factors outside the control of the individual. Despite the recent years of development in structuration theory and social constructionism this kind of analysis is still popular. This is especially clear in analyses inspired by Foucault and Luhmann. Whereas the results gained by such analyses are often valuable and original, I think their theoretical basis is questionable. I think it is based on misunderstandings in two layers.

The first layer is the understanding of structures, discourses or systems. These are often described as working outside the individual. But since the individuals are *the* material of societies there is no such thing as forces working outside the individual. When Foucault points to structures and Luhmann to systems, they are in reality referring to unconscious dynamics between people. These unconscious dynamics are then in lack of understanding called power and discourse or codes and communication. Since the unconscious dynamics are identified as such, the further investigation of their meaning and content is obstructed.

The second layer is the understanding of conscious versus unconscious dynamics. When indirectly focusing only on the importance of unconscious dynamics these authors only give us vague picture of the force of will and consciousness in societal development. This means that the possibilities for understanding to what extent we can influence society are reduced.

These are the reasons that the third strategy remains the best and most popular available alternative in sociology: the mutual constitution of agent and structure. Here structure is to be understood very concretely as institution, habit, norm, routine or even organisation. There are several versions of this mutual constitution of agent and structure and it has now become mainstream theory in the form of social constructionism (Archer 1985; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Giddens 1984; Sztompka 1993). Anthony Giddens' depiction of agent and structure remains the most influential and will form the basis of our treatment here. One of Anthony Giddens' earnings is the conceptualisation and spreading of the relationship

between agent and structure. Seemingly building on Berger and Luckmann he made it clear that agent and structure constitute each other.

Giddens' point of departure for a consideration of human motivation seems to be the concept of ontological security. To fight feelings of meaninglessness and fear of chaos the individual creates a "cocoon" – a structure of habits and routines that keep chaos at safe distance. So Giddens points to the mutual constitution of agent and structure.

Giddens deliberately avoids all talk of human needs. This means that his model of human action and motivation lacks explanatory power. What Giddens tells us is how we constitute society – not why.

What is unsatisfactory about this model and of social-constructionism in general is that a weak model of the individual is used. Giddens' model of the individual psyche is "empty" of motivational content except from the need for structure. Whereas Giddens has rightly pointed to the duality of structure and the transformative capacity of the agent he has done so from a very vague description of the human psychological conditions. By rejecting any talk of human needs, Giddens refuses to conceptualise the wants, motivations and needs, that inform human action. My point here is that it necessary to do exactly that: generalise about human needs. It is necessary because it is the reality that we all live in and therefore it governs our way of constructing society. So although Giddens has written intensively on consciousness, self-identity etc. he has not incorporated a theory of motivation with his theory of society.

This is a serious problem since we are left with the impression that human beings can create any social structure they might conceive of. This means that the structuration theory and other related theories do not give us any tools to compare and evaluate different social structures. They are all equally possible and all equally good or bad.

But there are patterns in development given by the dynamics of motivation. These patterns, however, set only very broad frames for development. We are free to influence and change our lives, organisations and societies as we can within the limits given by our psychological motivations. However the patterns in structuration given by these motivations are ambiguous and hard to define. This ambiguity accounts for many unnecessary divisions in social sciences, for instance the differences between structuralism and social-constructivism. Viewed properly there is no opposition between the two views. They can be united in a theory of motivation.

But whereas social science is rich in conceptualisations of structure, it is very poor on conceptualisations of the agent. Social scientists know virtually nothing about psychology and motivation:

The various sociological theories claims that the individual is driven by:

| Body of theory | Assumption on motivation |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Functionalism and institutionalism | Norms and institutions |
| Structuration theory, radical socialconstructionism | Contingencies |
| Neo-classical economy | Rational consideration |
| Liberal-realist international politics | Competition |

All of the above assumptions on the motivation of the individual pay lip service to the insights of psychology. Human motivation is far more complex than most social theory allow for. How can we ever hope to understand how society is constituted if we do not understand both sides of the agent-structure equation? Only then can we construct more precise models of the constitution of society.

The agent-structure debate has come to an impasse. We all agree that they are mutual constituting. But nobody few analyse exactly how this happens. The agent-structure problem is thus at the root of several other major discussions within social theory.

The divisions of micro, meso and macro

The third question to be met before we embark on an integration of psychology and sociology is how to understand the division between the micro, meso and macro levels of society. The use of these levels in social theory is the concrete form of the agent-structure debate. The micro-level is the agent's domain, whereas the macro-level is the structures domain. In almost all theories of society it is possible to speak of different levels or layers (Collins 1988; Israel 1980; Smelser 1998b). These layers are often labelled the micro-, meso- and macro-level. Usually these crude levels cover a variety of sublevels. This is illustrated below.

| Social level | Subject | Main division |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Level 1 | Individual | Micro |
| Level 2 | Group | Micro, Meso |
| Level 3 | Organisation | Micro, Meso |
| Level 4 | Institution | Meso, Macro |
| Level 5 | Structure | Macro |
| Level 6 | Society | Macro |
| Level 7 | Societies | Macro |

What is a macro-level theory? Here macro-level theory will be used to connote what is often labelled grand theory elsewhere. It is theory that conceptualises the "big" structures of society and the major patterns of development. As compared to meso and micro-level theories, macro-level theories aim to describe the large patterns societal change, structure and history. We can say that macro-level theories cover level 4 to 7 in our model above. The macro-level is treated by sociologists, political scientists, economists, historians etc.

Meso-level theories in the social sciences are the theories and concepts that help us understand society at an organizational and institutional level. In the model meso-

level theories rudely cover levels 2 to 4. Most meso-level theories are developed to understand phenomenon with-in particular parts of society, i.e. government institutions, business enterprises etc. Meso-level theories are used in very different contexts from sector policy analysis to narrow case studies. The meso-level is treated by organisation consultants, business analysts, political analysts etc.

Micro-level theories cover understandings of the individual and the closest of his or hers relations. Micro-level theory is usually seen as psychology or as psychologically inspired. This covers the levels 1 to 3 in the illustration above. Micro-level theory seeks to understand the behavioural pattern of a single or very few individuals. This understanding can directed towards motivation, behaviour, power, emotion, co-operation etc. The micro-level is treated by psychologists, psychiatrists, biographers etc (Smelser 1998b, 1).

The social scientists of the macro and meso levels work to understand the dynamics of societies, institutions and organisations in order to understand why they change and develop as they do. It is their aim to understand common features of the actions and ideas of large number of people. The psychologists of the micro-level aim to understand the individual, how he changes and develops. In order to do that it has proven useful to develop theories to understand common features of large number of people. It is this part of psychology, that makes it interesting to social scientists.

Now at this point we should be aware of a very common problem related to this kind of analysis. The problem is related to the question of the validity of the layers. Are they reflections of the real world or are they mere analytical categories? The problem seems to be that there is no answer to this question. If we answer that the concepts are mere analytical categories, our theory becomes boring. If the concepts do not in any way reflect the real world, then they are of no special value to us and we might as well adopt some other concepts. If we on the other hand answer that they are reflections of the real world we will immediately be accused of reifying our concepts. This is of course also true since there is no such observable thing as a structure or a society or even an institution. And there is no way we can observe society as “above” structures or groups as “above” individuals.

