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An analysis of a discussion group

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AN ANALYSIS OF A
DISCUSSION GROUP

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
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BY
ROBERT THREATT

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Early research on small groups was given its primary impetus by psychologists, such as Lewis M. Terman,\(^1\) Floyd H. Allport\(^2\) and Ethel M. Riddle.\(^3\) Systematic observation in this area dates back to 1890.\(^4\) Sociologists have had a general but largely unfocused interest in small group research since the early days of Sociology, but as indicated below, only since 1920 has this interest been systematically focused:

Theoretically and empirically, works of sociologists have historical priority in showing persistent concern with the topic of small groups. Since the early 1920's a definite research development in sociology related to small groups has been carried on, as represented by the works of men like Thrasher, Anderson, Clifford Shaw, Zorbaugh, Hiller, and Whyte . . . \(^5\)


\(^3\) Ethel M. Riddle, "Aggressive Behavior in a Small Social Group," Archeological Psychology, XII (1925) #78.


Much of the theoretical bases for the research of the men listed above, however, had roots in the writings and ideas of Emile Durkheim, Charles H. Cooley, George M. Mead, and Georg Simmel.¹

The latest development in small group research revolves largely around the following orientations:² (a) the population, structure, and syntality approach which is used by Raymond B. Cattell; (b) the work performance interactional variables' approach which is employed by Ralph M. Stogdill; (c) the cohesiveness approach which is used by Saul Scheidlinger; (d) the sociometric approach which is used by Helen Hall Jennings; and (e) the action, interaction, and situation approach which is utilized by Robert F. Bales. A modification of Bales' approach is the one developed by George C. Homans who looks at small groups in terms of activity, interaction, sentiment, and norms.³

Strodtbeck points out that there is a need for some form of synthesis in research on small groups. Specifically, noting the shortcomings and suggesting a course of action, he says:

As becomes apparent even from this brief mention of the background, men from various disciplines contributed to make the study of small groups the going concern that it is today. As a consequence there is diversity of emphasis in formulating problems and hypotheses, and diversity in concepts used. This state of affairs has brought about considerable elbow-rubbing and interdisc plinary bickering among sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists. In consequence of this process the interdisciplinary approach has become a necessity for achieving a rounded picture.⁴

¹Paul Hare, Edgar F. Borgotta, Robert F. Bales, Small Groups (New York, 1955) pp. 3-23.
²Dorwin Cartwright, Alvin Zander, Group Dynamics: Research and Theory (New York, 1953) pp. 3-72.
⁴Strodtbeck, op. cit., p. 760.
With this brief overview of the small group field, attention will be given next to the problem of this study.

The Problem.--This project is concerned with the examination of the relationship of social status to participation in the interactional process. The study seeks to test the following hypothesis:

Social status influences the nature of participation in the interactional process in a small group and distinctive role patterns are reflected in qualitative and quantitative behavior of status groups.

In the investigation of this hypothesis five guiding and basic questions were of central importance, namely:

1. What is the nature of the participation by status groups (upper, middle, and lower) according to quality of acts initiated?

2. What is the nature of the qualitative participation when members of the status groups direct acts toward each other?

3. How do the status groups compare with each other in number of acts initiated and received?

4. How do the status groups compare with each other in number of acts directed toward individuals and toward the group?

5. How do the status groups compare with each other in number of acts which each directs toward the others?

Data and Methodology.--The data for this study were obtained from an adult male discussion group which consisted of fourteen members. The discussion group members met bi-weekly for a time period of one and a half hour at the Fourth Avenue Public Library, Columbus, Georgia. With the exception of two members who lived in Fort Benning, Georgia, the discussion group members resided in Columbus. Controversial topics that related to the American way of life were discussed by the group. The writer observed the group during four complete sessions that were held during the periods of November, 1956 and January, 1957. Additional information
on the study population is given in Chapter Two of this investigation.

The systematic observation method was used in this study. With reference to systematic observation of small face-to-face groups, Alvin Zander makes this statement:

Systematic group observation may be described as the method whereby the behavior of a group or its members is recorded with the help of specific categories which give the observer a common perception of the phenomenon being observed.¹

The categories used in this investigation were those devised by Robert F. Bales for analysis of the interactional process. The category system by Bales is divided into three parts, namely:

(1) Twelve categories which are as follows:

1. Shows solidarity, raises other's status, gives help, rewards.
2. Shows tension release, jokes, laughs, shows satisfaction.
3. Agrees, shows passive acceptance, understands, concurs, complies.
4. Gives suggestion, direction, implying autonomy for others.
5. Gives opinion, evaluation, analysis, expresses feeling, wish.
6. Gives orientation, information, repeats, clarifies, confirms.
7. Asks for orientation, information, repetition, confirmation.
8. Asks for opinion, evaluation, information, analysis, expression of feeling.
10. Disagrees, shows passive rejection, formality, withholds help.
11. Shows tension, asks for help, withdraws out of field.
12. Shows antagonism, deflates other's status, defends or asserts self.

Six paired categories which are:

1. Problems of orientation (consist of categories 6 and 7).
2. Problems of evaluation (consist of categories 5 and 8).
3. Problems of control (consist of categories 4 and 9).
4. Problems of decision (consist of categories 3 and 10).
5. Problems of tension-management (consist of categories 2 and 11).
6. Problems of integration (consist of categories 1 and 12).

Four problem areas which are:

1. Expressive integrative, social-emotional area: Positive reactions (include categories 1, 2, and 3).
2. Instrumental-adaptive, task area: Attempted answers (include categories 4, 5, and 6).
3. Instrumental-adaptive, task area: Questions (include categories 7, 8, and 9).
4. Expressive integrative, social-emotional area: Negative reactions (include categories 10, 11, and 12).

As to the applicability of his method to a group such as the one studied herein, the following statement from Bales is pertinent:

The method is most easily applied in groups where the attention tends to focus in turn on single speakers or members, as in most discussion groups. Hence it might be said to apply to groups small enough so that each member potentially takes into account the reactions of each to the other.

