



The Number of Members as Determining the Sociological Form of the Group. I

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NUMBER I

THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS AS DETERMINING THE SOCIOLOGICAL FORM OF THE GROUP. I.¹

THE following investigations constitute a chapter of a *Sociology* to be published by me in the future, the prolegomena to which have already appeared in this JOURNAL.²

In respect to the fundamental problem which appears to me solely to form the basis of a sociology as a distinct science, I refer to the introduction of these two monographs. I repeat here merely that this problem rests upon the distinction between the content or purpose of socializations, and the form of the same. The content is economic or religious, domestic or political, intellectual or volitional, pedagogic or convivial. That these purposes and interests, however, attain to realization in the form of a society, of the companionship and the reciprocity of individuals, is the subject-matter of special scientific consideration. That men build a society means that they live for the attainment of those purposes in definitely formed interactions. If there is to be a science of society as such, it must therefore abstract those forms from the complex phenomena of societary life, and it must make them the subject of determination and explanation. Those contents are already treated by special sciences, historical and systematic; the relationships, however, of men to each

¹Translated by A. W. SMALL.

²"Superiority and Subordination as Subject-Matter of Sociology," Vol. II, Nos. 2 and 3; "The Persistence of Social Groups," Vol. III, Nos. 5 and 7.

other, which in the case of the most diverse purposes may be the same, and in the case of like purposes may be most various—these have not as yet been the subject-matter of a particular science; and yet such a science, when constituted, would for the first time make manifest what it is which makes the society—that is, the totality of historical life—into society.

I deny myself at this point all further explanation and justification of this program, since it is, after all, less important to propose a program than to show by carrying it out its significance and its fruitfulness; and I proceed at once to the special problem, namely, how the form and the inner life of a societary group are determined by the numerical relationships of the same.

It will be conceded at the first glance, without hesitation, that the sociological structure of a group is essentially modified by the number of the individuals that are united in it. It is an everyday experience—yes, it is almost to be construed from the most general social-psychological presuppositions—that a group of a certain extent and beyond a certain stage in its increase of numbers must develop for its maintenance certain forms and organization which it did not previously need; and that, on the other hand, more restricted groups manifest qualities and reciprocal activities which, in the case of their numerical extension, inevitably disappear. A double significance attaches itself to the quantitative determination: first, the negative significance that certain forms which are necessary or possible from the contents or the conditions of life can come to realization only before or after a certain numerical extension of the elements; the positive significance that other forms are promoted directly through definite and purely quantitative modifications of the group. As a matter of course, these do not emerge in every case, but they depend upon other social circumstances in the group. The decisive matter, however, is that the forms in question never spring from these latter conditions alone, but are produced from them only through the accompanying numerical factor. Thus it may be demonstrated that quite or nearly communistic formations have up to the present day been possible only in relatively small circles, while they have always failed in large groups.

The presumption of such socialistic groups—namely, justice in the distribution of effort and of enjoyment—can no doubt be established in a small group, and, what is at least quite as important, it can be observed and controlled by the individuals. What each does for the totality, and wherewith the totality rewards him, is in such cases close at hand, so that comparison and equalization easily occur. In a great group this practice is hindered, particularly by the unavoidable differentiation of persons within it, of their functions and of their claims. A very large number of people can constitute a unity only with decisive division of labor, not merely on the obvious grounds of economic technique, but because this alone produces that interpenetration and interdependence of persons which puts each through innumerable intermediaries in combination with each, and without which a widely extended group would break apart on every occasion. Consequently the more intimate the unity demanded in the same, the more exact must be the specialization of individuals, in order that the individuals may be the more immediately responsible to the whole, and the whole may be dependent upon the individuals. The communism of a great community would thus promote the sharpest differentiation of the personalities, which would naturally extend over and beyond their labor, to their feeling and desiring. Hence a comparison of services with each other, of rewards with each other, and equilibration of the two, is infinitely difficult; but upon this the feasibility of approximate communism for small, and therefore undifferentiated, circles rests. What limits such circles, under advanced culture, by a sort of logical necessity, so to speak, to restricted numerical extent, is their dependence upon goods which under their peculiar productive conditions can never be furnished. So far as my knowledge goes, there is in present Europe only a single approximately socialistic organization, namely, the Familistère de Guise, a great iron foundry, founded by a disciple of Fourier in 1888, according to the principle of complete guardianship for every workman and his family, security of a minimum standard of living, of gratuitous care and education of the children, of collective production of the income. This society gave work in

the last decade of the nineteenth century to 2,000 people, and has proved that it is capable of life. This is evidently the case, however, only because it is surrounded by a totality existing under entirely different conditions of life. From this environment the organization can cover the necessarily remaining gaps in the means of satisfaction which are left by its own production. For human needs cannot be so rationalized as is the case with production. A previously calculated, mechanically working life-system, in which every detail is regulated according to general principles, can be applied, to be sure, in a small circle which can draw from a greater one whatever it requires for the establishment of its internal equilibrium. But human needs appear to contain an accidental or incalculable element, and this fact permits their satisfaction only at the cost of carrying on parallel activities which produce countless irrational and unavailable by-products. A circle, therefore, which avoids this, and confines itself to complete responsibility and utility in its activities, must always remain minute, because it has need of a greater group in order to be reinforced with the requisite capacity for life.

Moreover, there are group-formations of the ecclesiastical sort which, from the very fact of their sociological structure, permit no application to large numbers; thus the sects of the Waldenses, Mennonites, and Herrnhuter. Where dogma forbids, for example, the oath, military service, occupation of civil offices; where quite personal matters, such as modes of earning a living and the division of the hours of the day, are subject to the regulation of the community; where a special type of dress separates the faithful from all others, and distinguishes them as belonging together; where the subjective experience of an immediate relationship to Jesus constitutes the principal solder of the community—in such cases, evidently, expansion into large circles would snap the bond of union, which consists largely in their exceptional and antithetical attitude toward larger bodies. At least in this sociological respect is the claim of these sects to represent primitive Christianity not unjustified; for precisely this early form of faith, manifesting a yet undifferentiated unity of dogma and form of life, was possible only in those small

communities within a greater one which served them at once for supplying their external necessities, and also as an antithesis, in contrast with which they were conscious of their peculiar nature. Consequently, the extension of Christianity to the whole state has necessarily changed completely its sociological character not less than its psychical content.

Moreover, that an aristocratic body can have but a relatively narrow compass is given in its very idea. But, besides this trivial consequence of the dominance over masses, there appears to be here also a numerical limitation, which, although in large extent variable, is yet in kind absolute. I mean by this that not only does a definite proportion exist, which would always permit that with increasing number of the ruled the ruling aristocracy would likewise increase *pro rata* and beyond any limit; but that there is an absolute limit beyond which the aristocratic group-form can no longer be maintained intact. This limit will be determined partly by external and partly by psychological conditions. An aristocratic group must be capable of survey by the individual member; each must be able to have a personal acquaintance with each; relationships of blood and marriage must ramify through the whole body, and must be traceable. If, therefore, the historical aristocracies, from Sparta to Venice, have a tendency to the utmost possible numerical limitation, this is not merely the egoistic disinclination to partition of control, but it is the instinct that the conditions of the life of an aristocracy can be fulfilled only with a not merely relative, but also absolute, restriction of the number of its elements. The unlimited right of primogeniture, which is of aristocratic nature, constitutes the means for such prevention of expansion; under its presumption alone was the ancient Theban law possible, that the number of landed estates should not be increased, and also the Corinthian, that the number of families must always remain the same. It is, therefore, entirely characteristic that Plato once, when he spoke of the ruling *ὀλίγοι*, designated the same directly as the *μὴ πολλοί*.

When an aristocratic body gives place to the democratic centrifugal tendencies, which constitute the unavoidable trend of

very large communities, it involves itself in such fatal contradictions of its own life-principle as, for example, the nobility of Poland before the division exemplified. In more fortunate cases such a contradiction resolves itself simply through transformation into the unified democratic social form; for example, the ancient free German community, with its complete personal equality of the members, was aristocratic throughout, and yet became in its continuation in the civic communities the source of democracy. If this is to be avoided, nothing remains except to draw, at a definite point of increase in numbers, a hard and fast line, and to oppose to all elements approaching from beyond this line, even though they were otherwise qualified for admission, the quantitative completeness of the structure. Frequently the aristocratic nature of the same appears only at this point; it becomes conscious for the first time in this closing up of itself against the demand for extension. Accordingly, the old constitution of the "gens" seems to have turned into a real aristocracy for the reason that a new population, alien to the members of the gens, pressed in upon them in too large numbers for gradual absorption into the associations of like strata. In opposition to this increase of the total group, the groups of gentes, which, by their very nature, were limited in numbers, could conduct themselves only as an aristocracy. In quite the same way the *Cölnische Schutzgilde Richerzeche* consisted originally of the totality of the free burghers. In the degree, however, in which the population increased, it became an aristocratic society which closed itself against all intruders. A group which constitutes a totality and, like the gens for instance, is in its whole nature quantitatively limited, will be able to preserve itself within a new and very extended totality only in the form of an aristocracy.

