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Norms and institutions as means of coping with insecurity: the sociological perspective

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1. The paradox of the need for security

All the available information suggests that people throughout history have never lived as securely as they do in modern industrial or post-industrial societies. Average life expectancy at birth is now approaching what is believed to be its biological limit. Even the two terrible wars of this century have had less of an impact in this respect than the major wars of the past and their accompanying epidemics and famines. Even ageing people are coming to enjoy an increasingly enviable standard of health: whereas the female characters in Balzac's novels were already in the throes of a crisis of old age when they were thirty, and Sigmund Freud could still point to the rigidity of thirty-year-old women at the beginning of this century, nowadays we are astonished by the youthfulness of sixty-year-old women.

If we judge our level of security by the risk data of our observable living conditions, there is no denying that people have never lived as well and securely as they do today; this security is enjoyed not only by a small upper class but by the entire population, except for a few marginal groups. We have gone a long way: where was there ever a comparably efficient economic system? More political order and legal protection coupled with so little coercion? More individual freedom and greater technical ability to tackle risks and catastrophes?

Yet there is every indication that the need for security has increased in modern times and that it will go on increasing. To understand this paradox – that the subjective need for security increases the more actual security we have in terms of objective protection from perils – we must consider more precisely what is being aimed at when people strive for more “security”.

Consideration of the history of the concept¹⁾ shows first that “security” only became a normative and political notion with the development of modern society, incorporating not only the meaning of the Latin *securus* (free of care) but also the connotations of *certus* (certain), *tutus* (protected), *salvus* (intact) and *fidus* (reliable). “Security” has thus today become a complex model, a concept which expresses social value – like freedom, equality, health, prosperity, democracy, etc. – upon which we can so readily agree precisely because such different elements can be subsumed in it.

Nevertheless, it is not a formula devoid of content. The meaning of the concept of security arises precisely out of the amalgamation of the connotations mentioned above: security subsists where people can be certain of reliable protection of their intactness and can therefore be free of care. From this point of view, the *normative* aspect of the idea of security lies not only in objective protection from risks and perils but also in the simultaneous possibility of assuring oneself of this protection and its reliability and, precisely on the basis of this assurance, of justifiably feeling free of cares. Accordingly, insecurity signifies not merely danger or risk but also uncertainty of perception or of orientation; it is thus ultimately an emotional state and a state of consciousness.

When we speak of a “need” for security, we are plainly referring to a state of *subjective* insecurity. For the sake of simplicity, subjective insecurity may be regarded as a function of situational, cultural and personality factors. In the remainder of this study, we shall have to disregard the personality factors (e. g., tolerance of risk and frustration; differences in ability to define complex situations and to make decisions when confronted by them)²⁾. Apart from the pathological case of endogenous anxieties, however, each instance of subjective insecurity also has *situational* aspects – i. e., it is a consequence of the observation and assessment of situations, which may be either “insecure” in the sense of objectivizable risks or “insecurity-arousing” in the sense of not being readily comprehensible.

In the former case, precautions against risk will, it seems, always be possible, but in the latter, an appropriate response is much more difficult, if not indeed impossible. Insecurities of orientation are therefore generally more emotionally disturbing than identifiable risks. For this reason, the most important source of the persistent growth of the desire for security probably lies in insecurities of orientation rather than in an increase in the dangers to reputation, prosperity, physical integrity and life.

From another point of view, security and insecurity appear as modes of assessment of our orientation towards the future. Risk and danger constitute *future* possibilities which are assessed negatively. If we describe something as secure, we presuppose that it is not threatened in the future; this applies not only to goods but also to knowledge and perception. For modern man, however, the future is the epitome of uncertainty. We all know that as a rule the future will not be a mere continuation of the present but will be *different*³⁾. This is manifested, for example, in the assertion that we are in a *crisis* (crisis of meaning, value crisis, crisis of a society based on the work ethic, of the welfare state, of the environment, of technicized medicine, etc.)⁴⁾. Our fundamental experience of insecurity is thus an experience of the *variability* of our living conditions, while the awareness of crisis is a cultural reflection of the characteristic modern acceleration of social change under the influence of technology, the competitive economy and active intervention by the state. Such experiences, and, in particular, the accompanying cultural interpretation patterns, influence our cognitive structures – i. e., we today consider much more to be possible than did earlier generations. Our insecurity problem in fact lies in this *extended spectrum of possibilities*, the increased complexity of the parts of the world which we consider to be meaningful for us, and the resulting constant necessity of choosing from the plethora of possibilities and making up our minds.