A tape recorder was used to record the content of the discussion as well as to denote those persons who participated in the discussion. An additional tool used was a questionnaire, the questions of which pertained to socio-economic information about the discussion group members. A

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2 Ibid., p. 263.
modified version of W. Lloyd Warner's "Index of Status Characteristics" was also employed to ascertain the social status of the members. 1

The procedure used in the analysis of the study group will be presently described. The researcher sat next to the discussion leader at the head of the table. As the members assembled and seated themselves, their seating positions were diagrammed and numerically designated. A roster was also kept in order that an accurate identification could be made between a member and his number.

When the discussion leader called the meeting to order to commence the discussion of the topic scheduled for consideration, the tape recorder was switched on so as to get a full report on the content of the discussion and the direction in which communication was channeled. At the conclusion of the discussion, each member was given a questionnaire to complete. This questionnaire was employed to obtain information about the members with reference to age, education, occupation, marital status, and religious and political preferences.

After each meeting of the discussion group, the tape recorded discussion was transcribed. In the transcription it was noted who said what to whom. The next step was to analyze the discussion in terms of Bales' interactional process analysis method. Briefly, this procedure was applied as follows: As each member spoke, his numerical symbol, as well as the symbol of the member to whom he spoke, was placed in one of

1W. Lloyd Warner, Social Class in America (New York, 1949). The characteristics and weights used by this writer were: (a) occupation, six, (b) education, four, and (c) source of income, two. Four status groups, excluding upper-upper and lower-lower classes, were derived. The two middle status groups were combined into a single status group, thus giving three status groups.
the twelve categories. Determination of the category in which his number was placed was based on the content of his utterances.

After the data were collected, the next step was to compile them. A profile for each member was made in terms of the number of acts that a member initiated in each category. A second profile for each member was constructed in respect to the total number of acts he initiated and received irrespective of the observational categories. To show how the members related to each other in the interactional process, a qualitative matrix and a quantitative matrix were constructed. In the qualitative matrix each member was revealed in respect to the quality of his participation with the other members according to Bales' four problem areas. The quantitative matrix, revealing interpersonal communication, was devised by noting the number of acts that each member initiated for the other member.

The next step that was followed in the compilation of data was to profile each member according to the frequency with which each spoke to individual members and/or to the group. The distinction between acts initiated for the group and for individuals was indicated by designating all acts directed toward the group as zero, "0," and acts toward individuals as integers such as "1," "2," "3," and so on. The final step was to effect an approximate status classification for each member of the group. For this purpose, a modification of W. Lloyd Warner's "Index of Status Characteristics" was employed. On the basis of information received from the questionnaire given to each member, it was possible to determine status identification of the members by using three socio-economic factors, namely, occupation, education, and amount of income.
Related Literature.—Many studies have been made in respect to the
effect that status has upon the nature of participation in a small group.
Theodore Mills¹ viewed status and its influence as it related to a three-
man group in the formation of a coalition pattern. Mill concluded:

In summary, the results do not support the hypothesis.
By itself, status is not enough to produce regular differences,
and apparently the measurement of the need for dependence was
not refined enough to provide a sound separation of the sub-
jects according to personality need.²

A three-man bomber crew was investigated by E. Paul Torrance.³ One
of his observations revealed the status-role relationship that was operative
within the group. In two separate articles about the bomber crew,
Torrance makes these three statements:

Support is also found for Hurwitz, Zander, and Hymo-
vitch's findings that fewer communications will be directed
to those individuals of the group with lower status.¹

...Considerable evidence has been found to substantiate
the findings of Polansky, Lippits, and Redl that individuals
with high group prestige more frequently initiate behavioral
contagion.⁵

...The results, presented in Table 6, indicate that
certain types of interaction tend to characterize the oc-
cupants of each position. From these data, the pilots
appear to show more solidarity. . .the navigators tend to
do less agreeing. . .the gunners manifest less show of
solidarity. . .


2 Ibid., p. 665.

3 E. Paul Torrance, "The Behavior of Small Groups Under the Stress  
Conditions of Survival," American Sociological Review, XIX (December,  

4 Ibid., p. 754.

5 Ibid., p. 753.

6 Hare, op. cit., pp. 482-492.
George C. Homans analyzed the behavior of several small groups. With reference to the influence of status or rank in these groups, Homans suggested these generalizations:

...The higher a man's social rank, the larger will be the number of persons that originate interaction for him, either directly or through intermediaries.2

...The higher a man's social rank the larger the number of persons for whom he originates interaction, either directly or through intermediaries.3

...The more nearly equal in social rank a number of men are, the more frequently they interact with one another.4

...The higher a man's social rank, the more frequently he interacts with persons outside his own group.5

Harold H. Kelley studied the communication process in experimentally created hierarchies and made the following observations:

The more unpleasant is a position in a hierarchy, the stronger are the forces on a person to communicate task-irrelevant content, this holding true whether the communication is directed to one's own level or to the other level. Restraining forces act upon high status persons against addressing criticism of their own job to the lower sub-group, and against expressing confusion with their task.6

Jacob I. Hurwitz and his associates investigated the effects that power or status has on interpersonal relations within a group. The following conclusions was stated:

...The first conception is that group members occupying low status positions will perceive and behave toward

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1 Homans, op. cit.
2 Ibid., p. 182.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 184.
5 Ibid., p. 186.
6 Cartwright, op. cit., pp. 443-461.
7 Ibid., p. 460-461.
8 Ibid., p. 483-492.
high status members in an essentially ego-defensive manner, i.e., in ways calculated to reduce the feeling of uneasiness experienced in their relations with highs. . . The second conception is that awareness by people of the restraint on lows against communicating in social situations involving individuals of unequal status, and of their being unliked by other group members, may engender expectations that lows should participate relatively little in group discussions. Consequently, when lows speak up it becomes conspicuous, and the extent of their participation is exaggerated.  

In his investigation of equilibrium in the interactional process of a group, Robert Bales noted certain roles that were performed by members with various degrees of statuses. Among his many conclusions the following ones are cited:

Those who have fixed status, and those who have essentially accepted a low status, can afford to ask questions, but not those who are in the thick of competition.  