The tendency of political aristocracies leads, to be sure, as a rule, not to the maintenance of the existing status, but to decline in numbers and disappearance. Not merely on account of physiological causes, but small and narrowly exclusive groups are in general distinguished from greater ones in this that the very same destiny which strengthens and renews the latter

destroys the former. A disastrous war, which ruins a petty city-state, may regenerate a great state. This occurs not merely from the quite evident external reasons, but because the relation of the reserves of power to the active energies in the two cases is different. Small and centripetally organized groups usually call out and employ to their full extent the energies available within them; in greater groups, on the other hand, much more energy, not merely absolutely but also relatively, remains in a latent condition. The demand of the whole does not seize upon every member constantly and completely, and it permits much power to remain unused which then, in extreme cases, may be mobilized and actualized. The decisive thing in this case is, as indicated, the social centripetalism, that is, the ratio in which the energies present in the society are harnessed for its purposes. When it, therefore, occurs that a lower and smaller group allows its members much autonomy and independence, the latter then often develop energies which are not used socially, and, therefore, in case the appeal to the common interests occurs, they represent a considerable available recourse. This was for a long time the case, for example, with the nobility of the Scotch highlands. Likewise, on the other hand, where dangers, which demand an unused quantity of social energy, are excluded by the circumstances, means of numerical limitation, which extend even beyond endogamy, may be quite appropriate. In the highlands of Thibet polyandry prevails and, as even the missionaries recognize, to the advantage of society; for the soil is there so unfruitful that a rapid increase of the population would produce the greatest misery. To prevent this, polyandry is an efficient means. When we hear that among the Bushmen, on account of the sterility of the soil, very often even families must separate, the rule that the families must limit themselves to numbers corresponding with the possibilities of food production appears to be precisely in the interest of their unity, and highly appropriate when this and its social significance are considered. The dangers of the quantitative limitation are provided against by the external conditions of the life of the group, and their consequences for its inner structure.

Where the small group absorbs the personalities in considerable measure into its unity, especially in political groups, it strives, precisely for the sake of its unity, for definiteness of status toward persons, material tasks, and other societies. The large group, with the number and variety of its elements, demands or tolerates such definiteness much less. The history of the Greek and of the Italian cities, as of the Swiss cantons, shows that small communities, in case they do not proceed to federation, habitually live in open or latent hostility to each other. Moreover, warfare and martial law are between them much more bitter and sharp, and especially more radical, than between great states. It is precisely that absence of organs, of reserves, of undefined and transitional elements, which makes modification and adaptation difficult for them, and, apart from their external conditions, forces them, on account of their fundamental sociological configuration, much oftener to confront the question, "To be or not to be?"

By the side of such tendencies in smaller circles I cite, with the same unavoidable arbitrary selection from innumerable cases, the following for the sociological characterization of greater circles. I start from the fact that these, compared with smaller circles, seem to show an inferior degree of radicalism and obstinacy of attitude. This, however, requires a limitation. Precisely where great masses must be set in motion in political, social, and religious movements, they show a ruthless radicalism, a victory of the extreme parties over the mediating. This is primarily for the reason that great masses are always filled merely with simple ideas, and can be led by such only. What is common to many must for that reason be of a sort which the lowest, most primitive minds among them can entertain. And even higher and more differentiated personalities will approach each other in great numbers, not in the more complicated and highly elaborated, but only in the relatively simple universal human conceptions and impulses. Since, however, the actualities in which the ideas of the mass strive to become practical are always articulated in a very multifold way, and are composed of a great assemblage of very divergent elements, it follows that simple

ideas can work only in an entirely one-sided, ruthless, and radical fashion. This fact is accentuated in case the behavior of a crowd in actual physical contact is in question. Under such circumstances, the innumerable suggestions working back and forth produce an extraordinarily intense nervous excitement, which often deprives the individual of his senses, and drags him along as though he were unconscious. It inflates every impulse, often in a freakish manner, and makes the mob the prey of the most passionate personality in its number. This melting of masses into *one* feeling, in which all peculiarity and reserves of personalities are suspended, is naturally in its content so thoroughgoing, so radical, so alien to all mediation and consideration, that it would lead to sheer impracticabilities and destructions, if it did not usually find its end at an earlier stage from inner wearinesses and reactions, the consequence of this one-sided exaggeration. More than that, the masses, in the sense now in mind, have little to lose. On the contrary, they believe, so to speak, that they have everything to gain. This is the situation in which most of the restraints of radicalism habitually fall away; in this unorganized mass which consists of human beings with their immediate reciprocities, without a super-individual unity and form, those indefinitenesses, many-sidednesses, and mediatorial phenomena are lacking through which the great community ordinarily is distinguished from the small one. In order to form themselves upon the periphery of a community, they need precisely a stable center of the same, an objective social form and interest, in excess of the merely subjective and momentary unification of the elements.

Thus it is to be observed in general that small parties are more radical than large ones, of course within the limits which the ideas constituting the party prescribe. The radicalism here meant is immediately sociological; that is, it is marked by the unreserved dedication of the individual to the tendency of the group, by the sharp delimitation of the same against neighboring structures which is necessary to the self-preservation of the group, by the impossibility of taking up into the externally narrow frame a multitude of far-reaching endeavors and thoughts.

The radicalism which is peculiarly such in its content is to a considerable degree independent of the sort here in mind. It has been observed that the conservative-reactionary elements in Germany at the present time are compelled by the very fact of their numerical strength to restrain the ruthlessness of their endeavors. They are composed of so many and so different strata of society that they cannot follow any of their programs straight to the end without giving offense to some portion of their constituency. In the same way the Social-Democratic party is forced by its quantitative extent to dilute its qualitative radicalism, to allow dogmatic deviations a certain scope, to permit, if not expressly, nevertheless in fact here and there, a certain compromise with their intolerance. The unqualified coherence of the elements, upon which the possibility of radicalism rests sociologically, loses power to maintain itself as more and more varied individual elements are introduced with numerical accretion. For that reason professional labor coalitions, whose purpose is the improvement of the conditions of labor in detail, know very well that they lose in actual coherence with increase of extent. In this case, however, numerical extension has, on the other hand, the tremendous significance that every added member frees the coalition from a competitor, perhaps underbidding and thereby threatening it in its existence. There occur evidently quite special life-conditions for a group which constitutes itself inside of a larger group, and subordinate to its idea, and when its idea realizes its purpose only in so far as it unites in itself all elements which fall under its presuppositions. In such cases the rule usually holds: "He that is not for me is against me;" the personality outside of the group to which it, in accordance with the claims of the latter, so to speak, ideally belongs, does the group a very positive injury, through the mere indifference of non-attachment. This is the case whether, as among labor coalitions, through competition, or when it reveals to those standing outside of the group the boundaries of its power, or when the group only comes to real existence by the inclusion of all the elements concerned, as in the case of many industrial syndicates. In case, therefore, the question of com-

pleteness, which is by no means always in point, confronts a group—that is, the question whether all elements to which its principle extends are also actually included in it—then the consequences of this *completeness* must be carefully distinguished from those consequences which follow from its size alone. To be sure, the group will also be larger if it is complete than if it is incomplete; but not this association as a quantity, but the problem dependent immediately upon that, viz., whether with that quantity the group fills out therewith a prescribed scheme, may be so important for the group that, as in the case of labor coalitions, the disadvantages in cohesion and unity, following from mere increase of numbers, may stand in direct antagonism and counterpoise with the advantages of increasing completeness.

In general we may, in a very essential degree, explain the structures which are peculiar to large communities, as such, from the fact that they produce with these structures a substitute for the personal and immediate cohesion which is peculiar to the smaller circles. In the case of the large group, the question is one of correlating centers which are channels and mediators of the reciprocal action of the elements, and which thus operate as independent bearers of the societary unity, after this is no longer produced by immediate relationship of person to person. For this purpose magistracies and representatives grow up, laws and symbols of the group-life, organizations and social generalizations. At this point I have only to emphasize their connection with the numerical point of view. They all occur purely and maturely, so far as the main point is concerned, only in large circles, *i. e.*, as the abstract form of group-dependence, whose concrete form can no longer exist after a certain extension of the community has been reached. Their utility, ramifying into a thousand social qualities, rests in the last analysis upon numerical presuppositions. The character of the superpersonal and objective with which such incorporations of the group-energies face the individual is derived directly from the *multiplicity* of the variously operative individual elements; for only through their multiplicity is the individual element in them paralyzed, and from the same cause the universal mounts to such a distance

from the individual that it appears as something existing entirely by itself, not needing the individual, and possibly even antagonistic to the individual—somewhat as the *concept*, which, composed of singular and various phenomena of the common, is the higher above every one of these details, the more it includes; so that precisely the universal ideas which rule the greatest circumference of particulars—the abstractions with which metaphysics reckons—attain a life apart, whose norms and developments are often alien, or hostile, to those of the tangible particulars. The great group thus gains its unity—as it expresses itself in its organs and in its law, in its political ideas and in its ideals—only at the price of a wide distance of all those structures from the individual, his views and needs, which find immediate activity and consideration in the social life of a small circle. From this relation there arises the typical difficulty of organizations in which a series of minor combinations are included within a larger one; viz., the fact is that the situations can be readily seen, and treated with interest and care, only close at hand; while, on the contrary, only from the distance which the central position holds can a just and regular relation of all the details to each other be established. This is a discrepancy which, for example, always emerges in the treatment of poverty, in the organization of labor, and in educational administration. The relationships of person to person, which constitute the life-principle of smaller circles, are not easily compatible with the distance and coolness of the objective-abstract norms without which the great group cannot exist.