One last point on this subject is that if we experience ourselves as being in need of security, this is partly because security can today substantially be *achieved*. People in earlier times had to live with much greater perils which were uncontrollable and unpredictable. Damage and misfortune were interpreted as the workings of fate or even as having been sent by God. We, however, live in a society which has learned to handle risks rationally and indeed to profit from the increased level of risk bound up with its way of life. Every day we venture onto the roads with potential lethal weapons; we handle substances which are hazardous to life; and we satisfy our energy requirements from nuclear power plants. We live in a society in which risk has become both routine and calculable⁵⁾. For this reason, it is taken for granted that we must pay heed to security.

Finally, of course, having many possessions implies that one also has much to lose; this gives rise to worries about the preservation of more things and values. However, dealing with objectivizable risks has become virtually a matter of course for us. Our insecurity arises less from clearly identifiable threats to specific goods than from uncertainty as to the preservation of their value. The trouble is not so much the objective dangers as the uncertainty of future developments which threaten our automatic assumption of the continued existence of what is dear and valuable to us. For this reason, our need for security can be assuaged only partially by the coverage of identifiable risks.

2. Security and insecurity as the result of social conditions

Robinson Crusoe is a fictional character; no one in fact lives alone. Even if our everyday conception of security and insecurity relates principally to individuals, their security and insecurity nevertheless always depend on the social background. This was already true of small early

tribal societies and is equally so of modern man, even if in a different form. The technical, constitutional, legal and economic precautions on which the substantial freedom from danger of our lives objectively depends are the product of human interaction under specific, institutionalized conditions.

We shall not be concerned here with these concrete precautions – safety engineering, road safety or public security measures, constitutionality and its guarantee of legal security, the insurance industry and the economic security it provides, and the social security system (to mention only the most important). Many of these aspects will be discussed in other papers reproduced in this volume. As shown in the foregoing, the problem in modern societies consists less in the possibility of objective protection from risk than in the uncertainty of expectations and the deficiency of our orientations, as a result of which insecurity arises. The relation between “objective” protection and “subjective” security seems to be disturbed. There are many indications that this is due to our very limited ability to assure ourselves of the reliability of the safeguards on which the freedom from danger of our lives depends. This is illustrated nowadays particularly clearly by the emotionally charged controversy about nuclear energy and the prevention of war, but it is in fact a problem which virtually pervades the conditions under which we live. If we are to understand the paradox of our need for security, we must turn to sociology for an explanation of the condition of our society.

2.1. Norms and institutions

The principal concern of sociology is the description and explanation of human interaction in society. For people to be able to live and work together, a degree of preliminary understanding is always necessary; in more technical language, a certain quantum of reciprocal predictability of behaviour is required. This is the reason for the caution with which one confronts foreigners, who are assumed to be fundamentally different. By contrast, our behaviour with “people of our own kind” tends to be relatively open and uninhibited even if we are not personally acquainted with them. We take it for granted that the other’s feelings, expectations and actions are similar to what our own would be in his position. And we are constantly monitoring our success at reaching an understanding – the extent to which we live in a “shared world” – by observation of the other’s language, gestures and behaviour. The possibility of such common horizons of experience is a consequence of *social order*, a typification and designation of realities which we have come to take for granted: we do not need to invent the names of things and their meanings as individuals but always find them pre-existing as a socially constructed and defined reality.

Furthermore, this reality always has an implicitly *normative* character: in most situations of daily life, we can estimate what is permitted and useful in them or, conversely, what is out of keeping with the prevailing expectations. Social order is thus continuously confirmed by the behaviour of our fellows and ourselves; it is revealed to an impartial observer primarily in regularities of behaviour, but the participants themselves can usually also explain the rules which give rise to such regularities of behaviour – e. g., the rule of the road or the fact that normally only one person at a time speaks.