High ranking men tend to have more proactive attempted answers in their profiles and address more acts to the group as a whole than lower ranking men, while lower ranking men have more "reactions," both positive and negative, and address more of their acts to specific individuals.

Bales notes that role differentiation is a logical development in the functioning of small groups. He states that this differentiation is determined by four factors which he calls dimensions, namely:

(1) degree of access to resources, (2) degree of control over persons,
(3) degree of status in a stratified scale of importance or prestige, and
(4) degree of solidarity or cohesiveness.

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1Ibid., p. 491.
2Hare, op. cit., p. 436.
3Ibid., p. 438.
4Robert F. Bales, Interactional Process Analysis (Massachusetts, 1951) pp. 73-84.
Summary.--The purpose of the preceding discussion was to give an orientation about the broad area of small group analysis, the problem of this investigation, source of data, methodology and procedure, and related literature of this investigation. Chapter Two contains information about the discussion group members in respect to the community setting, meeting place and purpose of the discussion group, along with a brief biographical sketch and status ranking of the members.

An analysis of the discussion group members in terms of status and qualitative participation in the interactional process is the subject matter of Chapter Three. The Fourth and final chapter contains the summary and conclusions supported in this study.
CHAPTER II

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY GROUP IN THE COMMUNITY SETTING

Columbus, the seat of Muscogee County, is the third largest city in the State. The city's metropolitan area embraces three counties (Muscogee and Chattahoochee Georgia and Russell Alabama) with an estimated 235,900 persons. The city has more than 140 industries of all sorts. It is the leader of the Southeastern section of the United States in the textile industry. There are adequate means of communication and transportation in the community.

A continuous growth in population has taken place in Columbus. This increase can be attributed to three factors: (1) its normal rate of reproduction, (2) migration from surrounding areas, and (3) presence of military personnel. Evidence of this growth is revealed in terms of the "boom" in house construction, increasing school enrollment, and establishment of sub-business areas.

The population of Columbus was eighty thousand in 1950, and the 1957 estimate shows an increase of twenty thousand or twenty-five per cent. The age distribution of Columbus' population is typically urban; that is, with a median age of 27.7 years old, there is a low percentage of children, a high concentration of working age persons, and relatively few old.

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1 Columbus Chamber of Commerce, Columbus, Georgia: Hub of the Southeast (Georgia, 1957) n.p.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
people.\textsuperscript{1}

A distribution of Columbus' population by color reveals that the whites constitute more than two-thirds, while the non-whites constitute the remaining one-third.\textsuperscript{2} The median educational status of persons twenty-five years and older in Columbus is 8.2 years of school completed.\textsuperscript{3} Even though information was not available for Columbus proper with reference to occupation, occupational data about the metropolitan area of the community indicate the highest number of workers are employed in manufacturing, construction, agriculture and forestry and fishery, and wholesale and retail trade.\textsuperscript{4}

Columbus has a "Commission-Manager" form of government which consists of five commissioners who are elected by the city-at-large for a term of four years. The community is bi-racial in structure with a rating of "fair" in race relations. The biggest blow to this "fair" relationship came when an aggressive civic Negro leader was killed. His assassin, who was later filled by some unknown person, was exonerated by a grand jury that investigated his case.

In many efforts of the city, the Negro is used in working with "his" people. Negroes and whites, in many cases, live side-by-side. The Supreme Court's decision in regard to school segregation had little impact upon the pattern of race relations. Three or four economically independent

\textsuperscript{2}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{4}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 328.
Negroes, however, threatened to send their children to white schools but it did not materialize. Negroes are encouraged to vote. The senior high school takes its eighteen year old students annually to the courthouse for registration.

The community has four Negro policemen who work from 6 p.m. until 2 a.m. in the Negro section of the community. During 1956, three very good players who were Negroes were on the local baseball team. One of the local television stations has a children's program on which Negro children appear alone on a special day. There have been several interracial meetings between the Negro and white ministers at Negro churches. A leading minister of a white Presbyterian church recently wrote an article for a famous national magazine in which he attacked Southern traditions in respect to Negroes and advocated "creative contact" between leaders of the two races. The constitutionality of legal segregation on public conveyance is in the process of being tested by a Negro lawyer who is defending the case of a Negro soldier who was arrested for violating the segregation ordinance.

The Negro Sub-Community.—The social structure of Columbus, like that of the typical American city, is characterized by two highly distinct, yet closely interconnected sub-structures and/or sub-communities, one for whites and the other for Negroes. Each racial group tends to form its own society, from which individuals of the other racial group are systematically excluded. The interaction between the two sub-communities is, for the most part, restricted to symbiotic relations and economic matters such as buying and selling, hiring of services. Segregation of the races in other

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areas of living is strictly enforced by law.

It is difficult to describe the socio-economic characteristics of Columbus' Negroes because of the lack of scientific data. The information which will be given is primarily based upon personal observations. A majority of the Negro male population are concentrated in the occupations of wholesale and retail trades, manufacturing, construction, and personal services. The professional personnel is very small and concentrated, the teachers making up more than three-fourths of the number in this occupational group. Business and repair services are few, the bulk of which are in the nature of cafes and restaurants. The mass of Negro workers are in the laboring fields.

More than sixty per cent of the Negro population of Columbus live in sub-standard dwelling areas. This is true as is indicated by improper lighting, inadequate sewerage, unpaved roads, low terrain, and business places interspersed with residential places. These sub-standard areas are rapidly being improved as a result of an urban redevelopment program that includes zoning.

The educational level of the Negro population of Columbus is 5.5 years of school completed for those twenty-five and more years old as of 1950. The average annual income in 1950 for the Negro population in Columbus was $805.00 compared to $1,684.00 for the whites. The Negro population may be roughly divided into three major social status groups: The lower or working, the middle or white collared, and the upper or

1Ibid., p. 72. With reference to Negro female workers, more than fifty per cent of them work in the occupations of personal services, wholesale and retail trades, and professional and related services.