The unity and the correlating form of the great group, as contrasted with its elements and their primary socializations, come into existence only through negations. Social actions and regulations evolve in many ways the character of negativity in the degree of their numerical inclusiveness. In the case of mass actions, the motives of individuals are often so different that their unification is possible in the degree in which their content is merely negative and destructive. The unrest which leads to great revolutions is always nursed from so many, and often directly opposing, sources that their focalization upon a positive

aim would be impossible. The erection of the latter is usually the task then of the smaller circles, and of the energy of individuals who separate from each other in countless private undertakings, while these individuals united in a mass have worked in sweeping and destructive fashion. The same trend appears in the results of wide appeals to popular suffrage, which are so often, and almost incomprehensively, negative. For example, in Switzerland in the year 1900 a law with reference to sickness and accident insurance within the federation was summarily rejected by the referendum, after it had been unanimously adopted by both *representative* bodies, the Nationalrat and the Ständerat. The same has usually been the fate of most measures subject to the referendum. Rejection is the simplest action, and consequently great masses can combine in it. The positive standpoints of the separate groups from which this law was rejected were extremely various; they were particularistic and ultramontane, agrarian and capitalistic, technical and partisan; and consequently nothing could be common to them but negation. On that account, to be sure, in case many small circles agree at least in negative provisions, this may, on the contrary, indicate or prepare their unity. It has been observed that, while the Greeks exhibited wide culture-differences among themselves, yet even when we compare the Arcadian and the Athenian with the contemporary Carthaginians or Egyptians, Persians or Thracians, they still had many sorts of negative characteristics in common. Nowhere in historic Greece were there human sacrifices, or intentional mutilations; nowhere polygamy, or the sale of children into slavery; nowhere unlimited subjection to a single person. With all the positive differences, this common possession of the merely negative must necessarily have made the persons contained in such a community conscious that they belonged together, in a culture area extending beyond the boundaries of the single state.

The negative character of the bond which unites the great area into a unit appears primarily in its norms. This is prepared for by the phenomenon that, other things being equal, combining determinations of every sort must be the more simple and

the less comprehensive, the larger the circumference of their application. Illustrations might extend from the rules of "international courtesy," which are much fewer in number than those to be observed in every narrower circle; to the fact that the individual states of the German empire have, as a rule, a less comprehensive constitution the larger they are. Expressed in the form of a theorem: With increasing extent of the circle, the common elements which bind each with each into the social unity are decreasingly circumstantial. It is consequently (although at first paradoxical) possible to hold a great circle together with a smaller minimum of norms than would be required for a small circle. Of course, the aggregate of norms will be greater in the former than in the latter, but it consists of the special norms of the subdivisions of the circle, whereas the circle as a totality makes up for its size by deficit of many generally applicable norms. In qualitative respects, moreover, the modes of conduct which a community, in order to exist as such, must demand of its members are usually the more prohibitive and limiting in nature as extension increases. The positive combinations which, proceeding from element to element, give the group-life its proper content must at last be left to the individuals. The manifoldness of the persons, the interests, the occurrences, becomes too great to be regulated from one center. To this center, therefore, there is left only the prohibitive function, the determination of those things which *under no circumstances* may be done; the bounding of freedom rather than the direction of it—wherewith, of course, is meant only the trend of a development which is perpetually crossed and turned aside by other tendencies. Thus, where a great number of divergent circles of religious feeling or interest are to be composed into a unity. For example, from the decline of Arabian polytheism Allah arose as the universal concept, so to speak, of God in general. Polytheism produces necessarily a cleavage of the area included within the faith, because the components of the same will in different ways, according to the variety of their subjective and practical tendencies, turn to the various divinities. The abstract and unifying character of Allah is consequently in

the first instance of a negative sort. It is his original nature "to restrain from the evil," not, however, to incite to the good. He is only the "restrainer." The Hebrew God, who, in contrast with separatistic polytheism, and quite unsocial monism, like that of India, brought into being or expressed a unification of the religio-social synthesis unknown to antiquity, gives his most sharply emphasized practical norms in the form, "Thou shalt not." In the German empire the positive relations of life which are subject to the civil law did not find their unifying form in the civil statute book until about thirty years after the founding of the empire. On the other hand, the penal statute book, with its prohibitive regulations, was brought together, and to that extent made the empire a unity, in 1872. That which especially fits prohibitions to generalize smaller circles into a larger one is the circumstances that the counterpart of the forbidden is by no means always the forbidden, but often only the allowed. Thus, if in the circle A no α may occur, but β , γ , δ ; in B no β , but α , γ , δ ; in C no γ , but α , β , δ , etc., the unified structure may be formed from A , B , and C , upon the prohibition of α , β , γ . The unity is only possible if in A β and γ are not forbidden, but merely allowed, so that it also may be omitted. If, instead of that, β and γ are as positively forbidden as is α , and correspondingly in B and C , the consequence would be that no unit could be created which included all the positive group-limitations, because then there would always be on the one side direct prescription of that which on the other side is directly forbidden. The same is the case in the following example: From ancient times the eating of a given species of animal was forbidden to every Egyptian, namely, that species which was sacred to his own village. The doctrine that holiness demands abstinence from *all* animal food arose then as the result of the amalgamation of a collection of local cults into a national religion, at the head of which stood a priesthood ruling as a unit. This unification could occur only through the synthesis or universalization of all those prohibitions; for, if the eating of all animals, which was allowed in every village (that is, which also could be abstained from), had been positively commanded,

there would evidently have been no possibility of bringing together the special regulations of the parts into a higher whole.

Perhaps the connection between the enlargement of the circle and the negative character of its determinations shows itself most decisively in the following: The more generally, that is, for the greater circle, the norm is applicable, the less is its observance characterizing and significant for the individual; while the failure to observe it is usually accompanied by especially severe and notable consequences. This is particularly the case, in the first place, in the intellectual realm. The theoretical understanding, without which there could be no human society, rests upon a small number of generally recognized, although of course not abstractly conscious, norms which we designate as logical principles. They constitute the minimum of that which must be recognized by all who want to hold commerce with each other. Upon this basis rests the most fleeting consensus of individuals least acquainted with each other, as well as the daily association of the most intimate. Intellectual observance of these simplest norms, without which there could be no reckoning with experienced reality, is the most inexorable and most universal condition of all sociological life; for with all variety of the subjective and objective world-view, logic produces a certain common ground, departure from which must destroy all intellectual community in the broadest sense of the term. But logic, however, strictly speaking, neither means nor produces any positive possession whatever. It is only the norm against which we may not sin, while at the same time obedience to it does not afford any distinction, any specific good or quality. All attempts to win a specific cognition with the help of mere logic fail, and their sociological significance is consequently quite as negative as that of the criminal statute book. On the other hand, only failure to observe produces a special and classified situation, while remaining within the norm affords to the individual nothing else than the possibility of remaining, theoretically or practically, in the generality. To be sure, from thousandfold divergence of content, the intellectual nexus itself may fail, even with strict obser-

vance of logic; but with disregard of logic it *must* fail — precisely as the moral-social community, even with the most exact avoidance of everything criminally forbidden, may go to pieces; while with disobedience of these norms it *must* go to pieces. The case is not different with the societary forms in the more restricted sense, so far as they are actually general in a community. Although their observance is distinctive for nobody, transgression of them is in the highest degree distinctive, for the most universal laws of a community are merely not to be transgressed, while the special norms which hold together restricted circles, in the degree of their specialization, lend to the individual a positive shading and difference. The disobedience of these latter norms may destroy such a circle, but the larger comprehending group, in which the elements of the smaller belong in addition, remains still intact, and does not dissolve until its elements transgress that minimum of norms the essence of which is, in the ratio of their generality, merely prohibitive. Upon this relationship rests also the great practical utility of the quite empty societary forms of courtesy. Upon the positive existence of respect and loyalty of which they testify to us we may not count, even from their most accurate observance; on the other hand, the slightest failure to observe them proves that those feelings are *not* present. The salute upon the street by no means demonstrates respect; the omission of the same, however, gives very decided evidence of the contrary. As symbols of positive subjective attitude, these forms completely fail to be of service. The negative, however, they advertise in a most useful way, since a quite easy negligence may radically and definitely determine the relation to a given person—and indeed in the degree in which the form of courtesy is quite universal and conventional, that is, a part of the essential nature of a relatively large circle.