Social order can thus be reduced fundamentally to widely disseminated, shared ideas about what should be done or must not be done in specific situations. These are defined sociologically as *social norms*, which are distinguished by the extent to which they are binding, constituting, for example, law, morality, custom, convention or mere habit. However, it is not the rules themselves but their appropriateness which maintains the social order. Rules appear *appropriate* and condu-

cive to order if behaviour in conformity with the rules usually leads to success – i. e., to the achievement of the intentions of those concerned. This presupposes that the behaviour patterns applicable to specific situations are mutually consistent and that they constitute a context that is meaningful to those concerned and fully embraces their intentions, so that not only individual actions but the basic features of entire sequences of actions become susceptible of expectation. Sociologists refer to such complex ideas on typified situations, coherent action structures and sequences of actions as (social) *institutions*. Social ordering structures of this kind do not as a rule arise on the basis of a rational plan but evolve gradually during the course of history; they assume appropriate form predominantly by a process of inductive learning and subsequent generalization. However, particularly in modern times, far-reaching intellectual concepts sometimes admittedly also play an important part in these processes.

The institution of “marriage”, for example, subsumes the conditions of fitness for marriage, ideas on a “proper match”, the rules of sex-specific division of labour in the home or marital fidelity, aspects of the law of names and inheritance and, last but not least, conceptions of the “breakdown of marriage” and the norms of divorce procedure. Another example is the institution of the “contract”. Although the principal rules may be found in the Civil Code, the institution of the contract should not be identified with the relevant sections in the codification. The individualistic background of social philosophy and the prevailing conceptions of good faith, for instance, are equally important factors in the moulding of this institution. We may also describe “insurance” as an institution; however, as such it involves not only the law governing insurance contracts but also, for example, the system of State supervision of insurance, the principles of capital investment, risk cover and claims settlement customary in the sector, and the model of a “serious insurance company”.

More detailed analysis reveals three main aspects of institutions:

Firstly, in relation to the fields of life regulated by them, institutions define the typical possibilities of action of different actors, which can be conceived analytically as “positions” and “roles”. Secondly, they thus at the same time clarify the underlying power situation and, thirdly, they justify the meaning of the forms of behaviour allowed in their field of influence, while legitimating themselves as entities. As the modern examples mentioned above show, it must be assumed that conflicts of interest or even normative contradictions will arise as a matter of course within a coherent institutionalized action structure. An institution is only ideally a whole that is free of contradictions; in reality, the various rules attributed to an institution are only partially coherent and by no means always unequivocal; sometimes they may even be disputed. We shall turn later to the forms and scale of institutional integration.

2.2. The relevance of institutions to security

In order for coherent institutionalized action structures to be stable, the actors involved must on the whole abide by the social norms applicable in the situations concerned. However, how is the prevailing observance of the norms to be explained if we are bound to assume that conflicts of interest arise among those concerned even within coherent institutionalized action structures, and if it is indeed to be expected that many actors will consider particular rules to be disadvantageous to themselves or the identifiable result of the interactions to be unfair?

For the sake of brevity, this can be explained principally by the fact that institutions have the effect of *allaying uncertainty*. Life in society would be impossible without a certain measure of social order: man would be unpredictable both to himself and to others. Thomas

Hobbes was the first to put forward this idea of the fundamental unpredictability and dangerousness of man to man in a "state of nature" lacking social order, deriving from it the need for the State as the guarantor of an order ensuring public security⁶⁾. This idea was generalized by the American sociologist Talcott Parsons and turned into the foundation of a universal sociological theory whose fundamental concern is to explain how people manage to rid themselves of the insecurity resulting from the reciprocal contingency of their possibilities of action⁷⁾. For Parsons, the social institutions and the social systems resulting from them are the true subject of sociology. In the German-speaking world, Arnold Gehlen is the principal author to have discussed the uncertainty-allaying effects of institutions⁸⁾.