2Ibid.

3Ibid., p. 341.
professional and business. Distribution of the Negro group in the hierarchy approximates the following: five-ninths in the lower group, three-ninths in the middle group, and one-ninth in the upper group.

There are more than 150 formal and informal organizations, not including religious and affiliate organizations, in the Negro subcommunity.¹ Most of these are saving and social clubs. Efforts directed toward community advancement emanate, in the main, from the eight fraternities and sororities and the Young Men's Progressive Club.

THE STUDY GROUP

The Negro adult discussion group holds its bi-weekly meetings at the Fourth Avenue Public Library. The library was established in 1952, the first and only public library for Negroes in the community. It is a one-story building composed of a reading area for both children and adults, a store room for books and other kinds of literature, a kitchen-mimeographing room combination, a conference room for group meetings and music-listening, and an office. It has a modern heating and cooling unit.

The library has approximately five thousand volumes of books, fiction and non-fiction. The leading magazines, journals, pamphlets, and newspapers are a part of the library's collection. If a publication is desired that is not in the library, the librarian will either secure it from the central library, the Bradley Memorial (white), or will order it.

Bookmobile services are provided by the library. Books may be checked out for two-week intervals. The librarian staff consists of a head librarian, three full-time assistants, and several part-time student helpers. The conference room is used by the adult discussion group. The

¹This information is based upon data gathered by the writer during the summer of 1955 when the idea was entertained to do a study on voluntary and involuntary associations in Columbus, Georgia.
Physical facilities consist of three tables and several chairs which are arranged on meeting nights in the shape of a "T." Maps, a film projector, and a tape recorder are available.

Purpose of the adult discussion group.--This adult discussion group had its initiation in the fall of 1953 at the Fourth Avenue Public Library (Negro). The group was set up by the American Library Association in cooperation with the Georgia State Department of Education and the Bradley Memorial Library (white central library) of Columbus, Georgia. To state more clearly the background and purpose of the adult discussion group movement, a brochure published by the American Library Association states:

The Fund for Adult Education is dedicated to spreading the opportunities for people to become thinking people, aware of the political, social, esthetic world around them. The Fund for Adult Education has made annual grants to ALA for the American Heritage Project.

The American Library Association, a professional organizations for librarians, has developed the American Heritage Project as part of books, pamphlets, films, and all media of recorded thought. Intelligent consideration of ideas, uncensored thinking, are among the aims of ALA.

AND REMEMBER: In book discussion, decisions do not have to be reached. This makes our kind of discussion different from discussion for action. We don't need final agreement. The case doesn't have to be decided "for" or "against" State Rights; but each person should come from a discussion of the subject with a clearer notion of his own values and ideas on the subject with a broader perspective on what other people think on it too. This means that in American Heritage discussions, minority opinion has an equal status with majority opinion, with only facts and values to be the arbiter.\(^1\)

An annual publication put out by the State of Georgia as a sponsor of the American Heritage Project explains it this way:

The American Heritage Program in Georgia is a service offered by the public libraries for adult members of the

\(^1\)ALA American Heritage Project, "Orienting Leaders and Librarians to the American Heritage Project" (Chicago, 1954) p. 2.
community. The pattern is that of a group discussion, led by some member of the community, in which members take part. The participants express their own thinking after having read the same book, the same portions of a book, an article, or a pamphlet. Or they may view films together as a basis for discussion.1

Prior to the 1956-57 program of the adult discussion group, close contact was maintained among the local discussion group, the University of Georgia which supervised these groups in Georgia, and the American Library Association. Materials and other aids were provided for the discussion group by the University and ALA. Two leadership training conferences (one in the early fall and another one in the mid-winter) were conducted at the West Hunter Street Branch Library in Atlanta, Georgia. The first conference was primarily devoted to leadership training through demonstration and imitation. The final conference was mainly concerned with evaluation. The conferences were supervised by R. E. Dooley, a training consultant for the American Heritage Project of the American Library Association. Representatives were expected from each of the discussion groups in Georgia at the expense of the State Department of Education. Representatives were also present from the University of Georgia and the State Library Service agency.

Visitations were made, at least once a year, to the discussion group by a member of the University. The purpose of the visit was for evaluation and guidance. The discussion group was expected to send a report after each meeting to the University of Georgia. The report would include information about the meeting with reference to date, time, and place of

meeting, subject of and reference used for discussion, number of members present by sex, amount of participation, and weaknesses and strongpoints of the meeting. A data card was also expected to be filled in by each member of the discussion group. Information required for this card was name, date, sex, occupation, amount of education, source of knowledge about discussion group, reason for joining group, and length of membership.

In the fall of 1956, communication between this discussion group, the University of Georgia, and the American Library Association rapidly waned. The initial and only concern was whether the discussion group would function in 1956-57. No other correspondence was received, neither from the University nor from ALA. The training conferences were not held this past year, 1956-57. It is not known why such communication ceased. This break did not bar the discussion group from execution of its program during 1956-57.

The Negro adult discussion group meets bi-weekly from October through May from 7:30 p.m. until 9 p.m. in the library. The leader, the only designated official of the group, is selected either by the librarian or by the group members. It is customary that the discussion group, in its initial meeting, will discuss and formulate an agenda in respect to topics and reading assignments for the ensuing year. This agenda is flexible enough so as to allow for a discussion of important issues that may occur on the current events' scene and/or emerge within the group in the course of the discussion.

During the discussion year of 1956-57, a few of the topics discussed by the group were: (a) "What is new about New Republicanism?", (b) "The place of social protest groups in a democracy", (c) "The Suez Canal crisis,
What shall we do about it?", (d) "Are Americans sincere about education?", and (e) "A look at organized labor". A few of the basic reference books and pamphlets used were: (1) H. M. Bishop and S. Hendel's Basic Issues of American Democracy, H. S. Commager's Living Ideas in America, G. W. Johnson's This American People, and Robert Hutchin's "The Education we Need."