Then why use a model with different layers? It is indeed the case that many do not use such a model. Another solution however is to develop an understanding of the layers that avoids both problems sketched above. This paper will be structured as to deepen our understanding of agent and structure and to unify the concepts of the micro and macro levels. At the same time the level of macro-theory has distinctive problems of its own derived from the unclear agent-structure debate. These will be treated separately.

A model of motivation

In this section an elaborate model of motivation will be constructed. As will be seen the model draws heavily on core psychological concepts.

Psychology and psychoanalysis has been criticised by social scientists of being too narrow in its focus. The history of one individual's psychological development does not have explanatory power on the societal level (Liechty 1995, 21). And since we cannot psychoanalyse every individual, psychoanalysis is not useful to the social sciences. The aim of this thesis is to refute this claim and to broaden the use of psychology.

I think there is much to gain for sociology if a general model of motivation is developed (Alsted 1998). In this section therefore, we will have a close look on the human condition, with the intention of understanding better why we act as we do in organisations and society. I have earlier stated that this includes understanding the unpleasant side of social life, i.e. anger, jealousy and envy (Alsted 1999).

Fineman has had much the same experience and claims that students of organization can learn much from psychodynamic theory (Fineman 1993). Here we will do just that: try to learn from psychological theory. We will go straight to the core of psychological theory: Freud's structural model of the psyche.

A puzzling tendency in psychological writing is that most psychologists seem to take the tripartite model for granted. Nevertheless it is rarely debated. The literature on the model is far from as rich as on many other topics within psychology. The reason for this could be that Freud's tripartite structure has become tradition, another could be that there exist very little direct empirical documentation for the structure of the psyche. The structure of the psyche has to be inferred from secondary observations such as behaviour, pathologies etc. This makes it a controversial issue to construct a model of structure of the psyche. We will try anyway.

The structural model of the self

The structural model of personality is perhaps Freud's single most famous contribution to psychology. This part of Freud's writings also developed over the years. Here we will use the later versions of the structural model formulated around 1926². The classic illustration of Freud's structural model is as follows:

| |
|----------|
| Superego |
| Ego |
| Id |

The Id represents the unconscious part of the self. It contains the impulses of the drives and the repressed fantasies and wishes. To Freud the unconscious was man's repressed fear of his biological impulses, of his instincts (Løvlie 1982, 104).

² The structural model is commonly accepted as the most useful and correct one (Arlow and Brenner 1964). Freud himself discarded the earlier topographic model.

The ego negotiates the demands of the id, the superego and the external reality. The ego is the seat of the “realistic” self image and identity. The ego is partly unconscious. The ego functions according to the principle of reality. The principle of reality is another important concept in Freuds writings. It was introduced in 1911 (Olsen and Køppe 1985, 344). This concept seeks to explain how the individual can postpone the immediate satisfaction of the drives in order to satisfy them in the longer term. The principle of reality is the force that restrain or repress the immediate needs of the drives. This is necessary because an immediate satisfaction in many cases will be harmful to the individual. This is where the external reality comes into Freuds model.

The superego represents the idealized ego. It is the seat of internalized parental and social norms and rules. Part of the superego is unconscious.

Freud believed that the three forces should be in balance. None were better than the other.

The relations between the concepts of superego, ego, id and consciousness can be illustrated as follows:

| | Unconscious | Preconscious | Conscious |
|----------|-------------|--------------|-----------|
| Superego | X | X | |
| Ego | X | X | X |
| Id | X | | |

Is it still relevant?

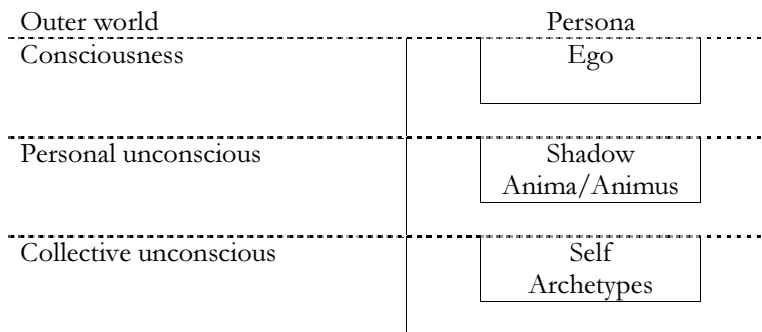
But is this model still relevant? Three objections to the tripartite model can be outlined.

First, a number of authors criticise the tripartite model of splitting the psyche into parts and thus loosing the view of the persons psyche as a whole (Ticho 1982, 851). These authors include Adler, Horney and Lichtenberg – referencer (Lichtenberg 1991, 59). According to their critique the conflictual basis of the tripartite model underplays the development towards a harmonious self. It seems however, that a very large part of the critique is directed towards the drives rather than the structural model. The basis of the critique then is less the structure of the tripartite model, than the functions attributed to the id, ego and superego. It is true that Freuds model does not handle more recent motivational theories, such as Lichtenberg’s or Maslow’s very well. An alternative must treat this problem.

In the place of the three structures is often proposed an overarching self as the main and only psychic structure. This self is then the broad container initiating, organising and integrating experience (Lichtenberg 1991, 59).

I think such a model of the self seriously reduces the prospects for a detailed understanding of intrapsychic processes. As Kernberg has rightly stated this conceptualisation empties the concept of the self of all meaning (Kernberg 1982, 892). It is almost tautological: The psyche consists of the self, which is the main structure of the psyche. In other words it leaves the psyche as a black box. This critique then does not present us with a valid alternative.

Second, Jung can be said to have developed a structural model of the psyche that presents a real alternative to Freuds (Jung 1933; Jung 1960).



Adapted from (Crain 1992, 292)

From my point of view Jung’s model have two weaknesses. The first is that Jung did not in a clear way include the role of relations to the outer world in his model. As our discussions in section 5.2 showed, this must form an integral part of motivation and the psyche. The second weakness is that Jung’s model lacks concepts that explain how the psyche develops. Through which mechanisms do the psyche mature and self-actualise? To the purpose of this work Jung’s model does not do.

Third, a common critique of the tripartite model is that it is too global (Chasseguet-Smirgel and Goyena 1993; Horowitz 1993; Wallerstein 1991; Weinshel 1991)

One good example of this critique is Mardi Horowitz. He stated that the model is “too global and, so, unwieldy in addressing issues of change processes.” (Horowitz 1993, 7). He therefore suggests the concept of schema. Schemas are learned throughout life and tell us how to love, fight, build etc. Certain schemas are related to the id others to the ego and others again to the superego.