The big advantage of institutions for all participants is that, by virtue of the situation definitions they supply and the associated expectations of action, while limiting each party's scope for action, they at the same time structure it. We are all familiar with the relief experienced when a doctor tells us that our troubles are the symptoms of a "disease". We then know that we are entitled to a period of recuperation, to the temporary neglect of our normal duties and to therapeutic measures⁹⁾. A whole range of possibilities of action opens up – possibilities which are closed or would usually not even occur to a "healthy person". All those around us in our society are bound to respect this "disease" – even if it is only a plausible pretence! Hence it is a feature of institutions that they can also be used in a manner contrary to their intention. Since they necessarily contain rules for a general or typical case, institutions always have a fictitious aspect in relation to concrete reality.

The "validity" of social norms is therefore up to a point distinguishable from personal acknowledgment of their underlying legitimating sense. Admittedly the stability of an institution is greatest when all those subject to it are convinced of its sense and value and of the correctness of all its rules; the inclination to deviate is then at its lowest, while the willingness to exert pressure on deviants is greatest. However, provided that the "sense of the whole" is not called into question from the normative point of view (as it is, for example, by Ivan Illich in respect to our medical system¹⁰⁾, the uncertainty-allaying and hence security-assuring function of institutions normally remains effective even if there are many infringements of the rules, because the possibly fictitious idea of an existing order is not thereby destroyed.

Hence, irrespective of the sphere which is regulated and also largely independently of the individual results of the current means of regulation, social norms and institutions have implications for security in that they can structure the expectations of those subject to them and define the scope of the actions open to the persons concerned. They therefore guarantee both security of behaviour and the determinacy of reciprocal expectations, and are thus a constitutive factor of social integration. By limiting the field of the socially acceptable, they admittedly restrict freedom to some extent, but at the same time afford greater security of expectations. The higher probability of prediction and hence the chance of the rational pursuit of interests are offset by a loss of undiscriminated possibilities of action.

A final comment on this point is that institutions can, of course, achieve all this only if those concerned know and believe in what is regulated by them and its meaning. We call the processes of acquisition of institutionalized knowledge socialization¹¹⁾. People learn the significance of social reality by participating in it. In modern societies, there are also explicit "theories" or "ideologies" for explanation of the reality and legitimation of the actions defined as necessary. People then usually assimilate the meaning of a coherent action structure (e. g., the

“market economy” or the “constitutional state”) only by learning the theory *and* by experience.

2.3. Traditional and modern societies

Yet the approach adopted so far is still too simple to resolve the paradox of our need for security. After all, it has so far appeared as if the security of our expectations and the possibility of orientation by acting so as to promote the interests of our security should increase with the evident growth in the institutionalization of all fields of life in modern times. This impression is indeed fundamentally accurate: we do in fact have more possibilities than ever before of providing for our future and protecting ourselves from catastrophes of almost every kind, precisely thanks to such forms of institutionalization.

However, it is implicit in the theories which suggest to us that institutions impart security that people are always exposed to the efficacy of only *one* institution at a time, or at least of one self-consistent institutional order guaranteed by a central institution. But this assumption is no longer true of modern conditions. To understand this change, we shall consider below the processes of *institutional differentiation* on which our acquired security rests.

Both T. Parsons's system theory and A. Gehlen's theory of institutions came about by a process of vigorous confrontation with the discoveries of ethnology and cultural anthropology – i. e., they were developed against a background of decidedly *traditional* forms of society. These differ from modern societies principally in the following respects¹²: (a) They consist of relatively small social units (mostly from a few dozen to a few hundred people) clearly distinguished from the world surrounding them. (b) People are at the same time always only members of *one* such unit, in which they are personally acquainted with nearly all the other members; they have no permanent contact with other social units. (c) Living conditions are unstable and directly dependent on the circumstances of the natural environment (weather, natural catastrophes, epidemics). (d) The cultural heritage is handed down exclusively or predominantly orally. Writing either does not exist or else literacy is confined to specialists in the service of the rulers.