Profiles of discussion group members.--A brief biographical sketch of each of the fourteen discussion group members is given below.

"A", who is forty-seven years old and is married, has resided in Columbus for the past eighteen years. He is a Catholic and is politically non-partisan. Even though a member of the medical profession, he participates widely in community activities with a preference for working with the Boy Scouts. He has been with the discussion group since its inception but has shown poor attendance at recent discussion meetings. When present at meetings, his participation is high, his views are conservative and authoritative.

"B," is a thirty year old schoolteacher who is a native of Columbus. He is a Baptist and is non-partisan in politics. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Political Science from a northern university and he is very active in community activities. He recently had a misunderstanding with several members of the City Commission with reference to a request made for Negro advancement. He is an original member of the group and has a good attendance record. Even though he is slow to enter the discussion and has a radical attitude, his participation is high and provoking.

"C," is a twenty-three year old army draftee who has been at Fort Benning, Georgia for about a year. In civilian life he is a school teacher with a Master of Arts degree. He is a Unitarian and is non-partisan in politics. He is single and his share in other activities of the community is not known. As a first year member of the discussion group, his attendance record is good, his participation comes early in the discussion and is marked by moderation and constructiveness.

"D," the designated discussion leader who is twenty-eight years old, is married and has lived in Columbus since 1953. He is a schoolteacher with a Master of Arts degree from
Tuskegee Institute. He is a Methodist and is politically non-partisan. In spite of his wide participation in community activities, he finds time for hunting and fishing. Even though he is a veteran member of the group and is serving his first year as leader, his participation is high in a few areas of group discussion and his speech is usually heavy with rustic and trite expressions. His views are liberal and he speaks softly and slowly.

"E," a retired soldier who is fifty-two years old, has been a resident of Columbus since 1940. He is a Catholic and is non-partisan in politics. He is married, has a junior college education, and is not known to share in other community activities. As a first year member of the group, his attendance is poor, his participation is low and spasmodic, his speech is slow and soft, and his attitude is conservative.

"F," a thirty-three year old gentleman, has lived in Columbus since 1940. He is a career soldier who works with the medics. Even though he is married and has a junior college education, he is a Presbyterian and is non-partisan in politics. He works diligently with many community activities. As a second year member of the discussion group his attendance record is good, his participation excels all other members, his attitude is liberal, and he is very much gestural and emotional in self-expression.

"G," a thirty-two year old native of Columbus, Georgia, is married and is a tailor by trade. He has no religious preference but is a staunch Republican. He has fifteen years of schooling and works with most community programs, especially with those that are political in scope. He is an original member of the discussion group and has a very good attendance record. In spite of his speech impediment, he participates very highly and reflects a radical attitude.

"H," is forty-five years of age and came to Columbus in 1943. He is a schoolteacher, a Methodist, and a Republican. He is married and loves outdoor life. He works moderately in community activities. As a two year member of the discussion group, his attendance is highly irregular, his participation is high, self-expression is rather vague, and his attitude is conservative.

"I," is a forty-three year old barber who has lived in Columbus since 1940. He is a Baptist, politically non-partisan, and is a divorcée. He has a high school education and participates very little in community activities. As a three year member of the discussion group, he has high parti-
pation, irregular attendance, and liberal views. He tends to be repetitive in self-expression.

"J" is a thirty-two year old native of Columbus and is married. He is an Enlisted Man in the Regular Army, and has a high school education. He is a Methodist, is non-partisan in politics, and is not known to take part in community activities. As a first year member of the group, he has poor attendance, very low participation, and appears to be vague and shy in self-expression. His attitude is conservative.

"K" is a thirty-four year old native of Columbus. He is a skilled laborer, a Baptist, and is politically non-partisan. He is married and is a high school graduate. He works little in community activities. As a three year member of the discussion group, his attendance is fair. His low participation is characterized by vagueness and timidity. He has a liberal attitude.

"L," who is twenty-five years old is an army draftee, a Presbyterian, and is non-partisan in politics. After discharge from the service, he hopes to attend college and prepare for the ministry. He is married and shares very little in community programs. As a first year member of the discussion group, his attendance is very good, his participation is very high, and he has a liberal attitude. He shows calmness but choppiness in self-expression.

"M" is a twenty-nine years old physician who came to Columbus a year ago as an officer in the army. He is married, politically non-partisan, and a Catholic. His participation in community activities is rapidly increasing. As a first year member of the group, he has good attendance, moderate participation, and a liberal attitude. He is calm and deliberate in self-expression.

The age range in Table 1 shows that the oldest member is fifty-two years old and the youngest member is twenty-three years old. The average age for the fourteen members is 34.1 years. Ten members or 71.4 per cent are below the average age. Four persons or 28.6 per cent of the membership are above the average age. This analysis suggests that this
discussion group consists largely of younger men.

Table 2 reveals that twenty years of formal schooling is the highest level of education and twelve years of schooling is the lowest level of education for the discussion group members. The average educational level of the group is 14.5 years of schooling which is equivalent to a junior college education. Six or 42.9 per cent of the members are below the average while eight or 57.1 per cent of the members are above the average level of education. On the basis of this analysis, it appears that a discussion group of this kind attracts relatively more persons with a higher educational status than those with a lower status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 - 32</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 - 42</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 - 52</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 indicates the occupational status of the discussion group members. For purposes of this writer, the occupations have been divided into four classes. Each class or category of occupations is constituted as follows: (a) Three teachers and two doctors in the professional class; (b) five soldiers and two skilled laborers in the specialist class; (c) a barber in the personal service class; and (d) one soldier in the retired worker's class. It may be inferred from this analysis that
relatively more persons whose occupations require technical or professional training are attracted to a discussion group than those who have little skill or training.

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF DISCUSSION GROUP MEMBERS ACCORDING TO HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED IN SCHOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Grade Completed</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF DISCUSSION GROUP MEMBERS ACCORDING TO OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Workers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Service</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialists</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired Worker</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 indicates that an overwhelming majority or 85.8 per cent of
the members are married. This picture seems to indicate that persons
who are married are more prone to affiliate themselves with a discussion
group than persons who are single or divorced.