And Horowitz is of course right. It is not enough to have a tripartite structure. We most also know what the structures contain. And this is exactly what Horowitz aims to do. Note that he does not discard the model, he elaborates. It is the general tendency among the critics referred to, that they do not present an alternative to the tripartite model. Instead they investigate so called “microstructures”, such as Horowitz schemes. To me however Horowitz’ schemes and other related concepts do not present a deeper understanding of the basic workings of the psyche.

In sum, it seems that there exists no real alternative to the tripartite model in explaining the structure of our psyche (Meyer 1991). In addition it seems that the critique of the tripartite model has more to do with its foundation in the drives than with the three structures themselves. As we discussed above the drives will not form part of this model of motivation, but the tripartite model will.

I believe the tripartite model to be valuable. There is a simple logic to it that is very difficult to reach with other models: The psyche mirrors the inner and the outer world through the id and the superego. To master the relation between these two the ego develops.

The id

The id is the regulator of interactions with the material world. To the id, pleasure means bodily pleasure, living out potentials and talents, using oneself, being. The id wants to master the environment for the sake of the pleasure connected to the very acts themselves.

The superego

The superego is the regulator of the relations to the outside world, the significant others and society in general. Since these relations are central to psychic development and functioning they have as high a priority in the psyche as the wishes of the id.

The ego

In general terms the ego has been named the organiser of experience (Greenspan 1991). There is widespread agreement that the ego perform the following functions:

- self-evaluation
- self-observation
- reality testing
- houses defences against anxiety

The ego has the important and difficult task of balancing life between the id and the superego. An integrated psyche is the goal of the ego. This means that the biggest threat to the ego is that of unintegration, it is the substrate of all anxiety (Rangell 1982, 877). To the ego then mastering the anxieties of the id and the superego are central. If the ego is swamped by emotions its functions are distorted and the psyches ability to decision making and acting in general is decreased. So the overall pattern in normal development goes towards greater ego strength.

This structural model of the psyche contain different deviations from Freud's original (and many later) presentation of the tripartite model (Arlow and Brenner 1964).

First, the id is often described/mistaken as the unconscious and then discussed as an instinct based residual structure rather than an independent entity. In this model it is agreed that large parts of the id is unconscious. But the id has its own dynamic components. The Id has processing capacities, preferences, ability for self-regulation etc. (Ticho 1982).

Second, the categories of unconscious, preconscious and conscious are seen as cognitive categories only. They have no content of their own, but only through the three instances. They describe the level of cognition in the psyche (Arlow and Brenner 1964). This means that all three instances can contain both conscious and unconscious elements.

Third, both id and superego are governed by feelings of pleasure and unpleasure. In many accounts only the id is in connection with these basics of the psyche (Arlow and Brenner 1964, 32).

Fourth, all three psychic instances are here seen as developed in parallel. Some view the superego as being formed later than the other instances (Brenner 1982).

Fifth, as to the meaning of the structure, the id, ego & superego are not containers, they are conceptual constructs meant to summarise findings of repetitive patterns of psychic functioning (Arlow 1991, 288). The three instances consist of a very large number of sub- or microstructures. However each of the psychic structures function according to different principles and therefore the sub-structures will follow these principles.

Dynamics: compromise formation

The tripartite model of the psyche seeks to account for the observation that the psyche seems to speak with several “tongues”. McIntosh has compared the psyche with a committee: Several actors that have to agree on an issue, each with his own will, McIntosh cited in (Pulver 1991, 165).

Conflict is important to the structural model since it is through exchange between the three structures that psyche develops. The exchange takes the form of conflicting priorities of the three structures. Solving conflicts and reducing ambivalence through compromise formation is the work of the psyche (Brenner 1982, 5-6; Schwartz 1991), Kernberg 1976, 59.

If pleasure and unpleasure is the basic way in which the psyche orients itself in the world, then conflict between the two can be said to be driving the psyche (Tyson 1991, 84). We have already discussed the basic elements of pleasure and unpleasure. But this does not explain much. If the world can be divided in pleasurable and unpleasurable events and feelings, then it should be enough for the psyche to avoid the unpleasurable and seek the pleasurable. As we all know from our daily lives this is not possible. On the mundane level of living pleasure and unpleasure is mixed. This fact of life applies on the psychic level as well. Some times the way to pleasure is through unpleasure or two different wishes for pleasure can be opposed.

In other words psychic life is one of conflict between different wishes. Brenner defines conflict as the situation when seeking pleasure arises unpleasure in the form of anxiety or depression (Brenner 1982, 70). An example of such a situation occurs when a child realises that his wishes (for pleasure) are in conflict with his mother's. Since rejection from the mother creates unpleasure (anxiety) in the child the psyche is confronted with a dilemma: Is it to postpone the wish for pleasure or is it to insist and risk further unpleasure? The solution of this problem is a compromise.

Compromise formation between different priorities is the work of the psyche. The tripartite structure is well suited to handle compromises. There are three elements in a compromise: a satisfactory amount of pleasure, a tolerable amount of unpleasure and a defence to protect the compromise (Brenner 1982, 109).

The three structures of the psyche are built to remedy conflicts as in the example given above. The function of the psyche then is to afford the fullest degree of pleasure compatible to a tolerable level of anxiety (unpleasure) (Brenner 1982, 119). This is done by compromise formations. These serve both the id, ego and superego and are compromises between them.

According to Brenner the ego must be seen as mediator between id and superego. There are several reasons for this

First, the more symmetrical model of the psyche offered here is developed as a consequence of Brenners insight that compromise formations are the output of the psyche. If compromises have to be negotiated it is because both parties have power to obstruct development if it is not integrated. This hints a more symmetrical structure of the psyche than is allowed for in Freuds model.

Second, this idea follows the insight of the objectrelationists that the psyche is born through the relationship with outer world. Consequently the psychic representation of the outer world relations – the superego – must be a dynamic force parallel to that of the id. If we are to take seriously the observations presented in theories that view personality as influenced by relations, we must alter the model of the psyche consequently. In Vygotskis, Leontjews and Kernbergs view the psyche is created in the process of relating to the outer world. This means that psychic management of these relations is as basic as wishes for personal satisfaction. Outer events arise emotional responses of the same intensity as inner events does.

It is not enough to say that each of the categories id, ego and superego are only constructed for analytical purposes. If we are to take our own model seriously we must stick to the assumption that the categories correspond to the reality of the psyche in some way. The following model claims that there are three fundamental organising principles in the psyche, that of the id, superego and ego. This does mean that there are three boxes or containers in our heads. But it does mean that the interwoven, overlapping, chaotic microstructures of the psyche each works according to one of these three principles. And the result is compromise formations serving all three principles.

Defence: Individuals' ability to relate

So what determines the individual's ability to relate is his tolerance of ambivalence in his own psyche and with the other. To differ between different levels ambivalence tolerance we must understand how the psyche copes with it. This is what we normally call defensive mechanisms.

So far we have identified the problem of motivation (ambivalence tolerance) as the ego's management of the conflicting priorities of id and superego. We have claimed that this happens through compromise formations. Compromises are formed from a satisfactory amount of pleasure, a tolerable amount of unpleasure and a defence to protect the compromise. The function of the defence is to exclude from the compromise formation excessive pleasure or unpleasure. In other words: everything that threatens the compromise formation.