Under these conditions, the chronological stability of institutions is almost entirely a matter of the performance of the *memories* of the members of the society or, as is already frequently the case, of “specialists” (e. g., magicians, chiefs and judges). The *immutability* and *fixity* of social order which we ascribe to traditional societies relates much more to the cultural models than to reality as it may be experienced. In view of the constant threat from external agencies and the transience of everything of importance to life, the striving for permanence and the assertion of the immutability of institutional orders are *complementary* tendencies. Under these conditions the stability of institutions is a matter not of actual immutability but of an appeal to the fact that things have always been so. This belief is usually legitimated by *religion* or, more precisely, it is religion which, being “sacred”, inviolable and unchanging, guarantees the continued existence of the order which is imagined to be immutable¹³. According to modern anthropological findings, human beings, unlike animals, are in a state of constitutional insecurity or “structurally unstable” (Hernegger). Because instinct is automatic, animals always know what to do, and it is precisely this security of instinct which man lacks; however, man's phylogenetic instinctual residues in effect survive in the *quest for a “unity” of world and experience*. Such an experience of unity was mediated in early man mostly by animal symbols (totems), with which the group identified. The totem is, so to speak, the guarantor of the social order and the symbol of group unity, whereby “the whole” can be experienced on both the real and symbolic levels simultaneously.

It is typical of tribal societies that economic, political, religious and reproductive functions are performed within one and the same group, but in more complex forms of traditional society (e. g., alliances between tribes, empires formed by conquest and superimposition, etc.), political functions are already somewhat centralized, the central ideas which guarantee unity being more abstract (myths and gods). As forms of political rule become more complex and literacy develops, there is already an incipient multiplication of institutions, and indeed of religious cults, which are eventually superseded by the idea of monotheism as a new unifying principle.

However, there is already a latent tension between the idea of monotheism and the principles of traditional order, and in the sphere of influence of Christianity¹⁴⁾, the way was paved for the *new principle of social integration* which characterizes modern societies and is based no longer on the hierarchic unity of institutional order but on the complementarity of relatively autonomous institutional suborders which are no longer rigidly linked together¹⁵⁾.

If for the sake of simplicity we wish to reduce the progressive tendency in the development of human society to a single common denominator, the concept that suggests itself is that of a progressive increase in complexity. Human societies are becoming more and more complex and multifarious. As indicated only in outline in the foregoing, this has, of course, not been the case only since the beginning of modern times, but there has nevertheless been a qualitative change as European history has unfolded since the late Middle Ages: we have succeeded in creating increasingly differentiated and specialized institutions, although at the cost of normative integration in a conceivable social whole. The functions of politics (the state), economics (the market economy), religion (the Church) and reproduction (the family) are now institutionalized in orders substantially independent of one another and are developing from within themselves their own "internal logics", which can no longer be brought into coincidence in a higher-level system. Again, further new institutional spheres have arisen, such as the scientific, educational and health systems and the fine arts, which also lay claim to internal logics and acknowledgment of their normative autonomy. Furthermore, different normative conceptions compete within each of these institutionalized spheres in modern societies, so that modern culture, as the epitome of the different institutionalized systems of meaning, may now appropriately be described as no more than a "pluralistic" conglomerate of different normative orders.

This cultural and functional differentiation is paralleled by a structural and organizational differentiation: social structures in modern societies conform to a specific type of organization, frequently referred to as "formal organization"¹⁶⁾. People are integrated as members of these formal organizations no longer in all fields of life but only in very specific aspects. Hence the living conditions of modern socialization are no longer characterized by integration in a group which embraces virtually all aspects of life but instead by membership of a large number of organizations which for their part have different institutional legitimations, conform to different social norms and therefore make different claims upon the behaviour of individuals.

A final point on this subject is that the substantial independence of the institutional suborders gives rise to a process of development affecting the whole of society because each of these institutional suborders changes according to its own internal dynamic, these changes, however, in turn having repercussions on other aspects of the society. The various suborders thus exert a constant mutual adaptation pressure on each other, giving rise to further internal changes in them

and initiating a further process of development.

In this way, modern societies have attained a new form of stability, which can best be described as a stressful equilibrium of differing trends. The concept of an integral and fundamentally immutable order has completely ceased to be applicable to a society in this situation. For this reason, all "ideologies of unity" are becoming increasingly implausible; the world as it may be experienced has become too complex to be comprehended from a single viewpoint.