This form-difference of the life-conditions which attaches itself to the social quantity-difference is, in the large, denoted also by the antithesis between custom and law. It appears as though in the case of the Aryan peoples the first attachments of the individual to a superindividual life-order proceeded from a quite general instinct or concept, which signified the categorical,

the appropriate, the should-be in general. The particular regulations in the realms of religion, morality, conventions, law, are not details in the sense that from them that concept could have proceeded as that which was common to them all, but they are the ramifications which rest undifferentiated in it. The concept is the original, not the later abstracted unity. In contrast now to the opinion in accordance with which morality, custom, and law have developed, so to speak, as pendants from that germ-condition, the germ seems to me rather to persist still in that which we call custom, and to represent the indifference-condition which puts forth from itself from different sides the form of law and of morality. Custom as a form of sociological combination seems to me scarcely to be capable of positive definition, but it can properly be defined only through the antithesis to those two forms which develop themselves from it—here also betraying its quite primary and general character. All three forms serve to assure the demeanor of the individual in accordance with the demands of social utility. Law has in statute and in its executive agencies the differentiated organs through which it can first precisely circumscribe its contents and, second, control them externally. Hence, however, it limits itself for utilitarian purposes to the quite essential conditions of the group-life. The free morality of the individual, on the other hand, possesses no other law than that which it gives itself autonomously from within, and no other executive than conscience. Hence its scope embraces, to be sure, in principle, the totality of action; it has, however, visibly, in its external practice, in every individual case, special accidental and varying boundaries.¹

¹ That law and morality thus alike spring *pari passu* from one variation of society development appears in the teleological significance of the two, which, more than the first appearance betrays, connote each other. If the restricted leading of the individual, which includes a life regulated altogether by custom, gives place to the universal legal norm, which has a much wider distance from everything individual, yet in the social interest the therewith attained freedom may still not remain responsible to itself alone. Through the moral imperative the juristic demands are enlarged, and the gaps in the regulations of life are filled, which are produced by defect of universally regulating custom. Regulation is now at the same time transferred much higher above the individual and much deeper within him, for whatever personal and metaphysical

Through custom, then, a community assures to itself the appropriate conduct of its members, where the pressure of the law is inadequate, and the superindividual morality is not to be relied upon. Thus custom works today as complement of these two institutions, as it was the sole regulator of life at a time when these differentiated forms of norm existed either not at all or merely in the germ. Therewith is the sociological place of custom sufficiently indicated. It stands between the largest circle, as a member of which the individual is subordinate to the law, and absolute individuality, which is the sole bearer of free morality. Custom belongs, therefore, to the narrower circles, the intermediate structures between the individual and the greater community. Almost all custom is that of a rank or class; its manners of expression, such as external behavior, fashion, honor, control always only a subordinate division of the largest circle to which the law applies, and they have in the contiguous subdivisions a different content. Against failures to observe good customs reaction is produced on the part of the narrower circle of those who are in some way affected by it, or are witnesses of it, while a violation of the legal order calls out the reaction of the totality. Since custom has as its executive only public opinion, and certain reactions of individuals immediately attached to it, it is evident that a great circle, as such, is excluded from administering it. There is no need of expanding the observation

values conscience and the autonomous morality may represent, their social value, which concerns us here alone, lies in their enormous prophylactic utility. Law and custom seize upon the activities of the will in their external manifestation and their realization; they operate, purely as such, in a compulsory way, at the utmost through fear. Morality, however, stands at the roots of the deed; it thus reconstructs the subjectivity of the agent until, of his own accord, he permits only the right action to proceed from himself, without needing the support of those relatively external forces. But society has no interest in the purely subjective moral perfecting of the agent. This is important to society only, and is only cultivated by society, in so far as it results in the utmost guarantee for the socially useful actions of precisely this agent. In the morality of the individual, society creates for itself an organ which is not only more fundamentally operative than law and custom, but which also spares society the different sorts of cost involved in these institutions. Hence the tendency of society to satisfy its demands as cheaply as possible results in appeals to "good conscience," through which the individual pays to himself the wages for his righteousness, which otherwise would probably have to be assured to him in some way through law or custom.

that the customs of trade, as such, permit or command something different from those of the aristocracy; those of a religious circle, again, something different from those of a literary body; etc. In this connection it is obvious that the content of custom consists of the special limitations which a narrower circle needs, which circle has at its disposal for the guarantee of the limitations neither the power of civic law nor entirely trustworthy autonomous moral impulses. What is common to these circles and the most primitive, with which for us social history begins, is nothing else than numerical paucity. The life-forms which earlier sufficed for the entire community-circle have, with the growth of the latter, withdrawn themselves to its subordinate divisions, for these contain now the possibilities of personal relationships, the approximate equality of level of the members, the common interests and ideals, in the presence of which one may confide social regulation to so precarious and ambiguous a species of norm as customary morality is. With increasing quantity of the elements, and of the therewith unavoidable independence of the same, these limitations disappear for the circle as a whole. The peculiar constraining power of custom becomes for the state too little, and for the individual too much. The former demands greater guarantees, the latter greater freedom; and only with those sides with which each element belongs to intermediate circles is it still socially controlled through custom.

To this correlation which attaches the difference of the social form of custom from that law, to the quantitative variation of the communities, there are obvious exceptions. The original popular unities of the Teutonic stocks, upon which the great realms, the Frankish, the English, the Swedish, raised themselves, were often able to protect themselves a long time against loss of the privilege of enacting their own laws. Such laws as they had were often made enactments of the state comparatively late; and, on the other hand, in modern international intercourse many customs prevail which have not yet received the force of law. Within the particular state many modes of action are established as law which in external relationships, that is, within the largest circle, must be consigned to the looser form of custom. The

resolution of the contradiction is very simple: The size of the circle demands the legal form naturally only in that relation in which the manifoldness of its elements *is composed into a unity*. The social unity is a graduated idea; the spirit and purpose of various circles demand various degrees in the closeness and strength of their unity; so that the social form of regulation which is demanded by a certain quantity of the circle, with respect to the degree of the unity which it is to achieve may still be the same with different quantities. The significance of the numerical conditions is thus not impaired if a greater circle, on account of its special tasks, may or must content itself without giving legal forms to its rules, just as in other cases is possible only to a smaller circle. Those undisciplined civic structures of Teutonic antiquity did not yet possess the cohesion of the elements which, existing in the case of great groups, is both cause and effect of their legal constitutions. Likewise in both the collective and the individual relationships between modern states there arise certain norms in the mere form of custom, because there is lacking here a unity of the parties necessary to be the vehicle of a legal order, and such a unity is in part supplied in a smaller, just as in a looser, circle by the immediate reactions of element with element. This, however, corresponds precisely with the function of custom as a form of regulation. Consequently the apparent exceptions really confirm the correlation which appeared between custom and law on the one side, and the quantities of the circles on the other side.

It is evident that the concepts "greater and smaller circle" are of a very crude scientific order, entirely indefinite and fluctuating, and properly applicable in general only in order to point out the dependence of the sociological form-character of a group upon its quantitative limitations. It cannot serve in any way to show more exactly the actual proportion which exists between the former and the latter. Nevertheless it is perhaps not in all cases impossible to make out this proportion more exactly. In the thus far observed formations and relationships any attempt to assign precise numerical values would evidently be, for any stage of our knowledge that can be foreseen, a completely

fantastic undertaking. But within certain limits even now traits of those socializations may be cited which exist between a limited number of persons, and which are characterized by this limitation. As transitions out of the most complete numerical indefiniteness to complete numerical definiteness, I mention certain cases in which the latter in principle is already of some sociological significance, but still without a determination of the same in particulars; namely:

1. The number works as a principle of division of the group; that is, there are portions of the same which are formed by enumeration, and are treated as relative unities. The special significance of separate numbers in this connection will be discussed later, and at this point I merely emphasize the principle. That a total group which feels itself in any way as *one* divides itself at all, and that it divides itself not merely from top to bottom, according to the ratio of the rulers and the ruled, but according to co-ordinated members, is one of the most tremendous advances of humanity; it is, to be sure, not yet the proper organic life instead of the mechanical coexistence of society, but, so to speak, the anatomical structure which constitutes the basis of the life-process. The division may proceed merely from the hereditary principle, or from associations formed by voluntary pledges, or from similarity of occupations, or from classification by local districts. To these principles there attaches itself the numerical variant which divides the mass of the existing men or families by a definite number, and so produces similar subdivision on the purely quantitative basis. The whole has toward each of these approximately the same relation which the subdivisions themselves bear toward their individuals. This principle is now so schematic, to be sure, that for its realization a more concrete one must be associated with it. The numerically equal divisions were composed of units in some way near to each other: relatives, friends, neighbors, or units which otherwise reinforced each other through likeness or unlikeness. The decisive factor is, however, that numerical equality constitutes the form-principle of the division—although it never decides *alone*, but merely plays a rôle varying from the

greatest to the least importance. This size is highly significant for the group. Nomadic stocks, for example, often have, in default of otherwise stable life-content, scarcely any other possibility of organizing themselves except in accordance with the number-principle. Its significance for a crowd upon the march controls even today the structure of armies. It persists naturally in the circumstance that often in the subdivision of a conquered or colonized or newly discovered land, where in the first instance there is a lack of real standards of organization, the principle of correlation, according to numerically equal divisions, has the first place; for example, the oldest constitution of Iceland is controlled in this way.

2. While we have up to this point been concerned with the numerical equality of different divisions, the number may be used further in order to characterize a single, and indeed leading, circle of persons from within a total group. For example, it was in many cases the custom to designate the administrative group of the craft-organizations by their number: In Frankfort the heads of the wool-weavers were known as "The Six;" among the bakers it was "The Eight;" in mediæval Barcelona the senate was called "The One Hundred," etc. It is extremely noteworthy how precisely the *most eminent* personalities are designated by that which is in itself least distinguishing, which is completely indifferent to every qualification, namely, mere number. The presumption behind this fact seems to me to be that with a number, say with six, not six individual, isolated elements, simply standing side by side, are meant, but a synthesis of these. Six is not 1 and 1 and 1, etc., but a new concept, which is realized by the *concurrence* of these elements, and not *pro rata* in each of them for himself. In other connections we must designate the vital functional reciprocity of elements as their unity, which rises *above* their mere sum and in sociological antithesis with it. Here, however, in giving a name to a body of administrators, a committee, etc., by means of the mere sum, in reality that functional togetherness is in mind, and it is, as a name, possible only for the reason that the number in itself signifies a unity formed of unities. In the case cited, The Six are

not scattered through a homogeneous circle, but they signify a definite and firm *articulation of the circle*, through which six persons from its number are made eminent, and then they grow together to a guiding unity. The characterless impersonality of the naming by means of the number is just here highly characteristic; for it denotes more decisively than any less formal idea could that herewith no individuals, as persons, are meant, but that it is a purely social structure; the structure of the circle demands a definite quota of its units as a guiding body. In the purely numerical concept resides the pure objectivity of the formation, which is indifferent to everything personal in the separate member, and only demands that he shall be merely one of The Six. There is, perhaps, no more effective expression with which to emphasize, along with the social eminence of individuals, at the same time the complete irrelevance of everything which they stand for as persons outside of this function.