In his lucid treatment of different concepts of defence (repression, denial, displacement etc.) Brenner finds that defence is when the ego "says" no (Brenner 1982, ch. 5). Every defence is to avoid excessive levels of ambivalence to interfere with the compromise formation or to distort the ego's functions. There is no special defensive function. All ego functions can serve as defences, helping the ego to say no. Thus, defences are ways to deal with ambivalence, to reduce it. The less ambivalence tolerance in the relating individual, the more defences are needed in the relation.

In the preceding section on psychic development through life, I claimed that compromise formations and ambivalence tolerance become more and more

efficient through life in normal development. This is the real observation made by the authors of stage theories.

How can we determine the efficiency of the compromise formations? This is a very difficult problem. Normally we imply, that if the ego as part of a compromise formation must say no to large or important areas of social interaction, we would call it inefficient.

One way to observe this increasing tolerance is by studying the development of defences through life.

Kernberg has introduced several relevant ways to separate different levels of psychic organisation and consequently different levels of defensive operations (Kernberg 1976; Kernberg 1980). For the present purposes Kernberg's concepts can be presented as four different levels of defence:

1. Identity diffusion (the schizoid level)
2. Splitting (the borderline level)
3. Neurosis (the depressive level)
4. Integration (the healthy level)

The first two levels represent serious mental disorders, while the second two levels are more normal. Level 1 and 2 interests us here because they are relevant to the understanding of defensive processes in groups and societies.

Such a list however will vary according to the level of psychic development for the individual in question. What is an appropriate strategy for a normal 9 years old child, will lead to stagnation and underdevelopment for a normal 25 years old adult.

Each of these corresponds to a typical age period in the stage theories. A tentative illustration of the correspondence could look like this:

| Defence level | Typical Life period | Cognitive level |
|----------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Identity fusion | Childhood | Not separating self and object |
| Splitting | | Not Integrating good and bad |
| Neurosis | Youth and adulthood | Not integrating good and bad on a conscious level |
| Integration | Mature adulthood | Full integration |

Identity diffusion

This defence level corresponds to psychosis. In Kernberg's terminology psychosis is result of a failure to separate self-representations from object-representations. The psychotic individual has difficulties separating himself from other people and the outside world (Kernberg 1976, 148). The ambivalence stemming from the separation of the individual from the world is not tolerated.

Splitting

Splitting is part of the young child's defence and is typical for adult borderline personality. Here the psyche has learned to separate self- from object-representations. Failure is shown in the lack of integration of good and bad parts of both self- and object-representations. This leads to splitting as a defence against

ambivalence. Splitting is the separation of one-self or other people into all good or all bad persons. This way ambivalence is avoided and becomes tolerable. Splitting can take different forms (Kernberg, et al. 1989, 16).

Primitive idealisation is excessive idealisation of other people. The identification of faults or misgivings in the idealised person is totally excluded. He or she is perfect.

Primitive devaluation is the opposite of idealisation. It represents a depiction of the devaluated as an altogether evil or bad person. It can also take the form of pathological paranoia.

Projective identification is a primitive form of projection, which is a common defenceform at later stages of psychic development. Projective identification is characterised by the projection of an inner impulse to another person, while this impulse is still experienced (and not repressed) and a fear of this person who seen as dominated by the projected impulse.

Neurosis

An increased tolerance of internal ambivalence is now possible within each of the major structures id and superego. Anxiety is no longer split off but contained in one structure with-in id and superego. Here it is mostly confined to the unconscious level. As a result of increasing demand for emotional energy they become increasingly conscious throughout life.

This makes possible a further strengthening of the ego. This means an increasing ability to accept and face the existential anxieties and to exert impulse control (thinking twice before allowing oneself to become angry, sad etc.), thereby improving performance. This development of the ego, which is the marker of this period, is often seen as the forming of identity. As a consequence of this development, defences shift in character towards repression.

In neurotic or depressive conditions repression is the main defensive mechanism to handle ambivalence. As mentioned above defensive reactions have the purpose of protecting the ego from overwhelming anxiety. Whereas in splitting anxiety remains conscious, repression represents the tendency to restrict anxiety-provoking elements to the unconscious levels of the ego. It is thus a more efficient defence mechanism that allows for a better working of the ego. According to Kernberg repression is characterised by not fully integrated good and bad parts of self- and object-relations (Kernberg 1976, 45, 186). This means that even the relatively normal individual is sensitive to ambivalence. The price of repression is reduced perception of reality, decreased quality of relationships with other people, less access to creative and other potentials of the person.

We mentioned above that the ego does not apply specific defence “methods”, but use every function available to protect itself against excessive anxiety. To give an impression of what happens some examples of typical repressive defences are listed below.

Rationalising. Rationalising is a well known defensive strategy – also in the sociological literature. Rationalising can be said to be explaining an action or choice according to certain social standards and thereby hide the real (anxiety provoking) reason for the action or choice. This tendency in organisations has already been thoroughly described by the neo-institutionalists.

Specialness. Specialness implies creating a self-image that makes oneself a special person in the world, the history or on a smaller scale: ones workplace, family, nation etc. Often this image includes the notion of being better than other people. By creating this self-image we avoid confronting the question of death and meaninglessness.

Excessive identification with a group. This strategy covers the notion of giving up ones individuality and become part of something larger than oneself, as described by Yalom. This strategy has the same aim as the specialness strategy: to avoid confronting the question of death and meaninglessness. This has been eloquently studied by Canetti and Kernberg (Canetti 1996; Kernberg 1998).

Projection. Projection is ascribing ones own inner conflicts to other persons. This is often claimed to be the source of racism, but we all do it all the time. Used excessively is harmful to psychic development, because it hinders facing and thereby working towards the resolution of the conflicts. Projection probably happens on a more fundamental, unconscious level of the psyche than the above mentioned strategies.

Integration

Tolerance towards other people's mistakes and misgivings is a good sign emotionally developed person. It means that projection plays a relatively small role in the person in question. Tolerance facilitates the ability to relate to other people and the ability to perceive situations and conflicts in a clear way. Integrity is also reached by this development. Integrity implies being faithful to ones own preferences and personality. This covers a wide range of choices in life. It is often described as not being what others or society wants you to be but to live according to your own personal qualities. Kernberg describes the mature love relationship as conditioned by the partners ability to contain the threatening and bad sides of the other (Kernberg 1976, 223).

So the principles of this description of human psychic development are the following: There is no developmental plan laid down in humans. We are born with the potentially conflicting priorities of the psyche. What develops is the psyche and the ego's capacity to find increasingly efficient solutions to the conflicting priorities. To solve problems of motivation must be learned – it is not innate. In other words we learn to improve our psychic well being.