3. Conclusions

These social changes have not yet been properly assimilated in the world of ideas, nor have they been acknowledged universally as elements in our understanding of ourselves¹⁷⁾. Perhaps under the sway of their prehominal heritage¹⁸⁾, people are still searching for their "lost wholeness", the magic formulae competing for which are "identity" and "evolution". The loss of this wholeness makes a concrete entity of man's existential insecurity. Anxiety and security have thus become central issues of the twentieth century.

However, modern man's insecurity of orientation is due not only to this loss of cultural unity – i. e., the increasingly overdemanding requirement of feeling at home in a multiplicity of institutional orders which are badly, if at all, coordinated. New forms of experience of situational insecurity are also evident: anyone who takes his child to a hospital or approaches an official body with a somewhat unusual request can readily experience such a situation (depicted in extreme form by Franz Kafka in his novel *The Castle*). You stand on the doorstep of an entity which is substantially impenetrable in its internal organization, in the rules by which its actions are governed and, in particular, in the rationale of this organization – an entity which, while perfectly comprehensible in principle and quite possibly more or less effectively organized, nevertheless remains largely opaque to an outsider's scrutiny.

Each of us participates in specific institutional spheres to a greater extent than others, whether professionally or as an active leisure commitment. We usually know our way around fairly well in such spheres and can pursue our intentions in a considered manner¹⁹⁾. But we understand virtually nothing of the majority of our social institutions, or at least only what is presented to us by the mass media, which is as a rule the sensational and not the routine. Hence, although there are good reasons to assume that the institutional spheres with which we have to do only sporadically are in themselves similarly well organized to, and work no less reliably than, the ones with which we are more familiar, we remain unable to *assure* ourselves whether the expected services will be performed reliably in our case as in others or whether the organization and its staff with whom we have to deal will not take enough trouble with our affairs.

Although the situational and cultural insecurities of orientation as modes of experience have little to do with each other, they can ultimately be reduced to the same source: the increased complexity of social conditions. However, this complexity, or the specialization of functions on which it is based, is also the condition for the objectivizable forms of security mentioned at the beginning of this paper. In this way, our efforts to achieve more protection and security at the same time, and with a certain inevitability, generate more complexity, greater difficulties of orientation and hence new insecurity.

As a constructive criticism, the following recommendation may be made on the basis of this insight. Institutions – particularly those which have to deal not with a professional public (e. g., reinsurers) but with a lay public (e. g., most original insurers) – should concentrate their efforts to guarantee security not only on the objective services they ren-

der but should endeavour especially to make the reliability of their services more transparent to their clients. Of course, however, such efforts will not by themselves be sufficient to get rid of the problem outlined here once and for all.

The usual recommendation following from our understanding of the situation described above tends to be that people should learn to live with their insecurity. The insecurities of orientation could thus, so to speak, be charged on the debit side as a necessary concomitant of progress. However, to shrug off the problem in this way is rational only if it can be confidently assumed that the difficulties of orientation will cause only individual malaise or suffering without having any more extensive social consequences.

This assumption should not be relied upon. For instance, as more and more aspects of life come to be regulated by the law and respect for and confidence in the binding nature of laws declines as individual laws are constantly amended; and as more and more people in more and more situations obey the rules only opportunistically (or, where possible, disregard them in pursuit of their own interests); so of course are the efficacy and reliability of the legal order itself reduced²³⁾. A recent survey of senior executives reveals a clear increase in opportunism without ethical constraints among the younger generation²¹⁾. A final question which must be left open concerns the extent to which the objective reliability of our institutions is still further reduced by such trends.

Notes:

¹⁾ On the history of the concept, see W. Conze: article "Sicherheit, Schutz". In: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, Vol. 5, Stuttgart 1984, pp. 831-862; and F. X. Kaufmann: *Sicherheit als soziologisches und sozialpolitisches Problem – Untersuchungen zu einer Wertidee hochdifferenzierter Gesellschaften*. 2nd edition, Stuttgart 1973, Chapter 2. The following paragraphs develop some of the results of this study by the author.