The unity of grouping which reveals itself in the composing of elements into a higher number is brought to light with special clearness by means of an apparent instance to the contrary. That senate of Barcelona which was called the One Hundred had at last in reality more, up to the number of two hundred, without on that account changing its name. The same phenomenon appears when the number operates, not as a distinguishing, but as a dividing, principle. Where the division of the population according to hundreds occurred, which we shall discuss later, there was never exact preservation of this precise number of members in the subdivision. This is expressly stated of the old German Hundreds. The number is in this case, therefore, immediately the synonym of the social member, which at first included, or was supposed to have included, precisely such a circle of individuals. This apparently insignificant fact shows the immense significance of numerical definiteness for the structure of the group. The number becomes indeed independent of its arithmetical content; it shows that the relation of the members to the whole is a numerical one; or, the number having become stable, represents this relation. There remains at the same time the idea of the subdivision, to consist of one hundred

elements, only that the empirical relations actualize this division with greater or less exactness. If it has been said of the German Hundreds that they were intended to express merely an indefinitely large number between the individual and the totality of members, this designates precisely the asserted sociological type. The life of the group demands a middle resort between the One and the All, a bearer of definite functions which neither the One nor the All can discharge, and the structure devoted to these tasks is thus named in accordance with its *numerical* composition. The functions do not give the name, because they are manifold and variable. What remains is merely the consolidation of an aliquot part of the totality into a unity. How *great* this part is in each case may be uncertain. The permanent numerical designation shows that the numerical relation in general was felt to be the essential thing. Therewith appears in the social realm an occurrence whose psychological form is elsewhere observed. The Russian types of coin are said to have been derived from an old system of weights, and it was of such sort that every higher type contained tenfold the amount of the lower. As a matter of fact, however, not merely the absolute but also the relative amount of metal in the coins often varied, but at the same time their values, after they were once brought into the numerical order, remained constant. While, therefore, the real proportions of metal value are shifting, the service which they have to render to commerce through the constancy of these nominal relations is marked by the fact that the historically first weight relations give permanent name and symbol for these later relations. In other ways, also, the number becomes the representative of the thing which it enumerates, and then the essential matter, namely, that the real affair in question is a relation between the whole and the part, is denoted by the fact that the numerical concept of the earlier relation covers all later changes. Thus the tax upon the miners in Spain in the sixteenth century was called the Quinto because it amounted to a fifth of the value, and it retained its name later when the proportion was quite different. In the same way the word "tithe" came to have, among the old Israelites and in many other places, the significance of

tribute in general—just as the term “hundred” came to have the meaning of subdivision in general. That the quantitative relation, which is quite as much the essence of a tax as of the social division, has obtained dominance psychologically over its peculiarity of content, appears most decisively in the circumstance that the original numerical limitation crystallizes into a designation of all modifications of the relation.

3. The numerical definiteness as form of organization assumes within the social development a typical function. The numerical method of division appears historically as a substitute for the class principle. It appears that in many places the groups consisted at first of subgroups held together by ties of blood, each of which constituted a unity in economic, penal, political, and other respects. That this internally very well-grounded organization was displaced by the melting together of ten or a hundred men for corresponding undertakings in common, must at first appear as a miraculous externalization, a schematization utterly lacking in essential life. We should look in vain in the immanent cohesive principles of this group for a justification of a change from the form with organic roots to this mechanical and formalistic order. The ground for it is rather to be found only in the *whole* which is composed of such subdivisions, and which makes demands that are independent in contrast with the life-principles of its parts. In the degree in which the whole as a unity is richer in content and more energetic, do the parts lose, at least at the outset and below the highest stage of development, their peculiar significance. They surrender the sense which they possess in and for themselves to the whole, and they are now the more useful the less a self-sufficient idea lives in each of them, and the more they as characterless parts receive back a position and significance only through their contribution to the whole. This is a universal tendency of social development, which makes itself manifest in the case of the modern soldier as contrasted with the knight of the Middle Ages, the factory laborer contrasted with the hand-worker, and every member of the present national and international organization as contrasted with the more or less autonomous domestic and natural

industry. With a certain complexity and centripetality of the whole, it permits none of its elements any longer to bring a thought to expression, so to speak, but this member acquires an external and merely mechanical character—that of a mere means, which must be as much as possible colorless and schematic in order to be in the highest degree yielding and constructive with reference to the purpose of the whole. In the case of certain highly perfected types of development this is not the case. There are certain social structures which precisely with the largest size and most complete organization permit to individual elements the greatest freedom to live out their individuality according to special norms and in the most peculiar form. On the other hand, there are social structures which reach the highest total energy only under the condition of the most intensified and differentiated peculiar life of their elements. The transition from the clan to the Hundred, however, seems to mark that middle stadium in which absence of special spirit and character in the members denotes an advance for the whole; for only under such organization were they, in the given circumstances, easily surveyed, responsive to guidance according to simple norms, and without that opposition against the central power which, with strong internal cohesion of each subordinate group, too easily appears.

Where the constitution or action of the group is numerically determined—from the old Hundred to the modern dominance of majorities—there is in evidence an ascendancy over the individuality. It is a point at which the profound internal discrepancy between the democratic and the liberal-individualistic social ideas comes very clearly into view. That a “round number” is produced out of personalities, and that with this artificial creation operations are carried on without any regard to the peculiarities of the individuals included within it; that the votes are counted, not weighed; that arrangements, precepts, and prohibitions are simply conditioned upon the existence of a definite number of persons—that is, either despotically or democratically; in either case, however, a degradation of the real and total content of the separate personality to the formal fact that it is simply

one; inasmuch as the personality takes a place in an organization determined by number alone, its character as a member of the group has assumed complete mastery over its individually differentiated character. Whether the division into numerically equal subgroups is rough and in practice continually modified, as in the Hundreds of the Germans, the Peruvians, the Chinese; or so refined, purposeful, and exact as in a modern army, in either case it betrays most clearly and pitilessly the existence for its own sake of the law of formation for the group, in one case as a newly emerging tendency which is in perpetual conflict and compromise with other tendencies, in another case an absolutely thoroughgoing application. That which is super-individual in the grouping, the complete assertion of the independence of its form, in contrast with every content of the individual life, exists nowhere in more absolute and emphatic shape than in the reduction of the organizing principles to purely arithmetical relationships; and the degree of approach to this, as it in various ways appears in the most diverse groups, is at the same time the degree in which the group-idea, in its most abstract form, has absorbed the individuality of its factors.

4. Finally, in the following respect important sociological consequences attach themselves to numerical definiteness, although the effective quantities of the elements may be, according to the circumstances, quite varied. "Society," in the modern polite sense, furnishes a typical case. How many persons must be invited in order that a "society" may exist?¹ The qualitative relationships between host and guests manifestly do not decide the question. The invitation of two or three persons, who have a completely formal and essentially unrelated attitude toward us, does not bring a "society" into existence. On the other hand, the opposite is the case if we call together, say, the fifteen persons of our most intimate acquaintance. The number remains ever the decisive factor, although its *size* is naturally dependent, in special cases, upon the type and the

¹ [With our somewhat generous vocabulary of specific terms for social functions of all degrees we lack a generic term for the concept "assemblage involving formality." We venture to press the symbol "society" into service. The author's meaning is plain from the context.—TR.]

closeness of the relations between the elements. The three circumstances—namely, the relationships of the host to each of the guests for himself, that of the guests to each other, the manner in which each participant subjectively reacts with all these relationships—these constitute the basis upon which now the number of participants determines whether a “society,” or a mere existence together of a friendly or of a materially utilitarian sort, is present. In this case, consequently, a numerical modification always produces a very surely perceived transformation into a quite special sociological category, however imperfectly the degree of this modification may be determined by our available psychological means. At least, however, the qualitatively sociological consequences of the quantitative occasions are in a certain measure describable.

In the first place, the “society” demands a quite specific external apparatus. If one invites from a circle of acquaintances of, say, thirty persons only one or two, he need “put himself to no trouble.” If, however, he invites the whole thirty at once, there at once emerge quite new requirements in respect to food, drink, toilet, forms of behavior, and extraordinarily enhanced expenditure on the side of the sensibly stimulating and enjoyable. This is a very clear example of how considerably the mere mass-construction depresses the level of the personality. In a meeting of a very few, such a reciprocal adaptation is possible. The things in common, which constitute the content of their sociability, may include so comprehensive or so eminent portions of their individuality that the meeting bears the character of intellectuality, of differentiated and highly developed psychic energy. The greater the number of persons who come together, however, the smaller will be the probability that they can coincide in those more worthy and intimate sides of their nature, and, accordingly, the point must be sought lower down which is common to their impulses and interests.¹ In the

¹Complaint about banality in the intercourse of general society betrays, consequently, complete sociological unintelligence. The relative depression of the level upon which a company of large numbers actually finds itself is, in principle, unavoidable. For all higher and finer cultures are of an individual sort, and consequently do not adapt themselves to the contents of the general mind. They may, to be sure,

same degree, however, in which the quantity of the elements affords to the higher, more individual psychic factors no more room, the effort must be made to atone for this lack of the former sort of charm by enhancement of the external and the sensible. Between multiplicity of persons meeting together for festive purposes, and the luxury, the mere sensuous satisfaction of their meeting, there has always been the closest connection. At the end of the Middle Ages, for example, luxury at weddings increased so much, merely in the matter of the number of attendants who accompanied the bridal pair to the baths taken on these occasions, that the authorities often precisely ordained, in their sumptuary laws, what might be the maximum number of persons constituting this escort. If eating and drinking have always been the combining agencies of great companies, for which otherwise a unifying interest and consensus would have been difficult to reach, so must now a "society," purely on account of its quantitative factor, which excludes community and reciprocity of the finer and more spiritual concords, the more strongly emphasize these pleasures which are sensual, and on that account with greater certainty to be shared in by all.