Another consequence of this model is that the timing of the developmental scheme can be different through history and across cultures. Furthermore there will be many different solutions to the problem of motivation. This means that the developmental sequence can be different from culture to culture, from sex to sex and from person to person. These variations can be explained by several factors: earlier experience, learning from significant others, cultural barriers and inducements to learning etc. Some families and cultures make it virtually impossible to establish relationships to help the individual attain psychic development beyond neurosis. Psychic development can be halted at all levels. If development stops at primitive defensive mechanisms it is labelled as pathologies, if stopped at higher levels it is labelled depression or resignation. On the other hand it is imaginable that in an ideal future culture the defence level of integration can be reached at the age

of 18! And there might even be potentials of the psyche beyond what is labelled the healthy level here.

Another remark is that of historical relativity. Compromise formations are also historical constructs. Since it is integral to our psychic well being to maintain “good” relationships with other people we are marked by the spirit of our time.

These ideas of psychic development through learning do not mean, however, that we must give up all predictions of how people develop through life. We have learned from observation, that this learning follows certain patterns. Analysing these patterns can tell us more about the psyche and motivation. There still is a surprising similarity of psychic development from person to person.

Psychological development through relationships

Throughout life we seem to learn what “works” for us in terms of mental wellbeing. This learning takes place in the context of relating to other people. In this section we will have a closer look at how we relate to each other.

The fundamental point of object-relations theory is that we learn about ourselves through interacting with others. We see how they react on our actions. The basic ingredient of relations is thus mutual attention. We need response/reality testing from our surroundings. It is through relationships that we experience ourselves.

The ability to give attention to others and to receive it consequently becomes very important. The individuals’ need for attention is virtually endless. But the ability to give attention (love) is not. The ability to give love is normally said to be dependent on self-love. What then is self-love? Following our investigation of the motivational sources self-love is connected to the experience of oneself as competent, stably receiving attention (love). This means that the emotional energy released through a relationship is closely related to the amount of attention invested in it. Relationships can be differentiated according to this principle.

Thus not all relationships are equally rewarding. Some relationships provide better conditions for psychic development than others. How do relationships differ? Lieberman et al conducted a very illustrative and eloquent study of development in encounter groups. Assessing the leadership of the groups they found that there are 4 basic leadership functions (Lieberman, et al. 1973, 233-239; Poulsen 2000, 39)³:

Emotional stimulation represents the revelation of feelings, personal values and attitudes by the leader and the encouragement of others to do the same.

Meaning attribution is the provision of concepts for understanding and explaining relations and events in the group

Caring is the offering of friendship, protection, acceptance, affection and love

Executive function represents provision of structures such as limits, rules, decisions and goals

These measures have since been used to develop leadership tests, plans etc. But I think they tell a truth not only about leadership but about relationships in general whether or not these are symmetrical (i.e. partners or friends) or assymmetrical (i.e. parent-child or leader-employee). Emotional stimulance, meaning attribution,

³ See also Yaloms own comments on the study (Yalom 1980, 32-33).

caring and steering are central ingredients in every relationship from parent-child to couples, client-therapist and friends etc.

Lieberman et al found that maximal development of group members occurred with leaders combining these functions in a specific way – regardless of method. The relation between outcome and leadership style was as follows:

Leaders with moderate emotional stimulation had the best results whereas low or high stimulation yielded comparatively worse results. With regard to meaning attribution it seemed that the more the better. This was especially so when meaning attribution was directed towards the individual as opposed to the group. Correspondingly so with caring. The caring displayed towards group members the better results. Finally executive function or steering proved best in moderate amounts (Lieberman, et al. 1973, 240).

This is then the optimal form of relationships. But how does relations form in practice? It is the mutual negotiation of emotional stimulance, meaning attribution, caring and steering. If two persons meet they will both “desire” and feel threatening the content of the relation. What a person will “desire” and feel threatening on a concrete level will depend on each persons character. On a deeper level the partly unconscious motivational elements will come into play. Following our model of motivation contact with other people satisfies some motivational needs and threatens others.

Contact can be satisfactorily for the motivational needs by giving stability, entertainment (affective pleasure), superiority (specialness), belongingness (social integration). It can be threatening by provoking anxieties of change, dependence and loosing individuality. In most cases it will do both these things and more.

Contact with other people creates both love and aggression. As with the process of psychic development ambivalence is a core experience in relations. Tolerance of ambivalence is central to the ability to relate to other people. This correspondence to mechanisms of psychic development is not a co-incidence, of course. Psychic development and relating are intimately connected. As was illustrated in the section on psychic development through life ambivalence tolerance in the individual develops while relating to others in what could be called a dialectic development sequence.

The capacity for establishing relations to others, whether superficially or deeply, is directly related to love. Love is the basic emotion needed to be able to supply the attention to others. It is commonly accepted that the ability to give love is strongly related to the love for oneself. But what is love?

As tolerance of ambivalence is paramount in intra psychic development, it is correspondingly so in love for others. Since other people often have motives and anxieties of their own, that threatens the individual, it is important to be able accept and allow for these in a relationship. Full ability for concern for others presupposes the integration of love and hatred (Kernberg 1976, 223). To have a deep relationship is only possible to the degree that one has integrated good and bad affects, i.e. motivations and anxieties.

The tripartite model and motivation

Then how can we use the tripartite model to understand motivation? As earlier mentioned there are some obvious strengths of the tripartite model. It allows us to understand the overall dynamics of psychic development. First of all we understand now, that there is no simple answer to the question of motivation. The psyche contains structures with potentially conflicting priorities. The ego has a central role in reconciling and mediating between these priorities.

So what the tripartite model illustrates is the lifelong process of integration of the ego. It can be said to integrate more and more aspects of the id and the superego – of innermost wishes and of reality. The longer this process has come, the richer the individual. What changes are the compromise formations of the psyche.

Much of Freud's, Kernberg's and others writings seem to be hinting at exactly this: The key to continuous psychological growth is the continued development of the ego. What these authors argue is exactly that we should integrate (learn to cope) larger parts of our anxiety, larger parts of the real world in order to create our own world.

The problem of motivation is that every wish for pleasure seems to release anxiety. How are we to pleasure maximize? We are not born with this capacity. We have to learn it through our own and society's experiences. Over time the management of pleasure vs. unpleasure is improved through a strengthening of the ego's capacities. Ego development is to learn to give more pleasure to psyche and to increase the tolerance for anxiety.

A summation of the model

We can now sum up the model of motivation. In its effort to understand and mirror the world the psyche comes into existence by separating and categorising internally different events and feelings. Throughout life this categorisation develops and in some ways becomes increasingly flexible.

The tolerance of ambivalence increases and thus the ability to mobilise emotional energy for a variety of purposes, i.e. work and family.

This means that we have the following concepts and behaviour patterns to adapt to meso- and macro-level theories:

- The main ingredients of individual life are threefold: joy of life, anxiety and defensive mechanisms. Since they are important to the individual they will also affect the relationships that he or she forms.
- The human psyche has the potential to develop increasingly efficient defences against anxiety and higher tolerance of ambivalence. Such a development makes possible an increasing unfolding of capacities and resources (emotional energy) in the individual.
- A condition for development however is participation in relationships with high degrees of mutual attention and commitment. Psychic development is to a high extent determined by the quality of such relationships.