TABLE 4
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DISCUSSION
GROUP MEMBERS ACCORDING TO MARITAL STATUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>85.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 5
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DISCUSSION
GROUP MEMBERS ACCORDING TO RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Preference</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitarian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Preference</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 reveals that most of the members are Catholics, Baptists, and Methodists. Ten members or 71.4 per cent of the total membership prefer those denominations. The other four members have religious preferences as follows: (a) one is Unitarian, (b) two are Presbyterians, and (c) one has no religious preference. It appears, then, that persons with religious preferences are more inclined to become members of a discussion group than persons who have no preferences.

TABLE 6

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DISCUSSION GROUP MEMBERS ACCORDING TO POLITICAL PREFERENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Preference</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Partisan</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than three-fourths or 78.6 per cent of the members have no political preference. Approximately one-fifth or 21.4 per cent of the membership prefer the Republican Party while none of them prefer the Democratic Party. Thus it seems that persons who are politically non-partisan are more likely to be members of a discussion group than those who are partisan.

Table 7 reveals the social status of the discussion group members. This stratification is based upon the "Index of Status Characteristics"
(I.S.C.) which was developed by W. Lloyd Warner. Attention has been given in Chapter One as to how the I.S.C. was used in this study. It is shown in Table 7 that the upper status group is the least represented in terms of number in the discussion group whereas the middle status group has the highest representation. This analysis seems to mean that a

**TABLE 7**

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DISCUSSION GROUP MEMBERS ACCORDING TO STATUS GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

discussion group attracts more persons from the middle status group than it attracts from any other status group.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter has been an examination of background factors which are necessary in understanding properly the analysis of the small and informal discussion group studied. Consideration has been given to five major areas, namely: (a) Columbus, Georgia as the larger community setting of the group; (b) the Negro-sub-community as the community in which the group members live; (c) the Fourth Avenue Library as the immediate setting

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of the group; (d) the origin and purpose of the discussion group; and
(e) socio-economic facts about the discussion group members.

With this presentation as a backdrop, we can now move into the core
of this thesis, namely, an analysis of the discussion group. The interest
will be directed toward how the members relate to each other in respect
to status and participation in the interactional process.
CHAPTER III

Introduction.—This chapter is an analysis of the discussion group in terms of an interactional process method devised by Robert F. Bales.¹ This method employs a scheme that consists of twelve categories, six paired categories, and four problem areas. A detailed description of this scheme was given in Chapter One of this study. Use of the interactional process method to analyze the discussion group will reveal the quality and direction of participation of the members in terms of status groups. The three status groups were isolated and described in the preceding chapter. In analyzing how the three status groups relate to each other in the interactional process, the focus will be upon three factors, namely: (a) quality of acts initiated; (b) quantity of acts initiated and received; and (c) direction of acts.

QUALITY OF ACTS INITIATED

Table 8 shows that the three status groups are represented in all of the twelve categories listed above with the exception that the lower status group has no acts initiated in the category "asks for suggestion." An immediately obvious feature of the distribution is that all three status groups initiate most of the acts in the categories "gives opinion" and "gives orientation."² It should be noted, however, that the upper status group has predominantly more acts in giving opinion than the other two status groups; whereas the lower status group has a significantly larger number of acts in giving orientation than the other two status groups.

¹Robert F. Bales, op. cit.

²This is an expected occurrence in a discussion group wherein the main objective is to get one to express his thoughts on questions pertaining to the topic considered.
TABLE 8

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL ACTS INITIATED ACCORDING TO TWELVE CATEGORIES AND STATUS GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
<th>Status Groups and Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Shows solidarity</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Shows tension release</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Agrees</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gives Suggestion</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gives opinion</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Gives orientation</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Asks for orientation</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Asks for opinion</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Asks for suggestion</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Disagrees</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Shows tension</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Shows antagonism</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is to be further noted that the three status groups tend to reflect a difference in respect to high and low performances in acts initiated. The upper status group tends to initiate relatively more acts in the categories of showing tension release and asking for suggestion, and fewer in the categories of giving suggestion and asking for orientation. The middle status group tends to initiate a higher number of acts in the categories of giving agreement and asking
for opinion and fewer acts in asking for suggestion and showing tension release. The lower status group initiates relatively more acts in the category of agreement and less in the category of giving suggestion. What seems to be suggested here is that when members of different status groups come together, special roles are played which perhaps are reflective of the generalized roles in the larger social context and culture.

Table 9 reveals more vividly and descriptively the role patterns of the status groups in the interactional process.

TABLE 9

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL ACTS INITIATED BY STATUS GROUPS ACCORDING TO PROBLEM AREAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM AREAS</th>
<th>STATUS GROUPS AND PER CENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive reactions</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted answers</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative reactions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The role\(^1\) of the upper status group is shown to be largely in the areas of supplying answers and showing positive reactions. The middle status group, on the other hand, reflects behavior that is in the nature of asking questions and acting negatively. A middle-of-the-road

\(^1\)Michael S. Olmstead, "Orientation and Role in the Small Group," American Sociological Review, XIX (December, 1954) pp. 741-751. In reference to role, Olmstead says: "... that members will contribute differently to the solution of these problems and that insofar as these differences are stable they may be referred to as roles."
type of participation characterizes the lower status group. The highest amount of its participation is neither wholly with the upper status group nor with the middle status group. The lower status group tends to communicate more frequently in the areas of asking questions and giving answers. The suggestion that status and quality of participation are closely related tends to substantiate similar findings by Robert F. Bales, Philip Slaters, and E. Paul Torrance reported in articles appearing in a book by Hare et al.\(^1\) on small group analysis.

QUALITY OF INTERACTION WITHIN AND BETWEEN STATUS GROUPS

To this point our discussion has been concerned with an analysis of interaction between representatives of the respective status groupings. In this section attention is focused on a summary analysis of the quality of interaction within and between members of the three status groups.