A further characteristic of the "society," on the ground of its numerical difference, in contrast with the congregation of a few, consists in the fact that a complete unification of tone, which in the latter case is possible, neither can nor should be possible in the former; that, on the other hand, for a further difference, the construction of partial groups is easily possible. The life-principle of a friendly coexistence of a few persons abruptly opposes division into two separate mental attitudes, and even separate conversations. The "society" is at that moment present in which, instead of its absolutely *single* center, a duality emerges: on the one hand, a general, but only quite loose, centrality, which in essence is only externally and even spatially founded, whence, therefore, societies of like social operate in the direction of socialization, if a unity is to be attained through division of labor — something which, however, is evidently only in a slight degree possible within a "society." It is, therefore, sociologically, a perfectly correct instinct which causes us to regard the thrusting into prominence of the personal individuality in a "society," even if the personality be in itself significant and pleasing, as tactlessness.

stratum resemble each other the more as totalities the larger they are, however manifold their personal variations may be; on the other hand, special minor centers of common conversation, temper, interest, which, however, incessantly interchange their members. There thus occurs that incessant variation of attachment and detachment in the large society which, according to the nature of the persons concerned, affects one now as the most intolerable superficiality and again as a rhythmic play of the highest æsthetic charm. The ball, with the modern form of dance, exhibits this formal sociological type in a quite distinct example: a momentary and quite wonderfully close relationship of each single pair, modified into a quite new formation through constant changes among the pairs; this physical contiguity between persons quite strange to each other, on the one side, made possible by the fact that they are all guests of a *single* host who, however loose the relationship to himself may be, affords a certain reciprocal security and legitimation; on the other hand, through the unpersonal and, so to speak, anonymous character of the relationship which the size of the society and the formality of behavior joined with it, produce. Evidently these traits of the large "society" which the ball presents at once in a sublimated form and perhaps in caricature, are attached to a definite minimum number of participants; and we may often make the most interesting observation that an intimate circle of a few persons attains the character of a "society" through the appearance of a single additional person.

In a case which, to be sure, concerns a much less complicated quality, the number which produces a definite sociological unitary structure is somewhat more firmly fixed. The patriarchal domestic family numbers, in the most various regions, always twenty to thirty heads, and that, too, under quite dissimilar economic conditions, so that these cannot, or at least cannot exclusively, occasion the numerical equality. It is rather probable that the inner reciprocities which constitute the special structure of the domestic family produce the proportions of closeness and extension demanded for this structure only within just these boundaries. The patriarchal family has been every-

where characterized by great intimacy and solidarity, which had its center in the *paterfamilias*, through the guardianship which the latter exercised, both in the interest of the whole and in his own egoistic interest, over the concerns of each individual. Hence the upper boundary was determined: this sort of dependence and of control appears able to comprehend, at the corresponding stage of psychological development, no greater collection of elements. The lower boundary, on the other hand, is determined by the fact that a group thus dependent upon itself for its self-satisfaction and its maintenance must develop certain collective psychical facts, which in turn usually arise only above a certain numerical limit. Such facts are, for example, resolution for offense and defense, confidence on the part of each that he will at every moment find the necessary support and reinforcement; more than all religious consensus, whose exaltation and spirituality can raise itself above the individual and the individual above himself only from the commingling of many contributions, with reciprocal effacement of their individual peculiar character. The number mentioned has perhaps indicated the scope approximately established by experience above and below which the group could not go if it were to develop the traits of the patriarchal house family. It appears as though, with increasing individualization, before this stage of culture, those intimacies were possible only within a smaller number of persons; the phenomena, on the other hand, which looked to the *size* of the family at once demanded an ever-growing circle. The needs from above and below which in that stage of culture realized themselves with this numerical material have become differentiated; one portion demands a smaller, another a larger number, so that later no structure is any longer in existence which can satisfy both sides of the demand in the same unified way as was the case with the patriarchal family.

Apart from such singular cases, all questions of the sort whose type is the numerical requirements for a "society" have a sophistical tone—how many soldiers make an army, how many members are necessary to constitute a political party, how many participants make an outbreak. They appear to rehearse the

classical riddle: How many grains of wheat make a heap? For since one, two, three, four grains do not do it, but a thousand certainly, there must accordingly be between these two numbers a boundary, at which the addition of a single grain makes those previously present into a "heap." If one, however, makes the trial of further enumeration, it appears that no one can announce discovery of this boundary. The logical ground of these difficulties is found in the fact that a quantitative series is given which, on account of the relative insignificance of each single element, seems to be a continuous and uniformly ascending series, and that this from a certain point on must permit the application of a qualitatively new idea, sharply set off from the idea previously applied. This is obviously a contradictory demand: by virtue of its very idea, the continuous cannot justify purely of itself a sudden break and change. The sociological difficulty has now a further complication aside from that in the ancient sophistry, for by the "heap" of grains we understand either a piling-up, and then one is logically justified in this use of terms so soon as only one layer appears above the lowest layer; or, only a quantity is designated by the term. In this case it is quite unjustifiable to demand of an idea like "heap," which in its very essence is quite variable and undetermined, that it should lend itself to application to perfectly defined and unequivocally bounded realities.¹

In those sociological cases, however, specifically new aggregate phenomena appear, when quantity increases, which are not present *pro rata* in the case of smaller numbers. A political party has qualitatively another significance from that of a small clique. A few curious persons standing together betray different traits from those of a mob (*Auflauf*), etc. The indeterminate-ness which attaches to these ideas from the impossibility of fixing numerically the corresponding quantities may perhaps be

¹ Still more evident is this mistake in the negative direction, in the case of the question: How many hairs must one lose before one may be called bald? If we take this latter idea seriously, it applies only to him who has no hair at all. If we apply it, however, to any case in which there is possession of hair, we thereby surrender the unequivocal severity of the idea, and we may not wonder that we possess no objectively precise criterion of its application, since we have put such application out of our power.

emphasized in the following way. This variation affects evidently only certain intermediate quantities. Certain lower numbers surely do not yet constitute the collectivities in question. Certain quite higher numbers constitute them without doubt. But even those numerically small structures have, however, sociological qualities which are characteristic: the meeting which falls short of being the "society," the troop of soldiers which does not constitute an army, the co-operating vagabonds who are not yet a "band." Since the other qualities, which are quite as little doubtful in the case of the great society, are in contrast with these, we may indicate the character of those that are numerically intermediate as composed of both, so that each makes itself in a rudimentary way perceptible in particular characteristics—now appears, now disappears or becomes latent. Since, then, such structures, lying in the intermediate numerical zone, have also a share objectively in the decided character of the structure below and above, or at least have such share partially and intermittently, the subjective uncertainty in determining to which of them they belong is to be explained accordingly. The point, then, is not that in a sociologically qualityless structure suddenly, like the crystal in the solution, a quite definite sociological constellation forms, without our being able to designate the precise moment of this transformation; but rather that two diverse formations, each consisting of a collection of traits and capable of being arranged in a qualitative scale, under certain quantitative conditions meet in a social structure, and in various degrees divide it between themselves; so that the question to which of the two they belong is not essentially one that suffers from the inherent epistemological difficulties of continuous series, but it is simply a question whose content is fallaciously proposed.²

² More precisely, however, the situation is rather this: To every definite number of elements there corresponds, in accordance with the purpose and spirit of their combination, a sociological form, an organization, firmness of texture, relation of the whole to the parts, etc., which experiences a modification, however immeasurably small and indeterminate, with every added or subtracted element. Since, however, we do not possess a special expression for each of these endlessly numerous sociological conditions, even in those cases in which their distinctive character is observable, there

These explanations have thus had to do with social formations which, to be sure, depended upon the number of the co-working elements, while at the same time our knowledge was insufficient so to formulate this dependence that we could draw from distinct numbers their sociological consequences. Meanwhile this latter is not absolutely excluded, if we turn our attention by preference to sufficiently simple structures. If we begin with the lower boundary of the numerical series, arithmetically defined magnitudes appear as unequivocal preconditions of characteristic sociological formations.