- Degree of psychic development can be measured from the forms of psychic defence employed by the individual.
- All social systems from groups to societies can be seen as expressions of a common psychic defence against ambiguity and are thus essentially compromise formations
- Performance of social systems on both meso- and macro-level is expected to be predictable from the ability to combine emotional stimulance, meaning attribution, caring and executive functions in the optimal blend

What consequences does such a model have for our understanding of meso and macro levels of society? One consequence is that we have to see our interactions both as defences against anxiety and as mediums of self-actualization.

Social structures as psychic defences

In the preceding section it was established that the ability to relate rests on the efficiency of the psychic defences – the compromise formations. Above these were treated as an individual matter. But compromise formations also have a social dimension.

As was demonstrated above there is a close relation between the basic motivators and the key dimensions of relationships. I further stressed that the ability to engage in a relationship was dependent on the individual's level of psychic defence. But at the same time the only way to develop the psychic defences is through rewarding relationships. So which comes first? I suggest that the solution is not to state the priority of one over the other. In contrast the problem is essentially one of levels or systems.

When regarding the level of relations we are studying the internal workings of a system called a group, whereas when regarding individual defence mechanisms we are studying the internal workings of a system called the psyche. There is thus a hierarchy of systems. The problem of social constructionism is that they fail to investigate the workings of the psychic systems and how they spill over to the group system.

The reason that social constructionism has a valid point in questioning the “truth” of all social facts is that the basic human motives can be satisfied in many different ways. Consider the width of the four basic ingredients of a relationship. They can be fulfilled in many different ways and still the psychic system will work.

When two people relate they do so expecting to gain pleasure with as little anxiety as possible. In order to be able to act together (or indeed to meet at all) and communicate they must have a common picture of the character of their relation. This picture can be labelled a compromise formation and is a means to reduce ambiguity by determining what their relation does and does not encompass.

Since the real intentions of each person are ambivalent both parties will rightly be suspicious of each other. To reduce ambiguity and thus anxiety such a relation is formed under a common compromise formation. In order to communicate at all it is necessary for each person to establish picture of the other in order to structure the interaction. The picture is in effect a compromise formation – a psychic defence against ambiguity.

Thus in order to maintain a friendship we agree to the compromise formation, that friends are loyal to each other, that they tell each other private matters, that the friendship has a story etc. These are rules we have to believe in order to maintain the close relation a friendship.

Correspondingly with working relations: In order to work with other people we agree on the compromise formation, that colleagues have a common goal, co-operate on tasks, that they work within fixed ours, that they keep their promises etc.

That these assumptions are psychic defences can be seen in the fact that they do often not hold. Friends are not always loyal, colleagues do not always have a

common goal or co-operate. The social and individual reality is far more complex and ambiguous than the rules of friendship or colleagueship indicates. All relationships thus both have a symbolic representation and a real existence. The symbolic expression is a compromise formation.

This means that all social relationships are framed or protected by common compromise formations. This is what the words structure, institution and organisation indicate: common psychic defences in order to reduce ambiguity. We all have an interest in maintaining these common compromise formations since they are part of our psychic defence.

Social institutions, including group identities, are psychic defences making it possible for us to act together. Ritualisation of group activities is comparable to the psyche's ritualisation of relations and self-perception. When erecting social structures we protect ourselves from the ambiguity of social life and thus make it possible to act together on a larger scale. Social structures are the collective effort of many psyches defences.

This means of course that there is an intimate relation between the individual's level of psychic defence and the way he or she relates to common compromise formations.

Patterns on the macro-level

This section deals with consequences of the model of motivation for macro-sociological theory and is primarily occupied with patterns that cut across history and societies and how the psyche influences social organisation on the societal level. An understanding of this is the main challenge for macro-sociology.

The fundamental problem to solve is how we can accept both an individual foundation of motivation and a view of relations as the source of all that happens in organisations. We have learnt that it is not only possible but also necessary to attribute meaning to almost any object “chosen” by ourselves, to any social system developed by ourselves as the social constructionists claim.

But there are limits: First the priorities and defences of the psyche put certain limits and patterns to the way organisations are created. The agent-structure debate has taught us that structures are not given and external, but emanate from ourselves and that they can be changed. But the agent-structure debate did not provide us with two things. First we do not understand just how much we can influence structure and just how much structure influences us. Second we lack an understanding of the structure of the structuration process. With the present model of motivation we can now understand the principles under which structuration occurs.

Second history situates any social system (organisation, society etc.) in a context of competition with other equal entities. This means that history has a tendency to favour organisations that mobilise emotional energy relatively more efficient. If two sets of organisational forms are available and one seems to fulfil motivational goals better than the other everybody will opt for that. Over time we will have not just any organisation or institution we might conceive of. In contrast we will have structures that satisfies motivational goals better than earlier ones.

The following sections are devoted to these two matters: The structure of society and the direction of social change.

The structure of society

How can the motivational model developed here contribute to our understanding of the structure of society? I have earlier speculated that if society is indeed fundamentally structured in a uniform way through history, such structures must have their roots in the psyche (Alsted 2001). This follows from the principle of structuration. There are two major questions concerning the structure of society:

1. The source of the structures
2. The problem of ultimate primacy

The source of the structures

With basis in the model of motivation I will argue that we create society under the influence of our psychic structures . The organising principles of the id, the superego and the ego will be reflected in the societal structure. Since we meet the world through this threefold division we will also interact accordingly on a societal

level. This means that it is possible to separate societal structures generating from interacting individuals' priorities of the id, the superego and the ego. Societal structures are collective compromise formations of thousands of individuals. They are to be seen as our common psychological defence against regression and chaos.

The threefold division of the psyche indicates that society is also – at the most general level – likely to have three major structures. I take these to be economic, ideological and political structures. The sources of each of these structures are the three psychic instances: the Id, the Superego and the Ego. They handle different parts of reality. In societies there is a corresponding division of work between the structures. I will propose that economic structures correspond with the id, ideological structures with the superego and political structures with the ego. Each of the societal structures has a function corresponding to the functions of the three psychic structures.

Why is society structured according to the structure of the psyche? Since it is through relations that we realise our motivational goals, the structures of relations will mirror the motivational goals. If we remember that all macro structures only exist because enough people reproduce them, we can understand that we all have a motivation for reproducing economic, ideological and political structures. Everybody participates in the recreation of economic, political and ideological structures every day. Here is an important distinction to make between structure and organisation. Whereas we all have a psychological interest in the existence of societal structures, we do not all participate in the organisations that are the concrete expression of the structures. This means that the organisations, i.e. the cluster of organisations forming the political system, are not in themselves the structure. The organisations, the political system, rest on the psychological goal of regulation of interindividual relations and the following widespread acceptance of the need for specialised organisations to manage these relations. The organisations in themselves each function according to the rules outlined above.