²⁾ On this point, see the study by C. Graf Hoyos reproduced later in this volume.

³⁾ This is reflected semantically in the attribution of a temporal connotation to the concept of the future since the eighteenth century; see Kaufmann, loc. cit., p. 160 ff.

⁴⁾ The correlation between the attribution of a temporal connotation to consciousness and the experience of crisis is described by R. Kosel-

lek, article "Krise", in: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, loc. cit., Vol. 3, 1982, pp. 617–650.

⁵⁾ See U. Beck: *Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne*, Frankfurt am Main 1986.

⁶⁾ See T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, London 1975 (first published in 1651).

⁷⁾ See T. Parsons, *The Social System*, New York – London 1965².

⁸⁾ See the comprehensive summary by F. Jonas, *Die Institutionenlehre Arnold Gehlens*, Tübingen 1966.

⁹⁾ On the social basis of this "knowledge", see T. Parsons, *Definition of health and illness in the light of American values and social structure*, in: *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 21 (July 1951), pp. 452–460.

¹⁰⁾ See I. Illich, *Limits to Medicine*, London 1976.

¹¹⁾ A discussion of the relations between institutionalization and socialization which is also recommended as an introduction to sociological thought is given by P. Berger and T. Luckmann: *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Garden City, New York 1967.

¹²⁾ The following comparison is, of course, a gross simplification and is based more on the model of tribal societies than on that of the already more complex advanced civilizations which sometimes had empires covering large areas. But even these advanced civilizations (including the European feudal system) consisted in essence of relatively loose combinations of "segmental units" as described in the text.

¹³⁾ On this and the following points, see D. Claessens: *Instinkt, Psyche, Geltung*. 2nd edition, Cologne and Opladen, 1970. Independently of Claessens, but also on the basis of Gehlen's work, R. Hernegger, *Der Mensch auf der Suche nach Identität*, Bonn 1978, has provided us with an in-depth study of these matters.

¹⁴⁾ It should be added that the way is already paved for the modern idea of "unity in diversity" by the Christian theological concept of a "triune God"! Concerning the changes undergone by Christianity in the process of modernization, see F. X. Kaufmann: *Kirche und Religion in der spätindustriellen (modernen) Gesellschaft*. In: T. Rendtorff (ed.): *Charisma und Institution*. Gütersloh 1985, pp. 404–417.

¹⁵⁾ A good introduction to the relevant process of structural and functional differentiation of society is given by N. Luhmann: *Grundrechte als Institution*, Berlin 1965.

¹⁶⁾ The fundamental aspects of such organizations are described by J. D. Thompson, *Organisations in Action*, New York 1967.

¹⁷⁾ We may at least mention two recent publications which put forward a new conception of the world from the psychological and sociological viewpoints respectively: W. Obrist; *Die Mutation des Bewusstseins: Vom archaischen zum heutigen Selbst- und Weltverständnis*. Berne, Frankfurt/Main, Las Vegas 1980. N. Luhmann: *Soziale Systeme – Grundriss einer allgemeinen Theorie*. Frankfurt/Main 1984.

¹⁸⁾ See D. Claessens, loc. cit. ("Suche nach dem verlorengegangenen Instinkt", 2nd edition 1970, p. 131 foll.).

¹⁹⁾ We need only mention in passing that precisely in this field, it is, of course, largely a matter of individual capabilities (intelligence and learning ability) and social position (a clearer view is to be had from senior positions in the hierarchy!), and that this is precisely the locus of central aspects of modern social inequality.

²⁰⁾ See F. X. Kaufmann: *Rechtsgefühl, Verrechtlichung und Wandel des Rechts*. In: E. J. Lampe (ed.): *Das sogenannte Rechtsgefühl. Jahrbuch für Rechtssoziologie und Rechtstheorie*, Vol. 10, Opladen 1985, pp. 184–202.

²¹⁾ See F. X. Kaufmann, W. Kerber, P. M. Zulehner: *Ethos und Religion bei Führungskräften*. Munich 1986.