The numerically simplest formations which can at all be designated as social reciprocities appear to occur in the case of reactions between two elements. Yet there is a structure still simpler in external appearance, which belongs in sociological categories, namely, however paradoxical and essentially contradictory it seems, the isolated individual man. As a matter of fact, the processes which produce formations in the case of a duality of elements are often simpler than those necessary for the sociological characterization of the integer. In the case of these latter we have to do chiefly with two here pertinent

often remains no alternative but to think the situation as composed of two conditions; the one more and the other less conspicuous. At all events we have to do in such a case as little with a composition as, for example, in the case of the so-called mixed feelings of friendship and love, or hate and contempt, or pleasure and pain. In these cases, at least in numberless instances, a quite unified condition of feeling exists, for which we merely have no immediate concept, and which we consequently, by means of the synthesis and reciprocal limitation of two other concepts, rather circumscribe than describe; here, as in other instances, the proper unity of the existing is not within our comprehension, but we must resolve it into a duality of elements, neither of which quite covers it, in order to think it as proceeding from the interweaving of the two. This is, however, merely a conceptual analysis, possible only after the fact, which does not trace the actual genetic process, the proper being of that unity. Where therefore the stereotyped concepts for social unities—meeting and society, troop and army, clique and party, a few and a band, personal following and school, crowd and popular uprising, etc., etc.—do not find an exact application, because the human material seems to be insufficient for the one, and more than enough for the other, there yet exists a sociological mold, precisely as unified and just as specifically corresponding to the numerical limitation as in those more definite cases. The fact merely is that the lack of a special concept for these innumerable shadings compels us to denote their qualities as a mixture of those forms which correspond to the numerically inferior and to the numerically higher structures.

phenomena: isolation and freedom. The mere fact that an individual is in no sort of reciprocal relationship with other individuals is, of course, not sociological, but it also does not fill out the entire concept of isolation. This concept rather, in so far as it is emphasized and is essentially significant, signifies by no means merely the absence of all society, but rather the existence of society in some way represented and afterward inhibited. Isolation receives its unequivocal positive meaning as long-distance effect of society—whether as echo of past or anticipation of future relationships; whether as longing after society or as voluntary turning away from it. The isolated man has not the same characteristics as if he had been from the beginning the only inhabitant of the world; but socialization, even if it is only that with the negative coefficient, determines *his* condition also. The whole joy and the whole bitterness of isolation are merely various reactions upon socially experienced influences. Either is a reciprocal effect from which the one member, after production of definite consequences, is really excluded and further lives and further works only ideally in the mind of the other member. In this connection there is decided significance in the well-known psychological fact that the feeling of loneliness seldom occurs so decidedly and importunately in actual physical isolation as when one is conscious of being a stranger and without attachments among many physically quite adjacent people—for instance in a “society,”¹ in the crowded streets of a great town. For the configuration of a group much depends upon whether it favors or even renders possible such loneliness within its limits. Close and intimate communities do not permit such intercellular vacuums in their structure. As we speak, however, of a social deficit, which is produced in fixed proportions to the societary conditions—the anti-social phenomena of the miserable, the criminal, the suicides—in like manner a given quantity and quality of societary life produces a certain number of temporarily or chronically solitary existences, which, to be sure, the statistician cannot so exactly as in these other cases express in arithmetical terms. In another way isolation becomes sociologically

¹ [With the connotations above indicated.—Tr.]

significant, so soon as it ceases to consist in a relationship which is a play within an individual between himself and another definite group, or group-life in general; but is rather a pause or a periodic differentiation within one and the same relationship. This is important in relationships which from their fundamental idea are aimed at permanent negation of isolation, as in the chief instance of monogamous marriage. So far as in the structure of this relation the finest subjective shadings express themselves, there is an essential difference whether man and wife, with the complete happiness of life in common, have still preserved for themselves the pleasure in isolation, or whether their relation is never interrupted by devotion to solitude—either because the habit of being together has taken from solitude its charm, or because an absence of essential assurance of love makes such interruptions feared as dangers or as infidelities. Thus isolation, apparently confined to a single person, consisting in the negation of sociality, is really a phenomenon of very positive sociological significance; not merely from the side of the agent, in whom it presents, as a conscious affection, an entirely determinate relation to society, but also through the decisive characteristic which its occurrence, both as cause and as effect, lends to large groups as well as to the most intimate relationships.

Freedom, too, has among its many sociological meanings a phase which belongs in this connection. Freedom, too, appears in the first place as a mere negation of societary constraint, for every constraint is a restraint. The free man does not constitute a unity in connection with others, but he is such a unity of himself. Now, there may be a freedom which consists in this mere absence of relationships, in the mere absence of every limitation through other beings: a Christian or an Indian eremite, a solitary settler in the German or the American forests, may enjoy a freedom in the sense that his existence is entirely filled out with other than social contents; in the same way a collective structure, a house-community or a civic body, which exists in a completely insular way, without neighbors and without correlation with other structures. For a being, however, that is in correlation with others, freedom has a much more positive significance. It is a

definite sort of relationship to the environment; a being in correlations, which loses its meaning if there is no correlated party. In juxtaposition with this latter, however, freedom has for the deeper structure of society two highly important meanings.

1. For the social man freedom is neither an aboriginally given matter-of-course condition, nor a property gained once for all and of constantly equal texture. Rather has every single principal claim, which ever engages the energy of the individual in a definite direction, properly the tendency to go on indefinitely; almost all relationships—civic, partisan, domestic, friendly, erotic—exist, as it were, by themselves upon an inclined plane, and weave their demands, if we leave them to themselves, over the whole man. They are surrounded, in a way which often has an uncanny effect upon the feelings, by an ideal sphere, from which we must expressly set off a reserve of energies, devotions, and interests to be withheld from their claims. It is, however, not merely the extensiveness of the claims through which the social egoism of every societary formation threatens the freedom of its elements, but the relentlessness with which the quite one-sided and unlimited claim of once existing correlations asserts itself. Every such correlation is wont to press its rights with pitilessness and indifference against other interests and duties, whether they are harmonious or completely incompatible with it; and by this character of its behavior it limits the freedom of the individual not less than by its quantitative extension. In contrast with this form of our relationships, freedom appears as a continuous process of emancipation, as a struggle not merely for the independence of the *ego*, but also for the right to enter *voluntarily* at any moment even into dependence, as a struggle which must be renewed after every victory. Unrestraint as a negatively social attitude is thus in reality almost never a permanent possession, but an incessant self-detachment from constraints, which continually either limit in reality or attempt ideally to limit the living-unto-himself of the individual. Freedom is no solipsistic being, but a sociological doing; not a condition limited to the integrity of the agent, but a relation, even if always to be contemplated from the standpoint of the agent.

2. As on its functional side, so also on the side of its content, is freedom something quite different from the putting-off of relationships, or from immunity of the individual's sphere from the impact of contiguous spheres. This follows from the very simple thought that man not merely wants to be free, but wants to use his freedom for some purpose. This use, however, is in large measure nothing else than the control and use of other men. For the social individual, that is, for the individual who lives in regular reciprocal relationships with others, freedom would in countless cases be entirely without content and purpose, if it did not make possible, or did not consist in, the extension of his will over those others. Our idiom quite correctly characterizes certain brusquenesses and arbitrarinesses when it says that one "takes liberties with another" (*sich eine Freiheit gegen jemanden herausnimmt*), and in the same way many languages have used their word for freedom in the sense of "right" or "privilege." The negatively social character of freedom as a relationship of the agent to himself is thus enlarged in both directions to a very positive character. Freedom consists in great measure in a process of liberation, it raises itself above and beyond a constraint, and gets meaning, consciousness, and value only as reaction against the same; and it consists not less of a power-relation to others, of the possibility of making oneself count within this relation, of making others tributary or subject, in all of which relations to others freedom begins to find its value and its application. The meaning of freedom, which is confined to the agent in and of himself, is thus only like the watershed between these two social meanings of the term, namely that the agent is bound by others and binds others. This meaning, so to speak, shrinks to nothing for the sake of disclosing the real meaning of freedom, viz., even where it is represented as a quality of the individual, still as this two-sided sociological relationship.

Since, however, it is so often complex and indirect connections through which such apparently individual realities, seemingly belonging so far from society, as isolation and freedom, actually exist as forms of sociological relationship, yet the

sociological formation which is *methodologically* simplest is that between *two* elements. It furnishes the scheme, the germ, and the material for countless more complex formations; although its sociological significance by no means rests merely upon its extensions and its multiplications. It is rather itself a socialization, in which not only many forms of socialization realize themselves, purely and characteristically, but the limitation to a duality of the elements is, indeed, the condition under which alone a certain series of forms of relationship can emerge. The typically sociological nature of the same appears then not only in the fact that the greatest manifoldness of the individualities and of the combining motives does not alter the similarity of these formations, but rather that these sometimes occur quite as typically between pairs of groups—families, states, combinations of various sorts—as between pairs of single persons.

The peculiar conferring of characteristics upon a relationship through the duality of persons concerned in it is exhibited by everyday experiences. For instance, how differently a common lot, an undertaking, an agreement, a shared secret binds each of two sharers, from the case when even only three participate. The specific character of this difference is determined by the fact that the relationship, as a unity composed of its individuals, as a special structure beyond these, has a different bearing upon each of its participants from that of a more complicated structure to each of its members. However it may appear to third parties as an independent, superindividual unity, yet, as a rule, that is not the case for its participants, but each regards himself in antithesis only with the other, but not with a collectivity extending beyond him. The social structure rests immediately upon the one and the other. The departure of each single individual would destroy the whole, so that it does not come to such a superpersonal life of the whole that the individual feels himself independent; whereas, even in the case of an association of only three, if one individual departs, a *group* may still continue to exist.