How does this “division of work” between societal structures emerge? The basis of the division of the structures is a corresponding division of individual's relations that focus on the satisfaction of special motivational goals.

While in early societies these structures are fused, they become separated as a part of societal development (Runciman 1989, 13-14). Through history it is discovered that different organisational and symbolic structures have appeal and attract “participators”. An example could be a religion. Religion is attractive because it satisfies the superego's goal of being both a special individual and part of a group. At a certain stage it becomes possible for religious organisations to accumulate resources from this attraction. Through competition and selection religious (ideological) organisations emerge as a separate part of society. This organisational diversification has continued to give us the societies of the world today. Complexity has increased tremendously but the organisational logic is the same: economy, ideology and politic. This means that there will exist no societies without these three structures. They will of course take different forms according to specific developmental paths.

It is important to understand that this structure of society is not rigid. All organisations must satisfy the urges all three psychic instances to function. For instance, economic organisations such as private corporations do not only organise according to the priorities of the id, but are also influenced by the ego and the

superego. But on the other hand all organisations are not the same. At the basis of private corporations is the economy and the priorities of the id. If these are not met the organisation loses its existence. It is in this way societies become structured.

Economic structures and organisations provide stability and competence to societies. The basic economic activity of production is motivated by the id. At the heart of economic structures is the contradiction between the urge for stability and the urge to develop competence. One example of this is a peculiar tendency in market economies: interaction should be based on competitive development of new or cheaper products but a main activity of almost all companies is to reduce competition to gain stability.

Ideological structures such as religions provide rules for the interaction between individuals. Ideological structures are thus the collective expression of the priorities of the superego. There is thus a connection between an individual's ideological affiliation and superego maturity (Kernberg 1998, 27-28). Ideological structures and organisations provide individuals with a sense of both being special and of belonging to a group. This seeming contradiction can be viewed in the relatively common phenomenon of disobedience to moral or religious norms. Religion tells us how we should live but we seldom do because we have other motivations than to belong to a group.

Lastly political structures (states) create controls and monitor society. They function as a symbol of the collective ego. The state is the seat of the collective defence and the formation of compromises between conflicting groups. As the other structures the state is a compromise formation: States often claim to have full control but seldom have it. Just as the ego has a special role in the psyche so does the state in society. According to the model of motivation outlined above ego development occupies a central position in psychological development. Likewise I will argue that the state development is central to our understanding of societal development. The state houses society's defences against anxiety. As shown in chapter 4 it is the character of these defences that allow us to observe the developmental level of the individual. This goes for the state as well. We shall have more to say about the state in chapter 9.

In sum we look for stability and work, we look for identity as individuals and as group members and we look for a leader. This is provided for by the structures of economy, ideology and politics.

The problem of ultimate primacy

As argued in chapter 2, the problem of ultimate primacy is also related to the psyche. When social scientists are looking for the structure determining society "in the last instance", they are also looking for the basic psychic force. Arguing for an asymmetrical relationship between the general structures of society means arguing for an asymmetrical relationship between the psychic structures.

When Marx and Althusser, for instance, points to economic structures as the most fundamental ones in society, they argue that production is the most fundamental human activity. The marxist argument rests on the assumption that there is one fundamental force of the psyche. In this work the psychic structure connected to

production is the Id. So I would argue that Marx and Althusser, intended or not, give primacy to the Id.

The problem however, is that they do not connect their argument on economic dominance on a societal level to a corresponding dominance on a psychic level. The model of motivation provides us with a possible theoretical foundation to the problem of ultimate primacy. In chapter 4 I argued that the three structures of the psyche have equal access to the deeper levels of the psyche. None of the three organising principles of the psyche can be said to have primacy. They are all fundamental to the flexibility of the psyche.

This indicates that the three societal structures are also of equal importance. The motivations of the psyche are ambivalent and contradictory. Therefore society too is ambiguous and contradictory. No single motivation or anxiety dominates society. In stead several forces interact to produce complex social orders. We can, however discern a pattern in these orders, but it is not a pattern of ultimate primacy of one structure. No societies exist without one of the three structures (Crone 1989, 139). Neither have any society reached higher levels of social organisation without development of new techniques in all three forms of structures.

This does not mean that they do not undergo uneven development. Just as the structures of the psyche develop unevenly, so do structures of society. This means that economic organisations can develop in advance of ideological and political organisations. But only to a certain point. If such a development is not followed by a corresponding tendency in the other structures, it cannot be sustained. I will try to illustrate this point in the example on state history below in chapter 9.

Social change on the macro-level: evolution

There are three challenges to an evolutionary theory of societal development (Alsted 2001). These are

1. Macro-sociological measures of social change
2. The ranking of societies
3. Explaining the force of evolution

Below is discussed how the model of motivation can help sociology face these challenges.

Macro-sociological measures of social change

Structures, institutions and organisations are common compromise formations. They are compromises between pleasure and anxiety protected by a defence. The product of institutions is release of psychic energy. As argued in chapter four, psychic energy is the ability to tolerate ambivalence both in the material and the relational world. This ability is dependent on the size of the energy release allowed by the psychic defences – the compromise formations.

Above we saw how institutions generate resources from and for their members. Institutions are the carriers of social experience. Based on routine and tradition they carry earlier experiences from one generation to another. This is how increasing emotional energy through history becomes possible. Institutions help us remember

the good solutions. They are means to reduce the anxiety induced by the ambiguity of the world.

The model of motivation thus makes it clear that the basic measure of social change should be based on some measure of psychic pleasure or energy. Individual psychological change is measured by changes in the level of energy at disposal. This means that also macro-sociological change must ultimately be understood in terms of changes in the individual. This conclusion is in line with the one proposed by Randall Collins and Michael Hammond (Collins 1990; Hammond 1990). In two essays they state that social change is driven by the urge for psychic pleasure or affective maximisation. Social structures are generated according to their ability to provide comparatively better rules and frames for psychic pleasure (Hammond 1990, 64-65). The model presented here differs from Collins', however, in that it has a broader view of the sources of psychic pleasure. Collins has stated that the prime source of emotional energy is the relation to other people⁴. I have argued that the sources of psychic energy include stability, opportunity to develop competence, opportunity to bond and opportunity to compete.

There are several advantages in the use of the concept of psychic or emotional energy as the basic measure of social change. First it brings the understanding of social change down from the highly abstract level of reasoning to the daily behaviour of individuals. Instead of speaking of a general increase in the ability to co-ordinate we can now see it as an increase of the emotional energy in the individuals involved. Second the concept of psychic or emotional energy makes it possible (at least theoretically) to measure social change in a more detailed way (Collins 1990). Thus we can compare and rank social change in different social entities. Third psychic energy is free of the moral and ethnocentric overtones in other measures, such as degree of democracy or degree of technological development. The measure of psychic energy merely implies that societies are formed to increase the energy at disposal. Increasing psychic energy is an urge for all humans. But it can be done in many different ways, through many different social configurations. These can all be equally good, morally and culturally. What makes it possible to compare and rank them is the amount of psychic energy that they release.