**Positive reactions**—Table 10 reveals the three status groups as they positively relate to each other in the interactional process. The upper status group does not reflect any inter-group positive behavior. On the other hand, it is slightly positive in action toward the middle status group and is highly positive toward the lower status group. The middle status group acts positively toward members of its own group as well as the other status groups with more of its positive acts directed toward the upper status group than to the lower status group. The lower status group shows no positive actions within its group but it does

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\(^1\)Hare, op. cit., pp. 42 ff, 456, 482-492, 498-515.
TABLE 10

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ACTS INITIATED BY THREE STATUS GROUPS FOR EACH OTHER ACCORDING TO THE PROBLEM AREA "POSITIVE REACTIONS"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATUS GROUPS</th>
<th>Status Groups and Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

initiate positive acts for the other two status groups, directing more of the positive acts toward the upper group and less toward the middle status group. This analysis suggests three things: (1) The upper and lower status groups have no intra-group interaction and tend to give relatively more of their positive acts to each other; (2) the middle status group tends to receive slightly fewer positive acts from the upper and lower status groups than it directs toward them; and (3) the upper and middle status groups show more positive behavior than the lower status group.

Attempted answers: Table 11 indicates this pattern of supplying answers by three status groups: (1) The upper status group supplies answers only for the middle status group; (2) the middle status group gives answers to all three status groups, a relatively larger number of answers being directed toward the lower status group and a comparatively smaller number toward the upper status group; and (3) the lower status
group supplies no answers for each other and relatively more for the upper status group than for the middle group.

**TABLE 11**

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ACTS INITIATED BY THREE STATUS GROUPS FOR EACH OTHER ACCORDING TO THE PROBLEM AREA "ATTEMPTED ANSWERS"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATUS GROUPS</th>
<th>Status Groups and Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This analysis reveals these tendencies in respect to supplying answers: (1) The upper status group supplies fewer answers and has less intergroup interaction than the middle and lower status groups; (2) the middle and lower status groups receive relatively fewer answers from the upper status group than they give to it; and (3) the higher status groups (upper and middle) supply comparatively more of their answers for their immediate subordinate status groups whereas the lower status group directs most of its answers to the upper status group.

Questions.—Table 12 reflects intra-group and intergroup interaction in asking questions. The upper status group exhibits no intra-group interaction on this level but does direct questions to both of the other groups with considerably more being directed to the lower status group. The middle status group directs questions to each other as well as to
the other status groups with relatively more questions being directed
toward members of the upper status group than toward the lower status
group. The lower status group does not ask questions of members within
its group nor those within the upper status group; instead, all of its
questions are directed toward the middle status group.

TABLE 12
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ACTS INITIATED BY THREE
STATUS GROUPS FOR EACH OTHER ACCORDING TO THE PROBLEM
AREA "QUESTIONS"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATUS GROUPS</th>
<th>Status Groups and Per Cent</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This analysis suggests these conclusions in respect to asking
questions: (1) The lower status group will tend to ask fewer questions
and exhibit less intergroup interaction than the middle and upper status
groups; (2) the middle status group will ask considerably more questions
of the upper and lower status groups than it receives; and (3) the upper
status group will tend to direct more of its questions toward the lower
status group but will not receive any from the lower group.

Negative reactions.--The patterns of participation among status
group members in showing negative behavior are noted in Table 13. The
upper status group shows no negative behavior toward members within its
its group but exhibits slightly more negative reactions toward the lower status group than toward the middle status group. The middle status group displays intergroup negative behavior as well as negative reactions to the other status groups. Relatively more of it is directed, however, toward members within its group and the least amount toward the upper status group. The lower status group reflects no negative behavior to-

TABLE 13

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ACTS INITIATED BY THREE STATUS GROUPS FOR EACH OTHER ACCORDING TO THE PROBLEM AREA "NEGATIVE REACTIONS"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status Groups</th>
<th>Status Groups and Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ward its own group but acts negatively toward the upper status group more so than toward the middle status group. It is further shown that the middle and lower status groups display more negative behavior than the upper status group.

From this analysis these suggestions are derived: (1) The upper and lower status groups will not reflect intra-group negative behavior but will tend to direct most of their negative acts toward each other; (2) the middle status group will tend to direct most of its negative behavior toward members of its own group; (3) the lower and upper status
groups will tend to show less negative behavior toward the middle status group than they receive from the middle group; and (4) the middle and lower status group will tend to display considerably more negative behavior than the upper status group.

Summary.—This is a summary of the intra-group and inter-group participation by the three status groups in respect to showing positive and negative behavior, supplying answers and asking questions. Two extreme types of participation are noted in this manner: The upper and lower status groups refrain from intra-group interaction whereas the middle status group communicates with all three status groups. It is further noted that the upper status group does not ask any questions of the lower status group but does supply answers for the lower group. The opposite is true for the lower status group in respect to asking questions and giving answers. The middle status group tends to ask considerably more questions than the other two status groups; even though it directs a relatively larger amount of communication toward the upper and lower status groups, it receives less communication from the two groups. Finally, the upper and middle status groups have slightly more participation in showing positive behavior and supplying answers whereas the middle and lower status groups are slightly higher in asking questions and behaving negatively.

TOTAL ACTS INITIATED AND RECEIVED

This section of the analysis pertains to a percentage distribution of total acts initiated and received by the three status groups. This
discussion will seek to answer these questions:

1. How do the status groups compare with each other in number of acts initiated and received?

2. How do the status groups compare with each other in number of acts that are directed toward individuals and toward the group?