There are, nevertheless, exceptions to this character of the dual groupings, the most decisive of which seems to appear in

the case of that relationship which depends most definitely upon the dyad type, that is, monogamous marriage. The by no means rare fact that among thoroughly worthy persons decidedly unfortunate marriages occur, and very fortunate ones between defective persons, points at once to the fact that this structure, however *dependent* it is upon each of the members, still may have a character which coincides with that of neither associate. If, for example, each of the wedded pair suffers from vagaries, difficulties, and unavailabilities, but at the same time understands how to localize these upon himself, while he invests in the marital relationship only his best and purest, and thus holds the relationship free from all the discounts which affect himself as a person, this may immediately be to the credit merely of the partner in marriage as a person, but there nevertheless arises from it the feeling that marriage is something superpersonal, something in itself worthy and sacred, which stands over and above the unsanctity of each of its elements. Since within a relationship the one is sensitive only on the side toward the other, and behaves only with regard to him, his qualities, although they are, of course, always his own, nevertheless attain a quite different shading, status, and meaning from that which they have when, referring only to the proper *ego*, they weave themselves into the total complexity of the *ego*. Hence for the consciousness of each of the two the relationship may crystallize to an entity outside of himself, which is more and better—under certain circumstances also worse—than himself; something toward which he has obligations, and from which there come to him, as from an objective existence, benefits and injuries. With respect to marriage, this tracing of the group-unity to something more than its construction upon the mere I and thou is facilitated by the two sorts of circumstances. In the first place, by its incomparable intimacy. That two such fundamentally different natures as man and woman constitute such a close union; that the egoism of the individual is suspended so fundamentally, not merely in favor of the one, but in favor of the total relationship which includes the family interests, the family honor, and more than all the children, is really

a miracle which goes back to foundations beyond the conscious *ego*, in circumstances not rationalistically explicable. This very fact expresses itself in the distinction between this unity and its individual elements. That each of these is sensible of the relation as something which leads a peculiar life, with peculiar energies, is merely a statement of its incommensurability with that which we are accustomed to represent as the personal and of-itself-conceivable *ego*. This is furthermore promoted by the superindividuality of the marriage forms in the spirit of their historical tradition. Immeasurably different as the character and worth of the forms of marriage may be—indeed, one would be rash to say whether they are more or less different than separate individuals—yet in the last analysis no pair has invented the form of marriage for itself, but this form prevailed within each culture area as a relatively fixed one, safe from arbitrariness, and untouched in its formal nature by individual shadings and vicissitudes. This projection of traditional elements into the matrimonial relationship, which puts it in significant contrast with the individual freedom that is possible, for instance, in molding the friendly relationship, and which permits only acceptance or rejection, but no modification, obviously favors the feeling of an objective constitution and superpersonal unity in marriage; although each of the two partners has only the single other in juxtaposition with himself, yet he feels himself at least partially so situated as one feels only when in correlation with a collectivity—*i. e.*, as the mere bearer of a superindividual structure, which in its essence and its norms is independent of himself, although, to be sure, he is an organic member of it. Something sociologically similar might be pointed out, furthermore, in the duality of partners in a business. Although the formation and operation of the partnership rest, perhaps, exclusively upon the co-operation of these two personalities, yet the subject-matter of this co-operation, the business or the firm, is an objective structure, toward which each of its components has rights and duties—in many respects not otherwise than any third party. Yet this has a sociological meaning different from that in the case of marriage; for the business is some-

thing from the beginning separated from the persons of those who carry it on, and indeed in the case of a duality of such persons this is not otherwise true than in the case of one alone or many. The reciprocal relationship of the business associates has its purpose outside of itself; whereas in the case of marriage it is within itself. In the former instance the relationship is the means for the gaining of certain objective results; in the latter everything objective appears really only as a means for the subjective relationship. It is the more observable that in marriage, nevertheless, the objectivity and self-reliance of the group-structure, which are otherwise more foreign to groups of two, psychologically increase in contrast with immediate subjectivity.

One constellation, however, of extreme sociological importance is wanting in every grouping of two, while it is in principle open to every group of larger numbers, namely, the *shifting* of duties and responsibilities upon the impersonal structure, which so often, and not to its advantage, characterizes social life. This occurs in two directions. Every totality which is more than a mere juxtaposition of given individuals has an indefiniteness of its boundaries and of its power which easily tempts us to expect from it all sorts of achievements that really belong to the separate members. We turn them over to the society, as we very often, in pursuance of the same psychological tendency, postpone them to our own future, whose nebulous possibilities give room for everything, or will accomplish, by spontaneously growing strength, everything which the present moment is not willing to take upon itself. In the precise circumstances in question, the power of the individual is transparent, but for that very reason it is also clearly limited, while in contrast with it is always the somewhat mystical power of the totality, of which we therefore easily expect, not only what the individual cannot perform, but also what he would not care to perform, and, moreover, with the feeling of the full legitimacy of this transfer. Quite as dangerous, however, as on the side of omission is membership in a totality also on the side of commission. Here the point is not merely the increase of impulsiveness and the exclusion of moral restraint, as they appear in the case of the individual in a crowd,

and lead to those mass-crimes in which even the legal responsibility of the participants is debatable, but the point is that the true or the ostensible interest of a community justifies or constrains the individual in undertakings for which he would not be willing to bear the responsibility as an individual. Economic combinations make demands of such shameless egoism, colleagues in office wink at such crying malfeasances, corporations of political or of scientific nature exercise such monstrous suppressions of individual rights, as would be impossible in the case of an individual if he were responsible for them as a person, or at least they would put him to shame. As a member of a corporation, however, he does all this with untroubled conscience, because in that case he is anonymous and feels himself covered and, as it were, concealed by the totality. There are few cases in which the distance of the social unity from the elements which constitute it is so great. It is perceptible and operative to a degree which descends almost to caricature.

It was necessary to indicate this reduction of the practical worth of personality, which inclusion in a group often occasions for the individual, in order that, by exclusion of this factor, we might characterize the dyad-group. Since in this case each element has only another individual by its side, but not a multiplicity which ultimately constitutes a higher unity, the dependence of the whole upon himself, and consequently his co-responsibility for all collective action, is made perfectly visible. He can, to be sure, as happens frequently enough, shift responsibility upon his associate, but the latter will be able to decline the same much more immediately and decisively than can often be done by an anonymous whole, which lacks the energy of personal interest or the legitimate representation requisite for such cases. Moreover, just as the one of two constituting a group cannot hide himself behind the group in cases of positive action, no more can he claim the group for his excuse in cases of culpable inaction. The energies with which the group very indefinitely and very partially, to be sure, but still very perceptibly, overtops the individual cannot in this instance reinforce the individual inadequacy, as in the case of larger combinations; for, however

manifoldly two combined individuals accomplish more than two that are isolated, yet the decisive factor in this case is that each must actually perform something, and that, when he refuses to do this, only the other remains, without any superindividual energy such as, even in the case of a combination of only three, is in some measure present. The significance of this detail resides, however, by no means merely in the negative, in that which it excludes; from it grows rather a close and special modulation of the union of two. Precisely the fact that each knows he can depend only upon the other, and upon nobody else, gives to such a combination—for example, marriage, friendship, and even more external combinations up to political adjustment of two groups—a special consecration; each element in them is, in respect to its sociological destiny and everything dependent upon this, much more frequently made to confront the alternative of all or nothing than in other associations. This peculiar intimacy appears most simply in the contrast between it and combinations of three. In such a case each individual element operates as a court of appeal between the two others, and exhibits the double function of such an organ. It operates both in combining and separating. Where three elements, A, B, C, constitute a community, there is added to the immediate relationship which exists, for example, between A and B, the immediate relationship which they gain by their common relation to C. This is unquestionably a sociological enrichment, apart from the bond by the straight and shortest line; each pair of elements are now joined by a broken line. Points upon which the pair could find no immediate contact are put in reciprocal relationship by the third element, which offers to each another side, and joins these, nevertheless, in the unity of its personality. Separations which the parties could not of themselves reconcile are accommodated by the third, or by their being included in a comprehensive whole. On the other hand, the direct union is not merely strengthened by the indirect, but it may also be destroyed. There is no relationship so complete between three that each individual may not, under certain circumstances, be regarded by the other two as an intruder, even if it is only to the extent of

sharing in certain moods, which can develop their concentration and timid tenderness only with undisturbed glance from eye to eye. It may also be observed how extraordinarily rare and difficult it is for three people, even in the case of a visit to a museum or in the presence of a landscape, to come into a really united state of feeling, which, however, may occur with relative ease between two. A and B may emphasize the μ which they have in common and may feel it undisturbed, because the ν which A does not share with B and the ξ which B does not share with A are felt immediately as an individual reserve, and as located in another story of one's being. If, however, a C joins the company, who shares the ν with A and the ξ with B, the result is that even under this scheme, which is still favorable to the unity of the whole, the unification of feeling is in principle arrested. While two may actually be *one* party, or may stand quite beyond the party question, it is usual in precisely such finely tuned combinations for three to constitute at the same time three parties, and consequently to terminate the unified relation of each to every other. The sociological structure of the combination in twos is consequently distinguished by the fact that both phenomena are lacking: both the strengthened attachment through a third, or, it may be, through a social frame reaching out over both, and also the interruption and distraction of pure and immediate reciprocation. But in many cases this lack makes the relationship more intensive and strong, for in the feeling of being thrown exclusively upon each other, and of having no hope of recourse to cohesive forces which do not spring from immediate reciprocity, many otherwise undeveloped energies, which have their source in remoter psychical reservoirs, will become vital in the community, and many disturbances and threatenings into which there might be betrayal, under confidence in the third party and in a totality, are carefully avoided. This intimacy, to which the circumstances existing between *two* people incline them, furnishes the reason why precisely these constitute the chief seat of jealousy.

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[*To be continued.*]