So when analyses inspired by organisational materialism find that the organisational capacity of the state or the religion has changed, it is the level of psychic energy in the individuals that has changed. All other measures mentioned earlier indirectly measure emotional energy. When Giddens speaks time-space distanciation or trust, Mann of capacity to generate power, Runciman of roles, they all indirectly point to the development of possibilities for increasing emotional energy (Giddens 1985; Mann 1986; Runciman 1989). An increase of psychic pleasure over time will have effects in all societal sectors and thus show itself as development of technology, democracy or welfare.

| | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| Psychic energy | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technological development • Development ability to co-ordinate • Development of equality and democracy |
|----------------|---|--|

⁴ Workshop with Randall Collins at Institute of Sociology, University of Copenhagen, February 23rd 2001.

Ranking societies

Though opposed to the idea of evolution Giddens and Mann have in many ways paved the way for a revised approach to the ranking of societies. By pointing to co-ordination and time-space distantiation as key factors in social organisation they have inspired to new ways of thinking. Thus here we will follow their line of thought: societies must be measured by their output.

As mentioned by Collins we do not today have adequate measures of the societal level of psychic pleasure (Collins 1990, 47-52). At our disposal is however the developmental scheme presented in section 2. This scheme illustrates in a very general way the development psyche. Following the argument in section 3 it can characterise the development of societies and societal structures as well. This is illustrated in the table below.

Admittedly the developmental scheme works on a very general level. For a start this will do for our purposes. In the long run it could prove very interesting if more precise measures to compare organisational or societal level of psychic wellbeing were invented. Until then we will use measures that indirectly indicate the level psychic/emotional/social energy of societies.

| Defencelevel | Defensive mechanisms in societies |
|-------------------|--|
| Identitydiffusion | Society is disintegrating. Members leave and groups fission. |
| Splitting | Society's selfimage and image of others changes between over-idealisation and over-criticism. Violence is the prime way to solve conflicts. Low degree of integration: Large groups are excluded from influence. |
| Neurosis | Repression is the key defensive mechanism. Conflicts within society are repressed to confined institutions. Violence as a means to solution of internal conflicts is decreasing. Higher degree of integration: Large groups are represented in governing bodies. |
| Integrated | Many-faceted and differentiated society's abilities. Continuous evaluation of institutional functioning and members situation. Open to change. Even higher degree of integration: large groups have direct influence. |

If the validity of this developmental scheme is accepted at a general level, we must confront the next problem: How can we describe societies in terms of it?

The answer is to identify the character of the institutions in society. Institutions can function according to each of the four defensive logics described above. If the institutions of a society are generally of the "splitting" kind, then the entire society can be ranked as splitting.

The question is whether it is possible in a meaningful way to categorise structures and institutions this way. Admittedly it is a daring task with endless possibilities of

overgeneralisation. I think, however, there are some valuable insights to gain from it. One of them concerns the question of evolution.

Evolution

Society works towards greater efficiency. But the efficiency scale is the motivational model: we work towards a greater fulfilment of the motivational goals. This introduces an evolutionary logic to societal development.

Hendrik Spruyt has made a very description of how social evolution occurs (Spruyt 1994). This mechanism can be sketched as follows.

The first step in social evolution is mutation. Mutation is the occurrence of new organisational forms. Such new forms emerges continually through history as part of relations between individuals.

The second step is selection. Selection is the process that determines how long an organisational form survives. Spruyt argues that institutional selection occurs both top-down and bottom-up. Top down selection occurs basically through competition between different organisational forms. Bottom-up selection occurs by the choice of individual and organisational agents.

Both these processes are influenced by the psychological make-up of the individual. An organisational form that survives through top-down competition with other organisational forms will usually be able to generate more resources than other organisations. The ability to generate resources is dependent on the flexibility of compromise formations that the organisation expresses. The top-down mechanism will thus in the long run select organisation that provides the most flexible compromise formations for its members.

Bottom-up selection by individuals functions in a comparable way. Human beings strive for psychic pleasure. This striving makes them opt for organisational and structural alternatives that provide the comparatively best frames for psychic pleasure for the most people. Institutions are selected historically both by choice and by output.

In personal development the psyche strives for the integration of the motivational goals of id and superego. Likewise in organisations. The organisation that most efficiently can provide satisfaction for the psyche will perform best. The increasing complexity of society and plurality of organisational forms is due to the trial and error process of inventing more efficient organisational forms. Thus we see political organisations that combine regulatory principles of organisation with productive or meaning-attributive principles in increasingly complex ways.

Both selection-mechanisms allow for very great variation in social organisation. But there are nevertheless some general patterns to the development. If average maturity in individuals increase historically societal interaction and generation of resources will increase as well. Societal complexity and speed of change will increase.

| | | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Increased psychic | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accelerating technological development• Accelerating ability to co-ordinate |
|-------------------|---|--|

| | | |
|--------|--|-------------------------------------|
| energy | | • Increasing equality and democracy |
|--------|--|-------------------------------------|

There are two dimensions in the historical development of relationships:

1. The quality of relationships: from less to more quality, valid for all types of relationships from micro to macro
2. The number of people it is possible to relate to/communicate with: from less to more people

Both developments have released ever more energy throughout history.

It should be stressed that evolution is a process of learning. There is nothing teleological about the mechanisms outlined here. The process of social learning can take us in many different directions – provided that they increase our ability to tolerate ambivalence.

The historical process of evolution has not been an easy one. The method of trial and error is expensive – both in time and in human lives. It is easy to provide resources that make it possible for a few to solve the problems of motivation, but very difficult to make it possible for whole populations.

Nevertheless the model of motivation lay the ground for an optimistic evolutionary macro-sociology. Evolution happens in terms of increasing fulfilment of motivational goals. So human history is one of experimenting with societal solutions to motivation. If this is true it will mean that we have moved towards societies that are more mature, efficient and provide better frames for living happy lives. Society matures through the concerted efforts of economic, ideological and political organisation

Mature societies have institutions with a high respect for the individual and a high tolerance for deviance. Mature societies have institutions and organisations where more people have more influence.

Efficient societies have increased their ability to generate resources and co-ordinate actions. Examples of this can be the increasing usage of competitive incentive in previously monopolised public areas. Since increasing efficiency is directly related to psychic pleasure this also means that organisations will gradually become more conscious of the deeper psychological ingredients of relationships.

Societies that provide better frames for living happy lives are societies that have inhabitants with better health, higher education, deeper self-knowledge and more productive lives.

In this way evolution mirrors psychic development through the mechanism of institutionalisation. Civilisation is a process that leads to ever more autonomous individuals, as Norbert Elias has argued. So what we see is a structure of society corresponding the id, the superego and the ego. In history we witness the process of the societal ego (politics) becoming stronger and mediating the conflicting priorities of economy (id) and ideology (superego). Thus we see a tighter managed economy instead of the wild capitalism and we see a less harsh regulation of interhuman affairs: tolerance in stead of wars, democracy instead of coercion.

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