3. How do the status groups compare with each other in number of acts that each directs toward the other?

Acts initiated and received.—Table 14 reveals that the middle status group initiates and receives more acts than the upper and lower status groups. The upper status group ranks third among the three in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATUS GROUPS</th>
<th>Acts and Per Cent Initiated</th>
<th>Per Cent Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

number of acts initiated but it ranks second in highest number of acts received. The lower status group, on the other hand, ranks second in initiating acts but third in receiving acts. Finally, it is to be noted that the upper status group receives considerably more acts than it initiates in contrast to the middle status group which receives five percent less than it initiates and the lower status group which receives and initiates the same number of acts.
This analysis suggests three inferences which are as follows:

(1) The middle status group initiates and receives relatively more acts than the other two status groups; (2) the upper status group tends to have a higher rank in acts received than in acts initiated while the reverse fact is true for the lower status group; and (3) the upper status group tends to receive a larger number of acts than it initiates whereas the other two status groups tend to reflect an equal number or a decrease in acts received as over against those initiated. It is suggested here that the upper status group exhibits this increase in acts received compared with acts initiated because this group is the target for more communication than the other two social status groups. This perhaps is what Homans had in mind when he stated that communication tends to flow toward the top or upper status group.

Acts directed toward individuals and the group.—Table 15 indicates that the lower status group directs more of its communication toward the group than toward individuals whereas the contrary applies to the middle status group. The upper status group gives an equal amount of activity to individuals and the group with a difference of one per cent in favor of the group. The middle status group initiates eight per cent more acts for individuals than for the group. The lower status groups direct seven per cent more acts to the group than to individuals. It may be concluded from this analysis that the upper and lower status groups tend to address more communication to the group whereas the middle status group addresses more to individuals.

1Homans, op. cit., p. 461.
Acts initiated within status groups.—It is shown in Table 16 that the upper and lower status groups do not exhibit intra-group communication. Both of these groups, however, communicate with each other and with the middle status group which initiates action for all three status groups.

### Table 15

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL ACTS DIRECTED TOWARD INDIVIDUALS AND TOWARD THE GROUP ACCORDING TO STATUS GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATUS GROUPS</th>
<th>Direction and Per Cent</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The upper status group directs fifty-eight per cent more of its remarks toward the middle status group than toward the lower group. The middle status group confines most of its remarks to members of its own

### Table 16

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL ACTS INITIATED BY THE STATUS GROUPS FOR EACH OTHER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status groups</th>
<th>Status Groups and Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
group but gives the lower status group two per cent more communication than it gives to the upper status group. The lower status group tends to address relatively more of its activity (four per cent more) to the upper status group than to the middle status group.

General summary—The nature of participation by three status groups has been analyzed in terms of the interactional process analysis procedure. The analysis reveals many significant observations. The upper, middle, and lower status groups reflected distinctive qualitative acts. The upper status group tended to show more positive behavior and give more answers, the middle status group tended to behave comparatively more negatively and ask more questions, and the lower status group supplied more answers and asked more questions. The upper status group performed highly in giving opinion and showing tension release; the middle status group directed more of its activity in the categories of giving agreement and asking for opinion while the lower status group performed heavily in giving orientation.

In respect to intergroup and intra-group qualitative participation, it was indicated that the upper and lower status groups have no intra-group communication. The upper and lower status groups tend to respond much more frequently to the communication from each other than to that which they receive from the middle status group. The upper status group received relatively more acts than it initiated whereas the middle and lower status groups received fewer acts than they initiated. The upper and lower status groups directed considerably more acts toward the group while the middle status group addressed considerably more of its action to individuals. Finally, the higher status groups directed more
communication toward their immediate subordinate status groups whereas the lower status group directed more of its acts toward the higher status groups, the upper status group being the target for slightly more activity than the middle group.

With this summary, consideration will be given to the final chapter of this investigation which will be an overall summary of the findings, the conclusions, and tentative generalizations derived from this study.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has been an analysis of the relationship among fourteen members of an adult discussion group in terms of social status and the interactional process. The purpose of this study was to test the following hypothesis:

Social status influences the nature of participation in the interactional process in a small group and distinctive role patterns are reflected in qualitative and quantitative behavior of status groups.

The testing of this hypothesis was guided by the basic questions listed below:

1. What is the nature of the participation by status groups (upper, middle, and lower) according to quality of acts initiated?

2. What is the nature of the qualitative participation when members of the status groups direct acts toward each other?

3. How do the status groups compare with each other in number of acts initiated and received?

4. How do the status groups compare with each other in number of acts directed toward individuals and toward the group?

5. How do the status groups compare with each other in number of acts which each directs toward the others?

The data of this investigation tend to suggest that an observable relationship exists between social status and the nature of participation in the interactional process as indicated in the following findings:

1. Distinct role behavior tends to be reflected in the qualitative acts of the status groups. The upper
status group tends to supply more answers in the form of giving opinions and to show more positive behavior in terms of releasing tension. The middle status group tends to be relative higher in asking questions and showing negative behavior with reference to displaying tension. The lower status group tends to give more orientation and ask more questions.

2. The three status groups tend to communicate considerably more with each other in some quality areas than in other areas. The upper and lower status groups communicate more frequently with each other in showing positive and negative behavior. The upper and middle status groups communicate more frequently with each other in asking questions. The middle and lower status groups tend to participate more frequently with each other in supplying answers.

3. The middle status group tends to have more intergroup and intra-group communication than the upper and lower status groups. The middle status group interacts with all status groups whereas the upper and lower status groups refrain from intra-group interaction, and restrict their intergroup behavior to certain quality areas.

4. The upper status group tends to initiate fewer acts than it receives whereas the middle and lower status groups tend to receive fewer acts than they initiate.

5. The lower status group appears to direct relatively more of its communication toward the group whereas the middle status group directs relatively more of its acts toward individuals. The upper status group tends to reflect equal distribution of acts directed toward individuals and the group.

6. The upper status group directs considerably more of its remarks to the middle status group while the lower status group addresses more of its remarks to the upper group. The middle status group tends to direct proportionally more of its communication toward members of its own group and directs proportionally less toward the other two groups.

The analysis further suggests the following tentative generalizations that tend to be supported by these data:

1. The higher status groups (upper and lower) reflect
a wider degree of difference in qualitative participation with each other than either does with the lower status group.

2. The higher status groups have more variety in qualitative participation than the lower status group.

3. High status groups communicate more often with individuals whereas lower status group members communicate more frequently with the group.

4. Members of higher status groups communicate more frequently with each other than they communicate with the lower status group members.
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